



Supporting a Peer: Wee One Golf Event Set Sept. 27 at North Oaks

By Jack MacKenzie, CGCS
Editor, North Oaks Golf Club

Fifteen years, four months, three days and counting since I made the decision to give up the booze and commit myself to a spin dry program. Today it is mighty nice not to look for spiders in the bottom of a bottle and I would recommend it to anyone who is alcohol challenged. Sure it was tough, but very doable once I found the tools to master the issue.

It has been almost 18 years since my former wife announced that her love for me had faded and she desired a different relationship with a different man. Ouch, now that one hurt because I thought I had been a pretty good husband. However, I am even better one now that I learned a couple of lessons the 'hard way.' Going through a divorce really was the pits, but as my father said, "Jacko, you can survive this standing on your head." He was right.

Two of my three siblings have been terminated from their positions over the past several years. Pushing 50 years of age they were put to pasture to make way for younger and less expensive talent. Both have since acquired even better positions to excel at. Life built a road block that they went around.

Life challenges. We all have them. It comes with the territory; the risk reward of putting yourself "out there" as an individual or a family. Some issues are easy to address and others seem insurmountable. Yet with a bit of faith and time most crisis soon become history and life goes on...lessons learned.

Yet not everyone is as lucky as I have been. My former wife's 10-year-old niece had a swimming accident last summer and will now require home care for the rest of her life. 24/7. That is a tragedy for this gifted young woman, her family and the community they surround themselves with. Still they persevere, come together and through shared support dilute the

burdens of an unjust blow delivered by the hands of fate. Fund raisers have been accomplished, a handicap van 'drive' rallied and generous donations from anonymous persons have softened the sad circumstances.

I am thankful that there are resources, Gillette Children's Hospital, the Church, close friends, organizations and family to help.

Over the years in our local green industry there have been individuals or their immediate family members stricken by unexpected, traumatic and life altering tests of the human spirit.

shared his passion. Through the Foundation's work, Wayne's legacy will never be forgotten.

Since its inception, membership within the Wee One Foundation has grown to over 270 in 17 states. More importantly, the Wee One Foundation has gifted over \$330,000 to families in Arizona, Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan and North Carolina. As the Wee One grows more people are helped and more funds are needed to distribute.

This fall, in late September, the MGCSA is planning a Wee One event at North Oaks Golf Club with the proceeds

going to help support Tom Fuller and his family as they await a lung transplant. Not a 'one time' golf tournament, the MGCSA envisions a continued annual challenge to raise funds to support the Wee One Foundation. Under the direction of Dale Parske as Chairman of the special day,

sponsorships will be requested from all in the golf industry to help make this and future Wee One Tournaments successful. More information can be found in this edition of *Hole Notes* on Page 16 and will be available in future issues as well.

Life in general is difficult. Out of nowhere and blindsided we can each be taken aback by unanticipated surprises. Most of the time these twists can be straightened out with a new perspective, some a moment to heal or maybe a few bucks spread in the right direction. Sometimes though, and thank God it isn't too often, the burden of events is too hard to bear alone. That is the time when friends and professional peers get together and do what they can to help redistribute and ease the load.

I look forward to welcoming you to my course in support of Tom Fuller and the Wee One Foundation on September 27!

"I look forward to welcoming you to my course (on Sept. 27) in support of Tom Fuller and the Wee One Foundation!"

- Jack

Most recently our professional peer Tom Fuller was diagnosed with and is contending with a debilitating lung dysfunction. Unlike a divorce, unemployment or problems brought about through poor life choices, Tom is experiencing issues I cannot even fathom. I send my prayers to him and his family, but there must be something more our industry can do to help Tom and others in his situation.

Indeed there is! In 2004 the Wee One Foundation was created to assist golf course management professionals (or their dependents) who incur overwhelming expenses due to medical hardship without comprehensive insurance or adequate financial resources.

The foundation was created as a tribute to Wayne Otto who passed away October 21, 2004 after losing his battle to cancer. Wayne dedicated his life to the betterment of the golf maintenance profession he loved and the individuals who

"Sometimes though, and thank God it isn't too often, the burden of events is too hard to bear alone. That is the time when friends and professional peers get together and do what they can to help redistribute and ease the load."