

# Satisfying a Dream With A Trip to The Masters

By John Monson, Superintendent  
Long Prairie Country Club

This April I finally satisfied a life long dream and went to The Masters Golf Tournament. Our club pro Michael Rey went along. If you ever have the chance, go. We were fortunate enough to have friends in Aiken, South Carolina (15 miles away) which solved the housing problem.

We arrived Monday late afternoon. Turned into gate 3 and asked for the will-call booth. It has its own little parking lot which made us feel special. After showing my supt. card and photo ID I got my pass and was on my way. A new pass has to be obtained each day, so you get to know the people in the booth. Everyone was so friendly and helpful.

## Late Monday was the perfect time to do our shopping.

Everyone else was leaving. The merchandise was priced the same as other courses and the pop was \$1 and sandwiches \$1.50. Hootie has enough money. After shopping we walked down to Amen Corner and looked around. On the way back I heard the sound of many mowers and over the hill came 15 Ransomes mowing #14 fairway Augusta style. One pass mowing. Should we be so lucky. You may have noticed on TV that when the camera is shooting from green to tee the fairways appear shiny and when shooting from tee to green they look green. That's because they only mow in one direction - green to tee. No stripes.

**Tuesday was spent walking, taking pictures and watching practice rounds.** Most of the players converse with the galleries and it is fun to watch. After Gary Player hit his tee shot on #16 the gallery started shouting "skip-it, skip-it." I had no clue. He then asked his caddie for a 4 iron and proceeded to skip the ball 5 times across the pond and onto the grass in front of the green. All went wild. A good day to see the entire course and get close to the players.

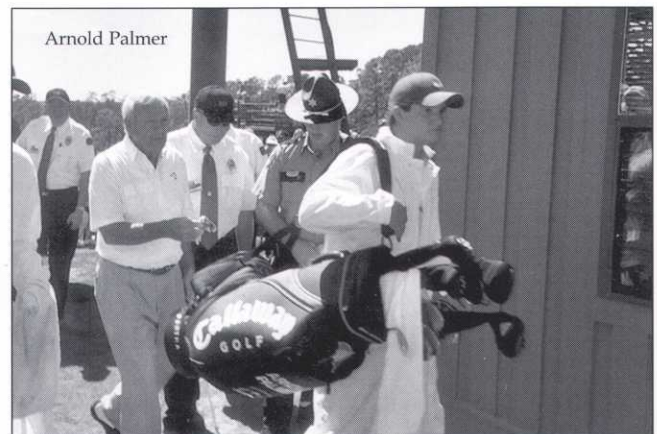
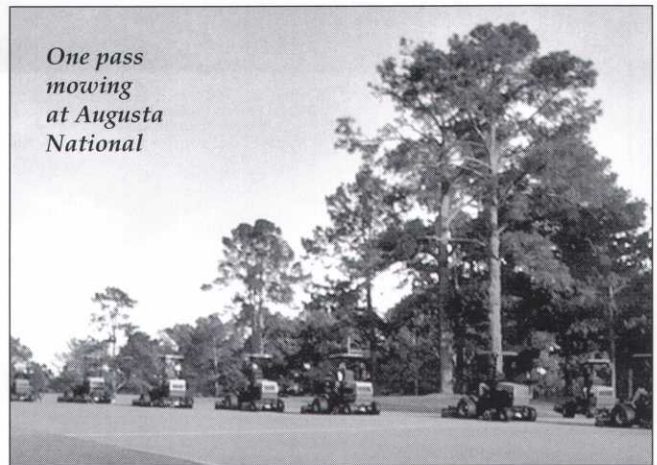
**Wednesday during practice rounds** Tiger, O'Meara, Haas and Howell lined up 4 abreast and skipped their balls across the pond on #16. Only one made it, not Tiger's. During the par 3 tournament I sat next to #2 green hoping for a hole-in-one. Weir answered that. As I sat there, two ladies sat down next to me and I heard them mention Sauk Centre. Turned out it was Dr. Dave

Mayer and his wife. I have known him for over 30 years. Small world. During the tournament we could not park next to will-call. All the course lots are reserved for badge holders. Parking on Washington Rd. is \$15 to \$20 but that was fine. Thursday I sat next to #14 tee with a great view of #13 green.

**On Friday I sat next to #3 green** with a great view of #4, too there were standing ovations as Arnie, Jack and Tom came through. Kind of gave one chills. Some said "thanks for the memories, Arnie" and some said "play for Bruce, Tom."

Because March was cool the azaleas were about 60% in bloom. When you make the trip, have good walking shoes. The course is very hilly. Most holes are either uphill or downhill. #10 is downhill big time. TV doesn't show that or the severe undulations on the greens. Augusta won't say but I would guess the greens rolled at 13 or 14.

**Watching the back nine Sunday afternoon** at home was unbelievable. Eagles, birdies, holes-in-one. Knowing I was there. I am content, my dream became a reality.



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