

CHIP SHOTS

SCHOOLING ANOTHER

CLUBHOUSE NEWS – January 15 was a bitter cold day in Northeast Ohio. The wind chill stung exposed skin, closed schools, and stubbled the loins of man and beast. I guarantee Dick Plageman did not play one of his 100 plus golf rounds of 2025 that morning. Well, I did, sort of. I hacked my way around Harbor Town on an indoor simulator. I declare I am worse at artificial golf than real golf and it is well determined I am a calibrated duffer and major nightmare to greenskeepers on any course. But this paragraph is not about me. While chipping from the woods on No. 5, I received a call. It came from the Geneva-on-the-Lake golf course. I hate to break a lot of hearts, but it was not Amy on the other end. Oh my God! Here we go again. The quote from Legend Fritz Ford, “I guess we have to train another” came to mind. The new clubhouse manager is Kristiana. From what I gathered, she has been part of the G-O-T-L course operations for over a year. She ran a 5-K race on Geneva weekend last year and was absent during our outing. She mentioned she met a couple stragglers still hanging around after our event finished. That is a plus. Amy sang our praises to Kristiana, more feathers in our cap. Amy was good to us, too good to us, maybe too, too good to us and, heaven forbid, that might be why she no longer runs the show. I do not expect quite that same welcome from Kristiana this year although we deserve it. I was relieved to know the purpose of Kristiana’s call was to confirm our commitment. With that worry lifted from my shoulders, I could get back to my golf game at Harbor Town. Imagine how much worse than 37 over par I would have scored if I did not get that call.

ON THE MEND – Here is an update about several Geneva brethren’s who had medical procedures since the last outing. Legend Gary Glanzman had lower back surgery in the Fall. Later he developed digestive problems probably from the medication issued to ease his back pain. Finally, he popped the Popeye muscle in his left bicep. Other than that, he is all right. Most all of his recuperation has taken place on Marco Island. Gary hit a small bucket of balls in mid-February. Calculations figure he went 7 months between swings. Gary intends to play nine holes very soon, maybe yesterday. It has been a hellish year, maybe the work of the Satan himself.

He figures good fortune is due to him and if all goes according to plan, he will be whacking around Geneva's hallowed grounds come July. Matt Mazzocco also missed the 2024 Geneva Open. Matt's Father, Gary, gave an update revealing Matt is still unable to grip a golf club. I was told not to expect Matt or Gary to attend this year's tournament either. They will be missed. Both enjoyed much success in Geneva. Matt won three Gavin Cups over the years. In 2007, he teamed with Chuck Rotter for his first championship. Matt and Jim Centorbi hooked up to win back-to-back titles in 2012 and 2013. Quite the feat that that has only been achieved one other time by Mini-Legend Jerry Graves and Brian Hughes several years later. Matt was also part of the dynasty that won three consecutive Best Ball Crowns from 2021 through 2023. His absence as well as Ron Szymczak cracked ribs forced the team to disband or they may have won a fourth title. Gary Mazzocco has some skins on his wall too, including two Gavin Cup wins, the first in 2010 with Tom Jech and again in 2019 as Todd Abdon's partner. I suppose some are happy the Mazzocco's are a scratch believing their absence gives us more of a chance to win. Not me, however. I wanted to be their partner. Those guys are winners.

KNEE ISSUES – I last saw Tim Black in Las Vegas at September's end. The pain in the ass we experienced watching the BROWNS play football never ends. The discomfort Tim felt in his knees, however, has been relieved. By Christmas, he lived through two surgeries, one on each knee. I checked on him recently and he said, "I am doing great." His last therapy session was President's Day. "Still a little stiff," he continued. "But that is to be expected. I have no more pain in my knees." I heard the same diagnosis from Legend Vince Gatto who had his right knee replaced in early February. His therapy is ongoing. Unlike Legend Gary Glanzman, Vince is capable of consuming different pain medicines mostly consisting of 90 proof or higher. Plans are to replace the left knee next winter. He intends to heal enough to attend Geneva. Just try to stop him.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? – I take you to Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, across the mouth of the Cooper River from Charleston. Here we find Geneva Charter Member Jim Nogawick. Mt. Pleasant has been home for the last 21 years. Married to Sue for some 40 years, Nogs may swear he celebrated only 10 years of marriage since his anniversary is February 29. He still drinks his beer, Yuengling these days. Because of his

monstrous size, those 8 oz. mugs of beer Planks served looked like a jigger full when he brought them to his lips. Golf continues to be part of his lifestyle and he plays to an 18 to 20 handicap. Jim took a job at Publix Grocery Store because he tired of playing golf 5 days a week. A surprising piece of information I learned is that he sings in two choirs, one at Church and the other as a voice in a traveling group. He informed me he sang Barbershop for 27 years when he lived near Circleville. Noggy and I were close friends, but Little Jerry Graves took to him like Danny Devito to Arnold Schwarzenegger in Twins. Nogs was a Geneva original and came regularly until he moved away in 2004. Mr. Nogawick has a super personality and a great sense of humor. When I called him, he said, "I'll tell you anything you want to know except my address. I don't want all you guys coming down here to visit. You guys drink too much." Where would he get that idea? The last time Mike Sachs visited, Doc drank all his Yuengling. On the golf course, Nogs is never out of play. One time in Geneva, his ball landed in the shelter house behind 12 tee alongside 15 fairway. It did not phase Jim. "I got a shot," he declared. After banging around the shelter house walls sounding like a Phil Collins solo drum rift, his golf ball reappeared and so did Jim sporting a smile. He says he will return to Geneva someday and it just may be this year. He laughed and repeated, "You guys drink too much." It has been over 15 years since Noggy's last trip to Geneva. I raise my whiskey glass in hopes he does come back. Those of us who know Nogs miss him. Those who never met him will be highly treated.

SPRING SOON? – A few days after Thanksgiving, Geneva was dumped nearly 5 feet of snow. That is feet, not inches. If you need a measuring stick, the snow packed high enough to reach the top of Mini-Legend Jerry Graves' head even if he stood on his toes. To this day, I am not sure they have seen grass since. Spring could not come soon enough for all of us, especially the greenskeeper at the Geneva-on-the-Lake Municipal Golf Course. Draped in white now but I picture lush green fairways intersected with troublesome, trickling streams, and several reflecting ponds gobbling golf balls, and dots of pure white Lake Erie sand glistening like large uncut diamonds when we descend in July. Trust me. Any shape Geneva is in on July 25 (the first day of the Geneva Open) will be better than today. A few tidbits about this year's Geneva, the team of Kerry Joyce-Keith Boggess-Michael Badea-Tom Black will defend their

Best Ball Crown. The teams chasing the champs will be drafted by an assortment of "B" and "C" players. As always, that draft will take place at the Commissioner's Dinner. Gavin Cup teams will be drawn on Thursday night at Lumpy's hideaway in front of a drunken, rowdy crowd. Michael Badea and Jerry Graves names will not be in the hat. They are teammates already because of their winning play last year. I know I babble a lot and maybe more in winter months. I should end this edition of the Geneva webpage but not before I pass along a word of advice from Dave Barry, a Miami Herald humorist and columnist. "Never under any circumstances take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night."