

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-Keith 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."

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."

CHIP SHOTS

ST DENIS BOOKED

NEW VENUE – Friday’s round will begin at noon on St. Denis Golf Course in Chardon, Ohio. This is a new course on the Geneva rotation. Opened in 1968, the layout is “Geneva Worthy”. Nestled in the hills east of Cleveland, the rolling terrain makes for scenic views and plenty unbalanced stances. The course is fair but finds ways to humble those who challenge. Every time I play St. Denis, I stumble frustratingly off the 18th green astonished of my high scores yet determined to return and play better. The results are always the same. Wise men will pray not to partner with me in the Gavin Cup competition. The traditional fogies will lead us and hit the ceremonial first tee shots. Unlike Jack and Gary at the Masters, these dudes will come to play. Like Jack and Gary, these dudes are old. Do not let that fool you. Mini-Legend Jerry Graves was the Gavin Cup winner last year. St. Denis, here we come.

SAD NEWS – I settled in my chair with coffee and muffin in hand on Sunday, March 23 when I was blindsided by a text stating Wally Maley died earlier that morning. Shot my day to hell. Wally was a revered brother of the Geneva fraternity. He journeyed to Geneva yearly from 1990 until 2012 when his kidneys acted up and dialysis treatment prevented him from returning. An eventual transplant was believed to correct his problems. Instead, his quality of life worsened. I questioned Huck Plageman (another Geneva brother and close friend of Wally’s) on cause of death thinking his body rejected the new kidney. I was wrong. According to Huck, “Actually his kidney was fine. He was fighting numerous stays in the hospital for staph infections. Nothing they could attribute it to. He had poor circulation in his legs and feet which caused sores that wouldn’t heal, and he fought chronic back pain. In the end, it took a toll on his heart which caused him to basically be living out of his recliner and bed. His heart finally failed him”. Wally was a cool guy, soft-spoken and a pleasure to be around. He was a sports enthusiast. Besides playing golf, he enjoyed watching football,

baseball, and hockey. His name appears on the Gavin Cup Trophy four times winning in 2003 with Denny Brake, 2006 with Joe Casa, 2009 with Jim Nogawick, and 2012 as Dick Plageman's partner. His play in 2012 was his last in Geneva. Huck said "...I know he loved Geneva and being with all the other golfers. He certainly had a rough last couple of years and his suffering is over". Rest in Peace Wally.

DREAMS COME TRUE – Every year as the doldrums of an Ohio winter digs deep into our being, we are teased by the beauty of the oceanside sights from Pebble Beach Golf Club. Do not tell me you have not had thoughts of playing this historic course at different times in your life. Granted, it is no Geneva but...I'm just saying. Well, here is a story of three Geneva brothers who made that dream come true. Legend Gary Glanzman, Mini-Legends Jerry Graves and Jack Berger packed their clubs and journeyed on their crusade in 2004. Jerry revealed he had \$25 a week from his pay direct deposited in a separate account to financially support his trip. The fourth member of the group was a dude named Clyde Strait. Though he never played in Geneva, he is a significant character in this event. Before we get to the golf, I want to point out that Clyde was invited because Legend Vince Gatto had family problems that made it necessary to scratch. Clyde had many phobias. The loud sleep apnea mask Clyde wore to bed kept Jerry from getting any sleep. So, Jerry turned on the TV but the sound kept Clyde awake and he insisted Jerry keep the volume low. Very unnerving for our Little Buddy who spent down time missing Vince. They were Felix and Oscar in real life. The night before they teed at Pebble Beach, Clyde unplugged Jerry's camera and killed the battery leaving them with no pictures. Mr. Strait was very lucky Jerry did not take a five iron to his head ala Elin did Tiger. The golf day started heavenly, sunny, warm, and no wind. Gary had birdie putts on the opening six holes, but did not make any. His reputation as a good putter took a major hit on this championship course. If that didn't stick in his craw, Our Short Buddy staked his iron on No.5, the 134 yards par 3 and made his 5 foot, breaking, downhill birdie putt. That guy is sneakily tough as you will see later. The weather began to sour and so did Gary's game. By the time they reached the 18th tee, it was Pebble Beach conditions, cloudy, windy (40 mph gusts according to Jerry

but we all know he is known to exaggerate) and spitting rain. The match, Gary and Jerry vs. Jack and Clyde, had four presses riding on this hole. Gary had nothing. His game took a dump. The pressure was on Jerry to win the match. The same held true for the other team. From the tee, Jack's goal was to stay clear of the ocean on the left. Success. He hit his ball so far right to the horror of the foursome and their forecaddie and they watched his Titleist bounce off a \$10 million dollar home. Good thing it was not Clint Eastwood's house. "Do you feel lucky?" Caddie Dave Brown instructed Clyde to use more club out of the 18th fairway bunker, but Clyde knew better. His shot ended short, leaving Jerry in the driver's seat. As time passes, memories are often skewed but Gary, Jerry, and Jack all vividly remember this scene. Jerry stood over his ball with every intention to make the putt. Just before he pulled the trigger, Gary blurted, "You can two putt and we win." The insulting insinuation to lag a short putt on the most famous hole in golf was told by all three with a hearty laugh. For years, Jerry tried to convince his friends that putt was for a par 5. "Don't let him shit you," Jack said. "I saved the scorecard. Jerry had a 7 and we all took 8's." There is a saying, "Do not confuse Irish blarney with the truth." Pebble Beach has hosted 7 men's major championships. The list of characters who stomped her fairways (Bing Crosby, Clint Eastwood, Bill Murray, Bob Hope, Phil Harris, etc.) also includes Legend Gary Glanzman, Mini-Legend Jerry Graves, and Mini-Legend Jack Berger.

NO GRAVES MAGIC IN 2025 – Remember last year? In his story book life, Jerry created another magical moment. After jumping into a blazing fire like a crazed leprechaun or maybe stumbling into the fire pit like a drunken Irishman, he scalded both legs with 2nd degree burns. Our Little Buddy scorched his way around Geneva for the final two rounds and teamed with Michael Badia to win the Gavin Cup, a trick that would impress David Copperfield. There will be no pot of gold or trophy this year for Jerry. Our Short Buddy's luck is on sabbatical. Back in January, after one of Ohio's ice storms, Jerry slipped and plopped hard on the frozen blacktop. This act caused damage that is unfixable by Geneva. His fall landed Mr. Graves on his shoulder. He tore two muscles which required surgery and saw bones told him no way will he be repaired enough for golf by July. As

tall as Jerry stands, you would not think his descent could gather enough force to cause such extensive harm. Unable to defend his title, Jerry's absence will send Michael back to the Gavin Cup pool and he will be drawn another partner. The good thing is Jerry did not land on his head, and he plans to still grace us at Geneva. He intends to buy a couple extra bottles of booze to keep him company while we play golf. Security started building a three-foot fence around the fire pit to keep Jerry safe. Both fire and ice prove to be the Little Guy's most recent nemesis.

