

May 2009

Last month I reported that a club member was using New York Harbor as a driving range. Shortly thereafter a whale was spotted off Staten Island north of the Verrezano Bridge.

Pause for pondering.

Yes I'm implying a connection!

Harrumph! Preposterous you say.

When I saw this whale on the news being turned away and chased by the Coast Guard, I saw the look of vengeance in his eye. Perhaps it was the offspring of the famous Kramer whale. But that begs the question, how did he find out about my article? Whales had their own World Wide Web long before us. Their songs span oceans and are there for any whale to hear. They are large brained but they mostly eat and swim. They don't play golf or the piano, so there is a large spare capacity. They could have the power to monitor the human Internet and the means of hiping Vigilante Whale to what's happenin. Just another unintended consequence of the Internet.

Like in posing golf scores.

{Actual E-Mail Transcript}

Mr. X: I see you shot a 102.

Mr. Golf: It's not right for a non-game score to be posted nakedly like that. It's immaterial. At least I should have the right to an asterisk, like old, blind, not played in 3 weeks, practicing etc.

Mr. X: I agree

Mr. Golf: plus it's on the web. It could cost me a high paying investment banking job at a non TARP firm where good golf is a pre-requisite for employment, as in the good old days. Eh Chip?

It's on the web forever. The only redeeming value is if one is accused of a crime. Not only is it an accurate time and place alibi, but anyone that admits to bad golf must be innocent.

I do think that there should be an excuse page every week to go along with the postings. I enjoy seeing all the scores but it's missing all the color of the live presentation. Similarly a bragging page also, nothing like the commentary to go along with the eagle set up by a left handed 2 iron from under a bush.

The power of the Internet was revolutionary. The consequences of revealing our golf scores and other information to the world are really unknown. It is why I don't use real names in my stories. Ex wives, creditors, and law enforcement use digital forensics, just like Vigilante Whale. Big Paulie from Goodfellas would never talk on the telephone. He would unnerstan.

And to any swine that might laugh at my golf scores I can safely say that none of you will ever win the Masters but I could win the Pulitzer Prize for journalism.

My third book, tentatively titled MR. GOLF: OUT THERE SOMEWHERE will be a collection of these essays.

August 2009

As I write this we're on watch for another deluge with dangerous cloud to ground lightning etc. etc. So Sunday we'll be shooting darts into the soft greens, in my case my third shots. And then three putts.....

I used to look forward to the dog days of August. My handicap would drop significantly playing the burned out course. I used to carry a one iron. I could control a grounder better than a high bouncer. Course conditions back then is one of the reasons the SI Amateur is played at Richmond County.

One particular drought year I saw Eric Delin hit it to the 100 Yd marker on the first hole. You do the math kiddies. One Sunday an official looking motorcade pulls into the lot. It's Mayor Giuliani and son Andy lookin to play our yellow course, not to be confused with the Bethpage Yellow.

That fall sprinklers began to be installed on all city courses. Made everybody happy but sure ruined my game. The things I like are that it's prettier and we can play Summer Rules: I don't have to bend so much.

It was suggested by a top player that I write about coming down the stretch at the Amateur, what it felt like and maybe tips for those playing this year. Well knowing that he knew I never played in the SIA I said I thought he was just "makin sport", and sorta marking territory so to speak, him good, me stink.

So he says, how about a few tips from just playing there. Well back when I had rich friends I sliced a few into the cemetery along the 18th hole [did a Scotsman design RCCC?].

Well all I can say is that all putts break towards the Bayonne Bridge and that they're very fond of those collarless golf shirts that are so popular.

I'd like to add that I hope everyone acts in a quiet dignified manner to sort of prove to the world that public golfers can fit in at country clubs. Too many of you radicals lionize Jeff Thomas, the guy who trashed the Eisenhower Cottage at The Masters.

Now for trivia. No one e-mailed the correct answer to last months top forty golfer question, so I'm increasing the prize from an autographed Top-Flite to a non-autographed one.

This months question. Jack Nicklaus shot 280 and broke the U.S. Open amateur scoring record at Cherry Hills in 1960, the year Arnie won, Whose record did he break?

Answers next month, winner or not.

So until then.

Remember, because we play golf, we're all winners!

Or is that whiners?

September 2009

Wow did August fly. It always does for it's back to school next week. That feeling stays with you all your life. August was a month of moving golf balls, of an old guy winning the Club Championship, another the only Amateur qualifier and a third old guy, runner up in the Senior Amateur. Other news.

Me and the Deacon are on the outs! The guy's in the hospital for a month. You think he'd let me borrow his new sports car. He's not using it, what's the big deal.

