

CHIP SHOTS

COMING ALIVE FOR 25

SEEDS SOWN – Last year's memories are stored deep in the depths of our recollected space of the brain. The chore of creating new memories has begun. Here is what we know so far about the 2025 Geneva Open. The event will take place on July 25th, 26th, and 27th. Saturday and Sunday rounds are secure on the Geneva course. The venue for the first day and the practice round has yet to be locked down. Scheduled to defend their BEST BALL crown is the team of Kerry Joyce-Keth Boggess-Michael Badea-Tom Black. On the Gavin Cup trophy Michael Badea and Jerry Graves are the new inscriptions and the field will chase them. As mentioned earlier, many of the Committees are in session and that includes the Handicap Committee who is looking hard into Mini-Legend Jerry Graves catching 22 strokes especially after shooting an 83 on the Hemlock track. Showing heroic courage, Our Little Buddy continued his hot play at Geneva after scorching himself with 2nd degree burns to the back of his legs. Fishy? A handicap adjustment may be in order if the Committee deems it necessary. And who is Michael Badea? Besides winning the BEST BALL and Gavin Cup Tournaments, Michael's Scramble team earned a Skin with a birdie on No.9. Last year was not his first Geneva Open. He participated in the 2020 event. He was not as financially successful that year. Michael will no longer fly under the radar. Consider him a marked man. Having won those two competitions, he is only available as a Scramble partner this year. Michael Badea is the son-in-law of Don Rutherford. Early indications point to Michael's brother, Andrew, working out details to join the Geneva party in 2025. Be forewarned, he is a good golfer also.

DAY AFTER LUNCH – There was a nice gathering at the Gahanna Grill on Dec. 26. The table of fifteen looked like a mob meeting. Weapons were checked in at the door. Picture these gangsters, Legends Vince Gatto, Fritz Ford, and Frank Alexander conducting conversations with Don Jander, Dick Plageman, Pat Dorn, Don Rutherford, Jay Green, Ray Ballard, Mike Sachs, John Skunza, Mike Weilbacher, Mark Schmitt, as well as Ray Lake and Bob Ross. Our server, Celeste, provided great service keeping all

hydrated and was spot on with every order. I want to give a tip of the cap to Dick Plageman who had a tee time for Dec. 28. He bragged the round would be his 114th in 2024. Old-time math, the kind taught by Sr. Gavin, figures he played one round nearly every three days or so. Would you call him a junky? Junk or not, I appreciate Dick. When he is in my company, I am not the oldest. A humorous moment during the luncheon was a brainstorm of Jay at the expense of Legend Vince Gatto who earned a reputation of coming to Geneva short on supplies. Over 40 years of Geneva play, I cannot remember drinking any of his liquor or a beer out of his cooler. It has long been assumed these necessities are not on Vince's packing list. Jay must have caught wind of his negligence but in a different way. Mr. Green brought Vince a shopping bag full of toiletries. The bag included deodorant, body wash, dental floss, shampoo (really?), and polish for his head. Nice but early odds (25-1) say Vince still packs no liquor or beer.

WINTER GOLF – Not all of us are privy to 114 rounds of golf in a year. Not all of us want to play 114 rounds especially with Ohio's winter weather. Geneva founder, Adrian Skunza, sent me the following text.

"...and Shawn was yelling, 'tis a four-iron knockdown if I had my say, Laddie. I turned my back to the Lake Effect and selected the four iron.

"Peering through the slanted shafts of rain, I could see the flag stiff to the wind, and only the numbness of my hands betrayed the feeling that I surely needed for the shot.

"I swung and felt the wrenching of the shoulders...the ball climbing on a low trajectory, staying beneath the elements that were seeking to destroy it. With one bounce onto the green, the ball disappeared...and Shawn was jumping up and down yelling, 'the ball drained the cup Laddie'.

"I was overcome with an indescribable emotion that drained my very thoughts. And then I awoke and got ready for a day at the office".

The author to this essay entitled "Dreams" is unknown. My guess he is a man with a good golf game. My dreams are nightmares with plenty of shanks, duffs, and lost balls.

PROBABLE CHANGE – Every year, Geneva introduces innovated changes. As a 73-year-old Commissioner, I am set in my ways, like

standing in wet cement. The Geneva Open might be like playing golf in the 1960's using balata golf balls, woods instead of metal clubs, and wooden shafts if nobody poked me to change. It is tough to teach an old dog new tricks and the older we get, the tougher it becomes. That is why Blaise Plageman is my teammate in moving Geneva ahead. This year's project is to use technology to speed the scoring process. "What is wrong with a pencil and scorecard?" you ask. Nothing, except it takes time to enter the data into the computer to calculate the results. That duty has been managed by Ben Lloyd and Blaise. The time crunching numbers into the Geneva software takes fun time away from Ben and Blaise. We gather in Geneva to have fun. I am working with Blaise and Don Jander (the organizer of the Kentucky trip as well as Commissioner of the Plank's League and Sunday Tour) to bring modern technology to Geneva. Blaise found an app we download into our phones. Punch in the scores after each hole and most of the work is done. We visualize instant updates informing where we stand team wise and skins wise. Imagine knowing your team's position in the Scramble with three holes to play. Wow! We plan to test the technology on the Kentucky trip. Look, I will be honest. Changes occur too fast for me to keep up. Most of the time I must be forced to change, like needing to download tickets on my phone instead of getting paper or paying bills online instead of writing checks. Grandkids want to know what checks are. Blaise has given me a Yellow Brick Road to follow. I am often reminded of the quote from Alice in Wonderland, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there."