GENEVA BOUND – The harsh Winter is turning to Spring. The preparations to reunite at St. Denis on July 25 have begun. If there are any rookies planning to join us this year, please let me know. Thus far, I have not heard of any newcomers. Gathering names of "ins" and "outs" is under way. 13 tee times, 52 spots at St. Denis have been secured. As practiced in the past couple of years, we will log tee times for Friday and Saturday rounds. If you have a game for Saturday, please inform me and I will accommodate your wishes. This will be the 49th Geneva. Still a fantastic time. For three days we feel like lions prowling their carnivalistic jungle. It is a fact, however, a lion will not cheat on his wife, but a Tiger Wood.

CHIP SHOTS

ALL ABOARD

COMMITMENT TIME – May is the start of the growing season. Trees spring new leaves making every golfer swear the theory that trees are 90% air is balderdash. Daylight blesses us with extended hours. The ball of fire in the sky reappears and resumes its stint of warming our bodies and our hearts. Besides the heavenly changes, May is also the month Geneva registrations kick into high gear. The Pairings, Handicap, and Merchandise Committees try to get a handle on who is playing and who is sitting. They start with the assumption that everyone who participated last year will return. At this time, we are aware of one rookie joining us and he is Bill Juengar, a Blaise Plageman recruit from the Sunday Tour. If more plan to attend, please contact me. If you played in years past but not last year and intend to play this year, contact me. If you played last year but will not play this year, contact me. These two months before Geneva will rush by rather quickly and your fast response is appreciated. The recent practice of setting Saturday tee times will continue. If you have a foursome for Saturday's golf, contact me. If you do not have a game, the Pairings Committee will slot you into a group. Depending on the final numbers, foursomes will be formed. Every Geneva has headaches because of unfortunate circumstances like humping an inflatable rooster then falling to crack ribs on Geneva Eve creating a late, and I mean late scratch. So, it is a blessing to be organized and eliminate as many last-minute headaches as possible. Contact me.

St. Denis – I stopped into the clubhouse of St. Denis Golf Course just after Easter and introduced myself to Darrell. "Oh yes, the Geneva group," he smiled remembering that is the entry for our tee times on July 25. My appearance appeared to create mutual respect and appreciation. I have been fooled before, but I know I am genuine and the Geneva outing is what I say. He checked his log and informed me that currently, space is available for Thursday's practice round at noon. Those who plan to play need contact

Shawn Dorn who will secure the times once he has a figure. From the clubhouse, the course looked plush. The bright sunshine splashed on the Kelly-green fairways and gave the grounds a sparkling emerald look. The hope is it remains as colorful and luscious in July. Let's face it, some courses do not extend the effort to maintain country club conditions. Geneva plays differently in May compared to July depending more on Mother Nature than Pinehurst. I snatched a score card from St. Denis and immediately came to the realization adjustments may need to be made. There is a 900 yards difference between the up tees and the regular tees. Slope ratings are 107 and 126. The Gary Glanzman's, Pat Dorn's, Dick Plageman's, and Ron Szymczak's of the world, have a huge advantage from the up tees. How do we fix it? My first thought was everyone plays the white tees on the par 3's. That pushes the total yards 160 yards further for the seniors. Is that enough? I do not think so. I have a second option which is more complicated but truer to the fairness of the game. Distance from the white tees is 6,000 yards. Distance from the blue tees is 6,275 yards. I suggest seniors play the white tees and the younger dudes play the blues...with a twist. The old men hit from the gold tees on the four par 3's. All others play the par 3's from the whites. This changes the yardage discrepancy by 435 yards, much better to balance the competition. Maybe I have too much time on my hands or maybe I am testing my mind to see if I am still sharp. Memory loss is a sad and scary disease as we have noticed over this winter with a couple of Geneva's brothers. I hope to play St. Denis before the outing to test this idea. I will also gain input from those who play the practice round and hear if they believe my adjustments bring a fairer competition. It is never perfect, and I expect the usual bitches will chirp their complaint. I know who they are, and I know what to expect.

APP NIXED – For the past year and a half, I harped about introducing a scoring app to the Geneva theatre. The purpose was to relieve Ben Lloyd and Blaise Plageman from needing to stay after their round and collect score cards and enter hole by hole accounts into a computer to figure Skins and Gavin Cup results. This was valuable drinking time they sacrificed. The search led to a scoring app that looked very promising. I discussed applying this feature with the Commissioners of the Plank's League (Don

Jander), Sunday Tour (Don Jander), and the Kentucky Trip (Don Jander). We hashed out the logistics of applying this feature. The gummies kicked in and we realized the technology to operate this function was way above our brain levels and suited more for the Mensa Society. There is much more to this application than just posting your score on your phone. Setting it up to perform the duties desired for the Plank's League, Sunday Tour, Kentucky Trip, and Geneva is like programming a personal robot to serve all our needs. The conclusion was to operate the same as in the past. Before Blaise gets his panties in a wedgy, Don Jander and Ron Szymczak volunteered to take the task of entering the scores. Once they receive Ben's program to perform the necessary functions, they may find a way to tweak enough to make results more instantaneous. Don and Ron like that kind of stuff leaving Blaise and Ben to get back doing what they do best.

HIKE IN PRICES – Twenty-five years ago Joe Casa said, "Geneva-on-the-Lake is the village time passed by." The resort town was not resorting much. An order of langostinos as an appetizer, a 16 oz. N.Y. Strip Steak with potatoes and salad, washed down with a couple Beefeater martinis, adding a tip for Irene, our waitress, at the Restaurant/Lounge (Chops) would cost under \$30. Joe Casa ordered a round of Cuervo Gold (28 shots) for the table for around \$75. Improvements by The Chamber of Commerce since then have made Geneva-on-the-Lake a vibrant and active destination spot again. Just look at how the Summertime Inn spruced up for visitors. Believe me, you should have stayed in the joint 45 years ago. With the upgrades, came an increase in prices. Even the Geneva Golf Course raised green fees, which is more in tune today with other golf courses. Food prices and other amenities increased and John Skunza clearly blames it on Trump's tariffs. Well, I banged on my calculator attempting to keep Geneva dues down and the best I computed was \$240. That total will include green fees for Saturday and Sunday, the seven different competitions on the course, the Commissioner's steak dinner, and the cost of merchandise. Gone are the days when \$175 covered the same script. That total does not include housing or golf at St. Denis (\$50). Hey! I am trying to keep costs down. I am a disciple of Jack Benny and adhere to his

philosophies. One of his beliefs was “A rich man is one who isn’t afraid to ask the salesperson to show him something cheaper.”

