

CHIP SHOTS

JULY IS GENEVA

DAYS TO GO – The countdown has switched from months to days. Round one is set for Friday, July 28 at noon. The ceremonial opening tee shots will be stroked by the traditional foursome consisting of Legends Gary Glanzman and Vince Gatto playing with Mini-Legends Jack Berger and Jerry Graves. Their legendary leadership guides the field around Friday courses promoting the creation of new memories that someday may be told to our grandkids. Well...maybe we should wait until they are 35 to tell Geneva stories. Lord knows the last thing we want to do is botch their moral upbringing. The mixture of young and old, drunks and teetotalers, married or single is a true melting pot in Geneva, America like our forefathers intended and wary of adversity. Although the old timers are traditionalists, sometimes it becomes necessary to make changes. Having to play Hemlock on Saturday necessitates one such instance. In the past I collected for Geneva green fees paying Saturday and Sunday golf. This year I will only ask for \$120 to cover payouts and tournament expenses. Green fees will fall on everyone individually. That includes the Scramble. I hope to negotiate a decent price for those 9 holes. But I beg of you, do not let the almighty dollar ruin the weekend. Click! Click! Click! The seconds continue to tick away until Geneva day. I hear the excitement and good vibes in every chat from this year's participants.

GENEVA MONEY GAMES – Long before gambling became legal throughout the country, the Geneva Open wagered yearly on golf skills. Some swear that is not gambling. Back 40 years ago when we bet through bookies, Legend Vince Gatto learned an important lesson from his father, Joe. Victimized by Mr. Gatto's tongue lashing on gambling, Vince spurted, "You play golf every day and you bet on the golf course." Without hesitation and quickly defending his practice and the integrity of the game, his father responded, "That's not gambling, that's golf." Geneva is full of "golf." Individual winnings for Skins on Friday and Saturday plus the best Skill Shots on Saturday are stable transactions distributed at the Commissioner's Dinner. Team games can line pockets with Andrew Jackson's if your teams perform best. The Scramble Committee is hard at work putting those

squads together. Twelve foursomes will compete in this competition. The grueling three-day match for the Gavin Cup will consist of 24 teams. Ron Szymczak and Tony McGuckin will defend their title. The remaining combatants will be drawn at Lumpy's Gathering House on Thursday night amidst concoctions of Manhattan's and Old-Fashions. It is a wonder Blaise and I get it right, but many witnesses look over our backs to be sure it is on the up and up. The Best Ball game on Sunday consists of eleven groups chasing last year's winner (Ben Lloyd-Nick Boggess-Matt Mazzocco-Ron Szymczak). The competing teams will be chosen by "A" players at the Commissioner's Dinner. It is worth noting the defending champs shot a record 16 under par. Ron Szymczak closed with a blistering 71.

STAMP OF APPROVAL – Kerry Joyce and I engaged in a scouting exhibition of Madison Country Club a few weeks back. Both of us concluded the course will be a competitive, challenging, fair, and manageable test of golf. Kerry spent most of his time inspecting the fairways and they were as good as any Geneva venue. I seemed to tour some of the other acreage of the golf course. My assessment of these off fairways locations is do not go there. If you do hit an errant shot, creative skills will be tested. The trees are dense and tall. The course opened in 1923. Only a few of us were around then. Seedlings 100 years ago has grown into ominous forestry for wayward hitters. The gold tees for seniors have been moved up 700 yards from the regular white tees. That is a forgiving and Christian gesture. Short hitters can better manage creeks and ponds we would otherwise have trouble crossing. Madison features both long holes and short holes. The greens are far less undulating and easier to read than Chardon Lakes, last year's Friday track. All this information has been forwarded to the Handicap Committee. Players will compete on equal ground. Playing Madison should be fun. If not, you do not like golf. The only reason not to have fun is you.

BEACHED ON THE COURSE – Proving that no one escapes my poison pen including me, I have a story to disclose. This occurred at Raymond Memorial Golf Course during a Sunday Tour event. Having blasted a sand shot on the green, I needed to walk 30 feet to fetch a rake. Stomping back to perform my gardening duty, my foot slipped off the corner of the bunker. Imagine this tub of lard falling belly first into the sand trap. I have never seen a beached whale waddling on shore trying to return to its natural state, but I think I know how he feels. I peeked over the high lip of the bunker and noticed my playing partners lining up their

putts. Not one of them witnessed the humorous moment. We all experienced such a time. Embarrassed. Did anyone see me? A frightening thought crossed my mind as I laid in the soft sand. Would if I could not get up? Would Blaise Plageman have to toss me a rope to tie one end around my waist and the other end around the bumper of the cart? I did feel relief that I did not sign for the cart. By the grace of God, adrenalin, and determination, I climbed to my feet, brushed the sand from my clothes, and proceeded like nothing happened. Sitting safely by my computer and having a good laugh at myself, I felt an obligation to talk about the incident. I feel fortunate there are no tables in sand traps.

FINAL DETAILS – The field is pretty much set. It is time for the designated Committees to finalize their work. The Handicap Committee is crunching current day numbers to establish fair competition. The Committee Chairman has a philosophy for those unhappy with their handicaps. “Play worse” is his advice. Once the Committee settles on handicaps, the names are sent to the Pairings and Scramble Committees. We then wait anxiously for them to complete their work. The Scramble Committee has a tough task putting together fair and competitive teams. Their worksheet looks like John Madden’s telestrator when he is trying to explain a play. I mean this guy goes here unless that guy goes there then this dude settles in this spot opening a lane on that side forcing him to fill this gap and BOOM! It all comes together successfully. Besides handicaps, the Scramble Committee must deal with lengths of drives. Players like Nick Bogges and Don Jander poke their drives farther than “A” players Todd Abdon and Legend Gary Glanzman. It is important to arm the shorter hitters with lengthier “B” and “C” competitors. The Scramble Committee does a fantastic job. This year, the Pairings Committee is handed an extra task of slotting foursomes for Friday’s round at Madison C.C. but also Saturday’s play at Hemlock. The Scramble teams and the tee times for Friday and Saturday golf will be sent by e-mail as soon as they are completed. The workings of Geneva are no mystery proving true the words of Al McGuire when he said, “The only mystery in life is why kamikaze pilots wore helmets.”