The big deal and the big news of the month is that there is a winner of the Mr. Golf Trivia Challenge. I'll keep you in suspense for a bit.

My harangue this month is the lack of younger members, as I had alluded to in the opening paragraph. We tend to blame it on modern youth as they don't have the attention span to enjoy golf. Forget about attention span, a round of golf puts them out of contact for 5 hours, a horrific premise in our society.

"the two 13 yr. olds were spotted by the helicopters on the 17th hole. They were safely strapped into the child car seats and driven home by their parents who may be charged. More at 11 pm with the rip current threat at Tottenville Pool, and other news."

I assert that golf is obsolete in the modern world which is really a construct of media imagery, "where the ads take aim at the heart and soul of the spender."

The club has fixed costs and a lack of new members with older ones moving on to the Fairway Club where they can talk about their prostate health. We may have to take steps to augment the coffers, like naming rights. Barclay's Championship? How about the Barplex Club Championship for us. And the Interclub Team brought to you by Gateway Carpet, complete with uniforms and "Stan the Caddy" hats. Just a thought.

**Now what you've all been waiting for the answer to last months trivia challenge about the record broken at Cherry Hills. The answer is.....
Who cares! It was a ruse to give a clue for the first trivia challenge - What PGA player had a top 40 hit?..... DON CHERRY..... and the winner is.....DOUG SHULTZ who remembered without any help, internet or otherwise. So forget about those myths about loss of memory.**

Where was I..... oh yeah. Intriguingly Don Cherry finished 8th at Cherry Hills tied with Ben Hogan 4 shots behind Palmer and 2 behind Nicklaus's new amateur record. He was an amateur still, and would have set and held the record for maybe a half hour before Jack, had they set the pairings the modern way. They played and paired for 36 the final day.

This guy was good. No Justin Timberlake he. Great voice, a crooner, but the song sucked, "Band Of Gold"..... "i want a little band of gold, to prove that you are mine". I preferred "Tutti Frutti, all Rootie" and "BeBop a Loola"

Well there you have it. Until next month.

On second thought perhaps the lack of young players is caused by mental health professionals intercepting problems at a younger age. Hmmm...

October 2009

A writers mood affects both the tone of, and the choice of what he writes. We were rained out last Sunday. There is nothing sadder in sports than waiting out rain and the rain winning, but you have no where to go, so you just hang around. "Feel so bad, just like a baseball on a rainy day"

With the Interclub coming up this Sunday and most of the active members playing, I probably won't get to play for another week. I have never made the Interclub team. Obviously my only chance would be for the B team, but I stopped winning championships when the B team was started. I feel my dues are subsidizing a free round of golf for everyone. My petty bitterness is showing thru. I warned you in the first paragraph.

As far as the A team is concerned, you can't tell the teams without a scorecard. Who's playing where this year? Hey it started with free agency and I guess it's OK if baseball players jump up and down in unison every time they win a meaningless game. I guess it's an attempt at bonding among mercenaries. The Mick and the Dook might have shaken a few hands.

We're amateurs and should have a better sense of club loyalty. I suggest that only those who have never been a member of another club be eligible for the squad. That's proof of loyalty, not some superficial rah rah. Myself, Papa P, and Dr. Larry would make a good core for this new direction.

Similar problems plague the upcoming Presidents Cup. All these guys play on the same tour. How do you motivate. I can't see Couples saying "it's US against the World, fight, fight, fight." Or Norman ranting, "the Yanks brought the world to the brink of economic ruin, let's beat the bloody hell out of them." My interest is to see who Chrissie roots for.

Conclusion. Golf is an individual game. That's why we play it. With that in mind I recite the True Golfer's Benediction, Soon to be offered in various chotskie form, plaques, executive paper weights etc. by Mr. Golf Enterprises.

**MAY I SUCCEED WHILE OTHERS FAIL
YET MAY I BE PERCEIVED AS A TEAM PLAYER, AND GOOD GUY
AMEN**

I have another money making idea, not golf related. I present it here because I'm looking for venture capital. Hey you never know.

Premise. When you grow old you do not suddenly start listening to Lawrence Welk records. You cement the style that had the most impact on you when you were young. For example I just finished listening to my Archies album.

Hip-Hop started in the Bronx in the 1970's. The pioneers are aging rapidly. What will be waiting for them if I get start up capital for design and manufacture?

Their own adult diaper called "THUGGIES"

You'll be proud to show your "THUGGIES" peeking above your baggy pants.

**Remember "THUGGIES" NOW
Serenity Later**

November 2009

It's halloween and I'm hunkered in a corner quietly writing this hoping the "little bassits" won't bother me this year. I have plenty of broccoli to give them if they do. They'll thank me later.