CHIP SHOTS

SCORING APP BACK IN PLAY

PHONE SERVICE – For over two years, Blaise and I advocated initializing a scoring system to relieve several time-consuming man hours and duties. Last month, I nixed the idea. Locating a service I could understand and able to enact was like entering another galaxy. I may grow my hair to look like Albert Einstein but I am more on the intelligent level of Archie Bunker. I felt I was traveling the universe reaching for a star but was falling like an uncontrollable meteorite. Just in time, Tom Ritter directed us to a simpler satellite that even dummies like me should be able to operate. The name of the app is Squabbit. Many of you have seen the invitation to join on your phone. Quick studies and the Geneva IT Department think it will work. Tests are being conducted both on the Sunday Tour in Columbus and virtually in our simulated test laboratory in a hidden room in the corner of Ron Szymczak's house. Confident that the few chinks will be worked out by Geneva, I have given this operation a stamp of approval. Blaise is so happy, he began planning his solar trip to outer space immediately. My question; Is there enough White Claws in the store for his Space Odessey? All this proves to me is in the effort to make life easier, life has become so complicated, and Geneva imitates life.

HOW IT WORKS – I will try to explain in simple terms so even I can understand. Before the round at St. Denis, we will be sent a code to enter the app on our phone. Once the Squabbit app is accessed, then a list of the field should be visible. Only one golfer from each group needs to be entered. That individual will have the duty of recording the scores on his phone. Those entrees will be posted by Squabbit. This alleviates the necessity for Blaise to remain relatively sober in collecting score cards and enter scores hole by hole. Squabbit will do the work for him. A new code will be sent before Saturday and Sunday rounds. Simple. Do we think we could handle it? The tedious work should be handled by Squabbit. There still may be some human input but the Geneva IT Department will take care

of it. The time saved on calculating Skins is at least a 12 pack of White Claws for Blaise. Still to be determined is how much Squabbit can handle. With so many competitions occurring at one time, not all games may be covered. The Scramble, Skill Shots, and Best Ball can easily be computed the old fashion way, lead to scorecards. Skins and Gavin Cup are the concentrated matches for Squabbit. It will still be mandatory to keep scores on scorecards so any mistakes can be corrected. Since so many of the Sunday Tour play at Geneva, I feel confident they will help the first-time users.

CHANGE IN FRIDAY'S SKINS – Are you tired of the same dudes winning Skins on Friday? Each year, I seem to hand money to the same guys. Don't get me wrong. These are fine individuals whose golf game deserves a Skin or two at times. But I would like to pass cash to others, the Jacob Davis, Bob Rutherford, or Ray Ballard's of the Geneva field. Hell, I would like to win a Friday Skin myself. The Friday Skin game has always been a scratch event and highly unfair to the higher handicapped players. I hesitated to make the change before because handicapping the Skins would demand more of Ben Lloyd and Blaise Plageman's time in cyphering winners. I worried the extra time, and mental strain would drive Blaise from White Claws to Buffalo Trace and who knows if their calculations would be correct. Along came Squabbit. For the first time in Geneva history, we will handicap the Skins game. Every player will get half their normal handicap for the competition. Squabbit is being programmed to handle the assignment. Why half? This prevents anyone from getting two shots a hole. It is an effort to give all a fair chance to win. The Saturday Skins game will remain the same as always. "A" and "B" players will play in one flight while "C" and "D" golfers have their own Skins match. They remain scratch events. That is the way it will be. No bitching.

ALMOST TIME – Last minute preparations is under way. The Competition Committee has decided to move a couple Skill Shots to different holes. All par 3's will play "Closest to the Pin." No.9 will remain "Longest Made 1st Putt." The remaining two Skill Shots have changed locations. We decided to return "The Longest Drive" back to the 12th hole. The difference in yardage between the gold tees and the white tee box

should be enough to give more players a chance. Remember, to win, the ball must stay in the fairway. For the first time ever, "The Closest to the Pin on the 2nd Shot" will take place on No. 5. For years we played this competition on No. 10, but some long ball hitters nearly hit the green with their drives. That is a huge advantage for the gorilla hitters. By moving this to hole 5, everyone must play short of the pond with their tee ball, leaving the approach shot a more equal distance to the pin for all. The final count is between 44 and 48 players in this year's field. The push is on to finalize commitments this week and turn our attention to creating foursomes. The Competition Committee is doing their best to level the playing field. Winning is a goal of everyone. Other factors also make Geneva great. Though this edition of the Geneva webpage is all about the golf, many have other ambitions. In am better at other ambitions. I close with this advice from Bill Parcels who said, "If you have fun, fine. It's not all life and death."

CHIP SHOTS

SPELL JULY G-E-N-E-V-A

WAIT IS OVER – Spit shine the clubs, wash your balls, fill the coolers and pack your vehicle. Geneva is a few weeks away and before long, we will be counting the days. I thought Geneva would never get here. The winter was brutally cold and lasted long after Easter Sunday. Spring was extremely wet. I shuffled my walk from the 18th green to the 19th hole in Fred Sanford form after multiple rounds of cart path only. Pagnanelli's pedometer nearly rebooted on its own one day on the Kentucky golf trip. Lately, hell doomed us to a display of her climate with temps closing on 100 degrees and humidity well above. We overcome Mother Nature's chutzpah's every year and we will do so once more. Two years ago, rain washed out Saturday's round. We passed out umbrellas for gifts that season. Good news! Umbrellas are not gifts this year. Geneva was played amid drought conditions in 2024. We should not have to worry about that either. No matter what the weather gods bestow on us, we overcome. WE rally behind the famous motivational speech of John "Bluto" Blutarsky in Animal House when he said, "Nothing is over until we say it is. Was it over when the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor?" This year's weather could have Geneva in Augusta National condition by the time we converge. Despite the roller coaster climate ride, the different Committees have diligently prepared for our weekend. Some volunteered services not expected. I caught word that Don Rutherford spent many hours refurbishing and mending the cracks on the 25-year-old Gavin Cup. Sister Gavin would be proud. His next project is to fix the crack in the Liberty Bell.

SQUABBIT READY – The hardest working man the past six months has been Ron Szymczak, head of our IT Department. His tireless efforts demanded many manhours developing a Geneva program for the Squabbit app that will pay dividends calculating a quicker and more precise scoring procedure. Teaming with Don Jander, the Sunday Tour Commissioner, Ron tested the efficiency of Squabbit, and it works. The Sunday Tour deals with

skins and a net medal tournament. Geneva requires more. The Skins games, Gavin Cup, Best Ball, and Scramble must all be programmed with the appropriate handicaps. Ron is on it. He has taken the bull by the horns. I have an inclination that if Ron was a matador, the bull would have no chance, and we would be eating bull steaks at the Commissioner's Dinner. Look how he demolished that inflatable rooster last year. Many tests inside his scientific laboratory have given him the confidence of Squabbit's success. All it will take to enact Ron's program is a cell phone. One player from each foursome needs to enter the scores on each hole. Wah-La! Squabbit calculates the results. Can it get any easier? The instructions on how to access Squabbit will be forthcoming.

PRACTICE ROUND – As customary, there will be an organized practice round of golf as well as an unorganized practice day for alcoholic consumption. Many can handle four days of golf, not me. Others have trouble consuming spirits for three straight days. Szymczak did not make it past the first night last year. This paragraph is about the practice round of golf. Shawn Dorn booked six tee times at St. Denis starting at noon on Thursday, July 24. A few spaces are available if interested. They play a pot game (not to be misconstrued with the Doobie Brother's pot game) and skins. Feedback from this round is always important in setting the groundwork for Geneva's first day. The difference in yardage and slope between the up tees and middle tees makes course set up more challenging. I intend to scout the track soon and will make an executive decision on which tee markers we will play. The input from my own experience and the thoughts from the practice round will finalize how we attack St. Denis. Together, we will get it right. If you would like to join Shawn's group of merry hackers at St. Denis, Shawn is your contact. He is in charge.

LET'S PLAY – Here we go! The final preparations are being ironed out as Geneva days draw closer. Here are a few reminders to keep you posted on what to expect. The cost for all events is \$240. Only cash is accepted. Friday's green fees are the responsibility of each individual. Saturday and Sunday plus all Geneva amenities will be covered by the \$240. Kerry Joyce, Keith Boggess, Michael Badea, and Tom Black return to

defend their BEST BALL CHAMPIONSHIP. The draft at the Commissioner's Dinner to draw teams to challenge their crown will be conducted from a pool of "B" and "C" pickers. Unfortunately, Mini-Legend Jerry Graves will be unable to join partner Michael Badea in defending their Gavin Cup title. The shoulder has yet to mend enough to swing a club. How disappointing for the Little Guy's wife, Betsy, who will have a void atop her living room mantel where this lovely piece of hardware stood proud proclaiming her husband's excellence on the Geneva turf for three days last July. A new partner will be drawn for Michael on Thursday night when the Gavin Cup teams are constructed at Lumpy's Hide-A-Way next to the Summertime Inn. All are welcome to participate. Blaise Plageman runs this operation. New this year, Friday's Skins will be a handicapped event with each golfer catching half his total shots to allow more players a chance to pocket a Skin. Half handicaps prevent any player from catching two strokes on any hole. Much planning and consultations have occurred in the past six months to move Geneva smoothly along. No doubt pitfalls will pop up. They do every year. But we overcome. One lesson I learned during my tenure as Geneva Commissioner is that man makes his plans, but God determines the steps and most often, they follow different paths.

GENEVA FOLLIES

Throughout the years, Geneva generated many humorous moments. Good Geneva stories often bring laughter every time they are told even if repeated over and over. I thought refreshing our minds to some comical doings would be lots of fun. Many may learn of the past and of the individuals who brought about these historical events for the first time. The intention of this article is to warm Geneva hearts and bring a Geneva smile on your face.

“Where would you begin?” Mini-Legend Jerry Graves asked when told of my plans. Let’s start from the beginning, the very first day. The initial round was played on Deer Lake Golf Course near the State camping grounds and not on the fame Geneva-on-the-Lake spread. It was the only round ever played on that track. Deer Lake rented three-wheeled, one-man carts. Outlining the seven of us roam from rough to rough on each hole, looked like a telestrator after John Madden drew up a Peyton Manning pass play. Picture Jim Nogawick, 6’5” tall and weighing 250 pounds, sitting in one of the carts only fitting if his knees touched his chin. It was a sight a half of century later still hard to forget. That was an adult Dodge ‘Em ride. We graduated from three-wheeled golf carts to Go-Karts. There was a track on the Strip close to Yankees Bar and Grill. The competitive juices from golf carried over to the racetrack. The gauntlet was thrown. The race was on. Determined to win and with Mario Andretti skills, Little Jerry Graves made a practice on every turn to run his competitors off the pavement and into the rubber tires surrounding the track, put into place to protect the innocent bystanders on the sidewalk. We were banned from ever partaking again. We caused quite a stir that the following year was a no-go. Alcohol may have played a role.

From three-wheeled carts to Go-Karts to the Godiva Walk. Several years in a row, one could look between the trees towards No.15 fairway and catch a frightening glimpse. If you did not know any better, one might think it was Sasquatch strolling along. This creature was covered in hair except the dome of his head and exhibited a package between his legs

swinging from side to side damn-near down to his knees. Not a stitch of clothing on his body. It was Legend Vince Gatto proudly entertaining the Geneva field. The Godiva Walk turned into full gallop one year. On a hot day as Vince was finishing his round stomping down the 18th fairway, a maniac came from the trees sounding like a Sioux Indian in battle, in hot pursuit of the Legend. It was an obvious case of mistaken identity. Vince had covered his head with a wet towel to stay cool. He was wearing clothes, shorts and T-shirt. Still, plenty of skin exposed and tanned a dark caramel color that one would expect from a Sicilian decent. The nut from the Village mistook Vince for an African American and took upon himself to rid Geneva of unwanted visitors. Vince was in better shape then and outran the Village idiot to safety.

Others have humored us besides Legend Vince Gatto. There was Mike Akers who drove his golf cart, clubs and all, a half mile down the Strip to purchase cigarettes between nines. This was long before the Village allowed the rented carts we see roaming through today's Geneva. Mike was a trend setter. Another person using a golf cart to his advantage was Mel Voll. It is not a stretch to conclude Mel was not a gifted golfer. It is not a stretch to infer Mel has been a unique personality, full of humor and spirit that fit like a puzzle piece into the Geneva fraternity. Many nights found Mel standing on Pera's veranda telling parables with a much different message than preached 2,000 years earlier. Mel was a soothsayer of a different breed. Knowing his game was of no help to his teammates, except possibly on the green, he came to a Scramble with no bag, no clubs, only his putter on the cart.

Golf carts and Go-Karts were too puny for Steve Hoffman. He reached for much bigger notoriety. His memorial feat came in a car. Not any car, but one which the word POLICE was written on the side. After thoroughly enjoying himself on Geneva's Strip, Steve needed a ride back to Pera's. The Geneva-on-the-Lake Police Department was more than happy to oblige. Unfortunately for the officer, his cruiser was rewarded with recycled beer and steak. Trying to get Mr. Hoffman to clean his mess was hopeless. Giving up on this idea, the policeman drove Steve to his room. Lesson learned? Sort of. The next year instead of exploring the Strip, Steve

stayed close to Pera's and drank in the establishment across the street. Around closing time, Mini-Legend Jerry Graves stopped for a nightcap and found Mr. Hoffman, head on the bar, sound asleep. At the bartender's request, Jerry was to get Steve out of the place so as to close. Steve woke for a matter of seconds, long enough to put his feet on the floor then down fell the rest of him back asleep only this time sprawled on the barroom floor. Those were the only two years Steve Hoffman blessed us with his company. Geneva was too much for him.

There were many others who overindulged and did silly and stupid things. Scott Riffle comes to mind. If you ever watched the Andy Griffith Show, Scott is the spittin' image of Ernest T. Bass. Their physique and mannerisms were much the same. Scott liked his beer. By the time he staggered to the first tee, he was two sheets to the wind. He rode to Geneva with the Boggess brothers who picked him up somewhere around Chillicothe or Circleville. Plenty of time to consume a 12 pack by noon. He drank through 18 holes of golf and well into the night often until closing time. This was a yearly routine. One night he forgot his room number. He tested every door until he found one unlocked. He climbed into bed with an unsuspecting couple. They were a good sport about his confusion. He was lucky. Many Geneva-on-the-Lake visitors are from Pigspuke, Pennsylvania and my experiences found Pigspukians very unfriendly.