It's tough to write when you're no longer part of the loop. Eventually what was clever becomes redundant and it's a relief to know that this is my last column of the year, or of all time. I'm literally lost when it comes to knowing what's going on, just as I get lost out on the golf course. When Gary Port had the golf shop it was for me the clearing house for gossip ego glorification, and controversy, the stuff of comedy. We thought it a great idea for a Sit-Com for the Golf Channel. Now however as I rely on the largess of others in order to play, my "golf-time" is down 90% from the past, or what I consider "normal".

Similarly, but unfortunately so, my golf is feeling the same way. For the first time sorta happy the year is drawing down. Last Sunday was a round without redeeming social value, the couple of shots that make it worthwhile regardless of score or ability level. I like to think there are external factors, mainly the litany of side effects from the drugs I take: fatigue, muscle weakness, inability to walk a straight line, irregular heartbeat, sensitivity to sunlight, confused thinking. Those are just the ones that can affect my golf. Thank goodness my incontinence is taken care of by my "THUGGIES"™. The confused thinking is a given after a series of bad shots, and the main confusion is thinking you can identify the cause. Helpless and hopeless a negative feedback loop if there ever was one. If this continues, golf can no longer be fun or interesting and I hate to say it, it would be the end of Rico.

My plan is this: GET THE GEOMETRY RIGHT. I can't bail out a shot through athleticism. Eyesight and age prevent it. Therefore I must match the arc and plane and ball with squareness and a minimum of compensating body movement. Body alignment and posture is it, and the first step is setting up around my left eye for it is closest to the arc maker, your left arm.. STOP! That's what I do out on the course, but if I limit it to my setup it has to help. Otherwise the end is near and it's disgrace pain and degradation of going out at the bottom.

You never think that it would end like that. You envision yourself driving up the coast highway from Big Sur in your Porsche, past the lone cypress and Pebble. It's a Kodachrome 64 day, over saturated with color as ypu pull into Cypress Point for the lunch in your honor. You rejected the the dinner plan as being over the top for a modest guy like you. You're surprised they give you the Pulitzer Prize for short stories along with your sixteenth club championship. Don Cherry and his pal Dean Martin sing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow". You shock the audience by announcing your retirement because you have to lay up on 17 into a stiff wind and you don't want to use those newfangled clubs. You'll be out at the range hitting balls. You might play 9 occasionally, but you'll be there just to search for the "Secret of Golf" which is and has been your raison d'etre.

"Doctor, psychotherapy has no chance, just gimme the drugs."

June 2009

I was accused by a reader of being obtuse and esoteric, my words not his. This first sentence proves him right. Since he represents almost 10% of my audience, I must address this.

I do not want to become a generic columnist citing birthdays, holes in one {except my own} etc., sort of like.....

.....hey i'd like to give a shout out to those college grads out there who desert our club when it's time to pay full dues.....

Not me!

As golfers, we may make believe we are Ben Hogan, an amateur writer thinks himself Hemingway. If I'm not getting paid I refuse to compromise my artistic integrity.

So before I'm told what to write by a sponsor or a censor I'm going to get far out and tell you about Mr. Golf's greatest moment. It's a true na na na story. Get ready to sail into the mystic boys and girls.

It was a crystal blue July morning, more suited for September. I had finished the novella "Golf in the Kingdom" and was reading the essays in the back of the book. To those unfamiliar, it was a popular new agey book where the protagonist goes golfing in Ireland or Scotland and has mystical or psychedelic experiences. The non-fiction essays explore the surreal side of golf. Ben Hogan being beaten by unknown Jack Fleck in the U.S. Open; golf on the moon [yes kids, 40 years ago astronaut Alan Shepherd hit a one armed 6 iron about a half a mile]; how Scottish architects routed golf courses so the 18th hole was adjacent to the town cemetery. Rounds of golf mimicking life from cradle to the grave.

I then started reading the Advance, and that morning they reported that right below my window, under the 18th fairway of Silver Lake a mass grave of Irish immigrants was discovered. They died of Cholera in the 19th century. The plaque on the boulder as you leave the 18th green honors them.

Wow? Co-incidence or synchronicity? Either way I gotta play. So I go out as a single at the Lake, and randomly join Maria Hogan, she one of the best female golfers on the Island. Too much!

Fourth hole, I hit a drive to the top of cardiac hill. Six iron into the hole. The eagle has landed!

It's not the eagle that is my greatest moment but the entire quantum event. I have had a hole in one, three majors and a 59 on a game boy. This however was a transcendent day that made me Mr. Golf.

for fact checkers my Ultra says July 5, 1994.