One Geneva Saturday night, Scott was so drunk, he was kicked out of the Swiss Chalet three times. He would wander after his exile and find another door to the establishment. I do not think he knew he was reentering the Swiss Chalet. Dean Martin once said, "You are not drunk if you can lay on the floor without holding on." Scott lived this philosophy. There was another character who experienced the same fate. Billy Baum pushed the envelope with his costume. Over his khakis, Billy donned a pair of naked buns. They looked real. It is a good thing the plastic tush could not fart because Billy was the kind of guy who would think it appropriate to stink us out. He thought himself to be funny. Some of the local female clientele did not. Like Scott, he was shown the door three times.

Far be it from me to criticize anyone who could not handle their liquor. My story is repeated every year. You know, the one when I was so intoxicated that I could not stand up and fell like a lead balloon on top of one of Pera's antique tables and broke it. It is still hard to believe how one man can do so much damage just trying to walk to the bed. The room looked war torn. I was told when I pissed, I missed the toilet and washed the corner of the bathroom wall. I do not know. I do not remember. If it was not for the efforts of the late Ralph DiCarolis, I may have hurt myself that night.

Not all Geneva's humorous moments were caused by alcohol consumption although this next incident took place at Yankees Bar and Grill. Girls Gone Wild were performing. Looking to the stage, a perfectly sober Jim Centorbi joined the gals and performed as if he was part of the show. The dancers appeared amused by his antics. I am not sure the reason, but I surmise they saw this old man, harmless, having the time of his life. Jim was thrilled.

Let's take this piece to the course. Remember golf? That is why we convene in Geneva every year. To think this nearly did not make it into the new century. It was the Scramble Tournament. Maybe four other foursomes were on the course besides our 32 guys, and they were in front of us. Lo and behold, two Scramble teams joined together creating an eightsome. Not a course in the world allows eightsomes. When Geneva club pro, Chuck Webb, confronted our outing, Legend Vince Gatto came to our defense. It was a weak defense but none the nonetheless he pleaded our case. Mistake! Chuck held all the cards. The longer Vince stated our reasons, the hotter Chuck became. "There's nobody on this course but us," Vince argued. We were wrong and Counselman Gatto knew we were wrong. Yet he defended our actions. Matlock would be proud of him. After overnight consultations, we convinced Vince to apologize the following morning and Chuck accepted and Geneva lives on.

Thank God amends were made. This gave Vince the opportunity to show off his driving skills. He teed his ball atop a Michelob bottle. His wooden driver securely in his hand, he wacked at the ball. All he hit was

bottle. Shattered glass sprinkled across the tee box looking like hail in the July sun. What was not on the grass was embedded in the head of his driver. Weeks passed before all the fragments were disbursed. Vince's mangled trick came minutes after Bob Luzader performed his magic. Buck put one ball on top of another which is a trick in itself. He was not done, however. Grabbing a sand iron from his bag, he addressed the balls. As if blasting from a green side bunker, he hit perfectly under the bottom ball popping the top ball high in the air. Cool as a cucumber, Buck opened his front pocket, and the ball fell inside as planned. I have not seen a golfer perform that trick since.

Another memorable shot on Geneva's golf course was hit by Jim Nogawick. There used to be a shelter house in the trees next to 15 fairway behind 12 tee. Everyone on the 12th tee box, 13th green, 14th, 14th, 15th, 16th hole, and 17th tee heard the noise that sounded like rapid gunfire. Noggy hooked his tee ball on 15 directly into the shelter house. The ball rattled for several seconds hitting all sides numerous times and bouncing off the ceiling before coming to rest battered and beaten like grandma's old wardrobe. Nogs hit his next shot from the shelter to the fairway and, like grandma, emerged with a huge grin as if there was anything to worry about.

The inflatable rooster standing proud across the way from the Summertime Inn had plenty to worry about, especially when Ron Szymczak was in the mood. After closing Yankees Bar and Grill and shuffling his way back to the Summertime Inn, there it was, full of hot air and sporting a smile that Ron mistook for an invitation. Mr. Szymczak humped the rubber cock to a state of deflation. The debt for such misconduct was realized the next morning. Ron suffered cracked ribs, and the rooster laid airless on the ground.

These are just a few of Geneva's moments that come to mind. Many more can be told. If anyone wants to share their stories, please let me know. Sequels are prominent in our society. Enough new content will encourage a second edition of Geneva Follies. The great thing, no matter the silly and preposterous deeds we enact, we always make it back. The

journeys of Nick Boggess best exemplifies that fact. He drinks until he loses his way but manages to find his room somehow. There was the time he stumbled around 18 fairway following the stars when, like a Lighthouse on Lake Erie's shore, orange cones led him home. There was a deep hole on the Geneva grounds and the cones protected anyone from falling six feet into the dirt. Nick recognized the cones from the day's golf and in his drunk stupor, made it to his room. Many of us can relate to Nick's journey.

CHRISTMAS TIME IN GENEVA

If any of you ever wondered what the Christmas Season was like in Geneva, odds are you were spot on. Christmas in July is rambunctious on Geneva's Strip. In December, Geneva resembles a ghost town, absent the tumbleweeds. I took to the streets recently, driving to Geneva to get a bird's eye view. I stopped at the course and found it under a blanket of snow. As I looked out onto the links, I laughed as I surmised it needs green food coloring whether it is in winter or summer. The Summertime Inn was closed for the season, not a car in the parking lot. So much for "We'll keep the light on for you." Most businesses on the Strip were boarded up. A few of the saloons appeared to hold winter hours but I toured on a Monday and only the High Tide and Sportsterz were open. The Swiss Chalet, Yankies Bar, and The Cove gave indications they serve patrons during the winter months. The ovens at Mary's Kitchen and Madsen Donuts have nary a flame. Good luck ordering a pizza. The nearest shop is miles away. There will be no ball drop on Times Square in this Village come New Year's Eve. The hustle and bustle of the Holidays is nonexistent. See? Geneva during Christmas season is just as you imagined. I took several pictures during my visit and now your images are proven facts. Have a Merry Christmas!

CHIP SHOTS

A SALUTE TO ALL

THANKS APLENTY – Every year at this time, the Geneva Open expresses a hearty “Thank You” to all who participated. It is not Geneva that makes this weekend special, it is you that makes Geneva. 47 golfers and 3 on the Social Package attended. Whether on the golf course, stumbling down the sidewalk on the Strip, or hanging out on the Summertime Inn veranda, new personal memories were created. Many of those memories will be shared and rehashed often during future gatherings. Congratulations to the fantastic 50 who made the 2025 Geneva Open another success story. Still, I want to point out a few who earned extra credit. There are the normal cast of contributors who I thank every year. You know who they are. There is Don Jander who is the ringleader of promoting high alcoholic consumption. Something unusual occurs on his watch every Geneva. The extra efforts of Blaise Plageman and Shawn Dorn are instrumental in much of Geneva’s production. The hospitality of Legend Fritz Ford and Bob Rutherford, who open their cabin like a Community Hall in a Senior Living Complex is unmatched. This allows Mike Sachs, better known as Dr. Hate, to distribute his Old Fashion concoction with the pleasure of a demon. Did I mention Don Jander? Two others I have not acknowledged in past salutes, I will thank at this time. At the Commissioner’s Dinner, many come and gobble, but one man sets up the serving table and cleans afterwards, Kerry Joyce. I am great at making messes but lazy at restoring order. By the time Kerry performs his magic, there is little evidence of our feast except the full garbage cans. Of course, I would be remiss if I did not call out Don Jander. This year, he recruited an assistant, Steve Miller. A special “Thank You” needs shouted to Ron Szymczak. Besides the web master for these pages, Ron spent hours developing and testing the program for Squabbit. His work was sensational. If I had not expressed my gratitude earlier, let me take this opportunity to thank Don Jander. He did wonders for my head and liver.

GONE FISHING – The purpose of introducing Squabbit to Geneva was to free time for Ben Lloyd and Blaise Plageman, our scorekeepers the past several years. Squabbit passed the test. Blaise took advantage of his free time to pursue the pleasures of malts, hops, and rye. Anyone around Blaise that weekend can attest he spared no can from consuming its alcoholic content. As Blaise would opt to do, he found other ways to bind his time with his newfound freedom, fishing. During his Saturday round of golf, he found his foursome waiting to hit shots. I do not want to accuse the group in front of him of playing slow, but Blaise had time to fish off No.4 tee, and 5 and 6 fairways. So slow was play, Blaise snagged nearly 20 largemouth bass. Five of those hooked creatures were not as lucky as the other 15 caught. Blaise brought them to Lumpy's Hideaway where they were cleaned, grilled, and consumed. We have the word of Bill Boggess to prove this was not a fish tale. During Sunday's golf, Billy arranged to try his hand at the sport. Bill's aches and pains were too discomfoting to golf. Taking possession of Blaise' rod and reel, he parked himself by the pond. 45 minutes into his venture, he quit. "It wasn't any fun," Bill said. "Every time I cast into the water, I caught a fish." Good thing he packed up his pole early because he was the first on the scene to celebrate Ray Ballard's hole-in-one on No.9. With all this fishing success, a suggestion has been made to change the menu to surf and turf at next year's Commissioner's Dinner.

HEAVY HEART – Last August 14, Geneva lost fraternity brother, Ralph DiCarolus. He died of complications from dementia. For over 20 years, Ralph made Geneva an essential stop on his calendar. I roomed with him every year. His golf game was not special, but his personality surely was. I never saw him take a drop of hard liquor and he had a limit of three beers a night, proving one can enjoy Geneva without the assistance of overindulging. All those years and I could never grasp that philosophy. Ralph knew it. Many nights he was close by to be sure I did nothing stupid. When I did get out of sorts, like falling and breaking a table, he was there to pick me up. I talked to Ralph a week before he expired and was able to get a laugh, maybe more of a smile, when I relived that incident. I do not think he had an enemy in this world, but if he did, it was not any from the Geneva family. He loved golf, music, and football, especially Ohio State and

Cleveland Browns. That made him a great guy. Every draft, he preached that the Browns should pick all Buckeyes. Ralph had a unique knack for taking a story from the past and presenting it to others in a humorous manner. His laugh was infectious. I have known Ralph for 65 years and I have many stories stored, but I will close this paragraph by saying Geneva misses Ralph DiCarolis. May he Rest in Peace.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? – When it comes to Chuck Rotter, that is quite the appropriate question. Chuck played in Geneva regularly through the early years of this century. His last tournament was in 2015. Partnering with Matt Mazzocco, he won the Gavin Cup in 2007. Chuck earned the reputation of a great Scramble teammate. He was part of numerous winning teams. He plays to a 9 handicap. At 75 years old, that is damn good. I am envious. His tall, lean body makes the huge turn with his golf swing. He powers his drives far down the fairway embarrassing me and my 125-yard pokes. His form reminds me of Tom Weiskopf in his heyday. Then he watches me jiggle like the Pillsbury Dough Boy when I take my turn. To his credit, he holds his laughter inside. Chuck keeps his game sharp at Quail Hollow Country Club where he has been a member for years. He retired after spending 40 years selling steel and he was an excellent salesman. He used his selling skills one year to secure a Friday round for Geneva at the Quail Hollow track. Mr. Rotter calls Concord, Ohio home. Good luck finding him there. During the Spring of 2024, he traveled the coast of the Adriatic Sea through the countries of Slovakia, Croatia, among others. This past April, he and his lovely wife celebrated Holy Week in Rome after floating in gondolas on the waterways of Venice. They made their way to Genoa and admired that city's beauty and history. Back in the States, Pensacola, San Diego, New York City, and Hartford, Connecticut have recently welcomed the couple to their community. Often, throughout the year, they find themselves in golf resorts tackling some of the finest venues in the sport. Besides golf, music and dining grab much of Chuck's attention. Attending concerts is a favorite pastime of his. Many artists I do not know, and many are classic rockers and blues singers who we are familiar. Last Summer, he rocked with the Rolling Stones whom he has seen multiple times. Unfortunately, Chuck cannot sing a lick. He has trouble

holding a tune. When Chuck sings, dogs howl. The Rotter's have dined in nearly every restaurant and bar in the Cleveland area. They can tell you the good ones and the bad ones. One last tidbit about Chuck. In our college days back at Ohio University, in our spare moments between classes, the library, the pinball arcade, and lunch at the Side Bar, we watched jeopardy daily. Chuck knew 95% of the answers. I swear he could have beaten Ken Jennings. Chuck Rotter is a man about town. Do not be surprised if you happen to run into him anyplace at any time.

IN THE BOOKS – We nail the lid on Geneva 2025. All of us returned to our pressured life, be it with screaming kids, demanding bosses, or remodeling the kitchen. Hang in there until July 23, 2026, when we will be back together. If you find time on December 26, we will continue the tradition of having lunch inside the Gahanna Grill at noon. It is a fun time and gives us a chance to relax and get away from all the violence and chaos in this world. Sickening, isn't it? I learned to make the best of the current state of affairs. After all, if it weren't for pickpockets, I'd have no sex at all.

2025 BEST BALL WRAP UP

HAT'S OFF

There were no championship hats to take off. The Commissioner forgot to distribute them to the team of Mike Pagnanelli, Pat Dorn, Dagan Abdon, and Kyle Willis. The winning cash they collected added up to \$660. They deserved it. This team finished 15 under par. I am no Einstein, but I figured that calculates to \$10 per shot. Team Pags was loaded. Maybe not the same loaded as Legend Fritz Ford after Sunday's round, or Doug Zuene and Todd Moore during the Scramble, or Steve Miller, Don Jander, and Legend Frank Alexander sometime on Sunday morning. Theirs were a different kind of loaded. The bullets firing from Pag's Best Ball team were loaded with birdies and eagles, enough to earn a Champions cap and \$165 apiece.

Check these scores; Dagan Abdon – 67, Pat Dorn – 73, Mike Pagnanelli – 76, Kyle Willis – 98. Do not conclude Kyle was just a witness. His par on No. 3, catching a stroke, was the help the team needed to win. Pags, Creature, and Dagan birdied No. 1. They could only count one, but the tone was set for the rest of the day. Chalk an eagle to Dagan's round on No. 6, a par 4. The team started the backside with natural birdies on 10, 11, 12, and 13. The net scores for the foursome reads like a professional golf tournament on an easier track. Pags netted 66, Dagan scored a net 63, Creature finished net 65, and Kyle posted an 89. Pretty impressive. They needed every contribution because they only won by one shot.

Dick Plageman, Andrew Brinkmeyer, Ron Szymczak, Bob Rutherford, and Vince Gatto finished minus 14. Andrew scorched Geneva with a sizzling 68. His eagle on 18 could not bolt them into the lead. Big Dick was on fire himself. He shot his best Geneva round (71). By now, that scorecard is framed and displayed for all to idolize. The Achilles heal for the team was their par on the 13th. Very accessible from the tee for several of the long ball hitters, that hole was one of the easiest of the weekend. Still, a very impressive effort for The Big Dick team. In most cases, finishing 2nd or

beyond are long forgotten by the time we play our next golf game but Andrew's 68 and Dick's 71 may remind us of the results for years because I do not think Dickie will let us forget.

Another golfer who will not forget Sunday's round is Ray Ballard. His overall play may not be memorable, but his shot on No. 9 will be long remembered. For only the second time in 48 Geneva's, a hole-in-one was scored, and Ray struck the ball. What a sight! For a golfer, pulling his ball from the hole after an ace is as thrilling as watching the birth of your child. I reached out to Mr. Ballard and here is his excitement in his own words. "...I grabbed my trusty Stealth Driver and took a mighty swing at my ProV1, well, the ball was flying straight for a change. I hadn't been playing so well until then and headed right at the green. As it flew, it started to drop towards the right side in front of the green, which as you know, the pin was in the front but on the left side. Then, when it landed, it took the weirdest hop to the left, which I think my big brother may have had something to do with from the great beyond. It bounced a couple of times and then rolled right into the cup!!...I got to see the entire flight and roll in, all the while my son was yelling, It's going in Dad. It's going in the fucking cup!!' Then I remember getting picked up and hugged, and hands slapped and congratulated by my teammates, Alex, Todd Moore, and Geneva rookie Bill Juenger. It's a day I'll never forget and I'm very happy it happened at Geneva." Unfortunately, there are no Skins game or Skill Shots during Sunday's golf. Per Geneva policy, a hole-in-one wins all the Skins money for that day. In this case, the total would have been \$450. That does not include the \$50 for Closest to the Pin. His only reward for his accomplishment is lifetime recognition and a pat on the back. Way to go Ray! Maybe...just maybe, he will get a used range finder out of the ordeal. One of our participants left one on a cart and Ray found it. He sent an email asking to whom to return the instrument. If it is yours, contact Ray Ballard. The name Ray Ballard secures a spot in Geneva lore along side of Tim Black as the only Geneva Open linksters with a hole-in-one. Congratulations!

The gauntlet has been thrown down. Knocking team Pags off their BEST BALL throne will not be easy. Both Dagan and Pags cleaned up this

year. At least one of the two pocketed cash in every game be it BEST BALL, Gavin Cup, Skins, Scramble, and Skill Shots. Add Pat Dorn and Kyle Willis to the team and they appear as tough to beat as the Four Horsemen were in their day. The chore of picking Team Pags opponents will be the duty of the "A" players next year. Meanwhile, I will make an effort to send the champs (Mike Pagnanelli, Dagan Abdon, Pat Dorn, and Kyle Willis) their championship caps so they can brag to their friends and intimidate their competition.

2025 GAVIN CUP WRAP UP

RUN AWAY

Baby Boomers remember Secretariat winning the Belmont Stakes by 31 lengths, a performance for the ages. Generation X may recall the 49ers blowing out the Broncos in Super Bowl XXIV by 45 points, the biggest point margin in Super Bowl history. Tiger Woods also makes our list with his 15-shot victory in the 2000 U.S. Open at the fame Pebble Beach Golf Club. We now have something for the Millennials to remember. Mini-Legend Jack Berger and Mike Pagnanelli whipped the Gavin Cup field by 21 strokes in the 2025 event. They carded 45 under par net total for the three days. Pags shot rounds of 84 at St. Denis, then 84 and closed with a 76 on Geneva's track. Not bad for a guy playing to a 20 handicap. His teammate, Jack, was no hack either, scoring 86 at St. Denis and rounds of 80 and 79 on Geneva. He was catching 14 handicap strokes. Together, they made fools of the rest of us.

It would be hard to say anyone had a better weekend in Geneva than Pags although another was close and I will comment on him in a later article. For now, I want you to comprehend Pags' accomplishments. He captained the Best Ball team that won. Mike pocketed two Skins which he earned on Saturday morning. His total winnings added up to \$480 for the weekend. If that is not enough, he took home the shiny, refurbished, beautiful mantel piece called the Gavin Cup Trophy, a piece of hardware any wife would be more than happy to put on display in their living room.

I want to remind Pags of his responsibility to share the trophy with Jack. Kristen Berger is more than excited to show off her husband's excellent performance. This is Jack's second Gavin Cup Championship having won it in 2020 with Tom Black as partner. I am sure Mrs. Berger knows exactly where to flaunt it. It will be a ravishing addition to the furniture in their new house. There is an anecdote to this story. I spent Friday night at dinner with Jack apologizing that I believed the Handicap Committee did an injustice, giving him only 14 shots. Jack waved his hand

in a motion as if to say, "Don't worry about it." Reminding me of the '86 Masters when Jack Nicklaus played like he was in his prime, so did Mini-Legend Berger scorching Geneva with the confidence and precision he once played consistently twenty and thirty years earlier. If anything, the Handicap Committee gave him too much handicap. It would not have mattered.

Should I mention who finished second? Nobody remembers the Place horse to Secretariat or who was runner-up to Tiger in the 2000 U.S. Open. I guess they deserve their due. Steve Reed and Tim Black tallied minus-24 and Keith Boggess with Shawn Dorn were one stroke behind them for third place. There, I mentioned them. I still owe those guys money for their play.

On to other matters. Squabbit did its job. Knowing he was off the hook for scorekeeping duties, Blaise accomplished what he set out to do. He did it so well Thursday night, a patio chair on the porch of Lumpy's Hideaway became his overnight accommodation until the sun woke him. He then stumbled to his room and assumed a resting position on top of his bed. I sensed his father was not too pleased with his behavior. But there was golf to play, and Dickie thought it unwise to ground him. I asked Nick Boggess how he was able to get Blaise up for his tee time. He answered matter of factly, "I put a pizza outside his door."

The shot of the day on Friday was not a shot at all. Ron Szymczak found Don Jander's stray ball in the fescue at St. Denis. Don already hit a second ball opposite the fairway from the first shot, some twenty-five yards away. Szymczak, in a gesture of good sportsmanship, hit the found ball back to Jander. Do I need to go on? You guessed it. The shot was spot on and sizzled inches from Don's head and struck the back of his hand. Pictures of Jander flat on his face and stomach are circulating. Like Mini-Legend Jerry Graves last year who finished the tournament after falling into a raging fire, Don shook off his injuries and continued. Unlike Mini-Legend Jerry Graves, Mr. Jander did not win the Gavin Cup.

A tip of the cap to Mother Nature. Meteorologists across the region predicted rain, rain, and more rain. We received overnight moisture but

nothing that disturbed golf. It was hot and humid during the day. I heard nothing but praise about St. Denis which played more than admirable for Geneva's opening round. There is speculation we will return sometime in the future. The venue for next year's opening round has yet to be determined. Wherever we gather, we will be chasing Jack Berger and Mike Pagnanelli for their Gavin Cup Trophy. Until then, they will display their achievement proudly.

2025 SCRAMBLE WRAP UP

TEAM DAGAN CLEANS UP

Four by four the teams gathered on the hilltop behind the 9th green to heckle each player as they finished their round and to check scores as they signed their scorecards. A thrilling nightmare was fermenting. Four foursomes had finished with 31 total strokes. Two groups were still on the golf course. A Playoff loomed. The Scramble is notorious for Playoffs. I do not believe there were ever more than three teams playing extra holes to determine a winner. We were staring at a dusk finish. For many, the alcohol was taking hold. Have you heard of Pickle Ball? We were about to engage in Pickled Golf, having just spent 10 hours in heat and humidity, electrolyzed from beer and 80 proof. Sounds like fun.

The bubble burst when Dagan Abdon's team, the next to last group on the course, announced they finished minus 6, one shot better than the field. There was both relief and disappointment generated atop the hill. After all, dinner and other mind-altering substances were still ahead on most everyone's nightly agenda. Dagan partnered with Richie Heskett, Kyle Willis, and John Skunza to claim first prize. As Lee Corso says so elegantly, "Not so fast my friends." One more group needed to finish. That team consisted of Nick Boggess, Mark Kovachy, Tom Black, and Don Rutherford. They were 5 under par coming to the 9th tee. Just the way Nick likes it. In his neck of the State, they call Nick the poor man's Scotty Scheffler. His game and his physique can intimidate a bear, be it grizzly, black, or golden. True to form, the match rested on a 20-foot birdie putt. Each try slid to the side in dramatic fashion and their attempt to force a playoff fell one shot short. Instead, they dropped into the same pool of teams drowning in the "If only we..." excuse for losers.

John Skunza was part of the winning team. How did he come to join the group? Thank Jay Green. Most know by now Jay was absent from Geneva festivities this year. Jay was scheduled to appear but was confused on the days. According to Bill Boggess, who Jay kept informed,

he drove to Geneva on Wednesday, July 23, a day early. He scoured the grounds around the Summertime Inn and Geneva golf course and could not find anyone he knew. The next move drove him to the State Lodge, but there was no room at the Inn. Frustrated and disappointed, Mr. Green returned to Columbus and decided to skip Geneva. Factor the fact he missed the Geneva exit from the freeway and was in Ashtabula before he got right, may have scared him from returning. His scratch left Dagan, Richie, and Kyle with a threesome for the Scramble Tournament. John Skunza accepted my invitation to fill Jay's spot. That, my friends, is the answer to how he came to join the group. John Skunza has been a Geneva fraternity brother since the late 70's. He is not some sap I pulled from the Strip for the part.

If there was a strange foursome playing together in this Scramble event, it was the team of Legend Gary Glanzman, Doug Zuene, Todd Moore, and Kerry Joyce. Two guys span one end of the spectrum, and two fellows bounce around the opposite end. Gary had not touched an alcoholic beverage in 17 years. Kerry drinks one, and only one, Michelob Ultra after his round. Then there were Doug and Todd who were having the time of their lives. Their end of the spectrum was on another planet. Golfing skills took a back seat to just staying on their feet. Doug handled that bodily function poorly. He fell three times during the round. His final tumble occurred on the 9th green's fringe, in front of a gallery of heckling fans. Nobody helped him to his feet. He fell on his own, he must rise on his own. The look from Gary and Kerry as they joined the spectators on the hill told a story of exasperation. The Scramble Committee does a great job in comprising competitive teams, but they missed the boat on personalities when it came to this team. Hey! I am aware as all when it comes to the Geneva Factor. After his Scramble experience, poor Kerry witnessed Don Jander, Steve Miller, and me overindulge Saturday night until well into Sunday morning. I broke no tables this time. That's Geneva.

The Scramble also holds a Skins game during the competition. Two teams won Skins. The winners are familiar names. Besides capturing the Scramble Championship, Dagan, Richie, Kyle, and John pocketed skin money. They shared the pot with Nick, Mark Kovachy, Tom Black, and Don

Rutherford who also earned a skin. The take was \$120 a team. Though the goal of all is to win, we learned over the years that winning is not the only thing or everything as Vince Lombardi preached. In Geneva, other factors make this a super event. Cheers!

2025 SKINS & SKILL SHOTS WRAP UP

MANY COLLECTED

My past three articles have been mostly about the team competitions at Geneva. This piece will concentrate more on the individual play. The best shot of the weekend was Ray Ballard's drive on No.9 during Sunday's round. Most of us stand on that tee and visualize just reaching the green. When Ray's ball kicked towards the pin and rolled as if directed by a heavenly magnetic field, the excitement began to build. Screams and yells erupted as the ball disappeared into the hole. JACKPOT! Except there was no jackpot on that day. No Skins, no Skill Shot, only a "that a boy." The shot was not financially rewarded but it will be long remembered as long as Geneva continues, and this web page exists. It was an achievement Ray can be very proud to have accomplished and relished for the rest of his life.

Those who were rewarded for hitting good shots, did so on Saturday. All par 3's held Closest to the Pin contests. The Master shot maker was Rick Jonas. His shots on No.3, No.14, and No. 16 bettered the field earning him \$150. Do-Be-Do-Be-Do. Nick Boggess bested no.9. The Closest 2nd Shot to the Green was held on No.5. This hole was chosen because the pond in front of the green neutralized the playing field, taking the driver out of play giving all 46 golfers a chance to win. Taking advantage of the opportunity was Legend Fritz Ford who knocked his iron shot onto the green, sticking his Titleist close enough to pocket \$50. Putting the driver back into everyone's hands, Dagan Abdon launched the longest tee ball on No.12. There was also a game with the short stick. No.9 rewarded the player who made the Longest 1st Putt. That individual was Steve Reed.

If there was an award for the DUDE who had the best Geneva weekend (there have been discussions about such an award), it would be hard to give it to anyone other than Ray. However, an argument can be made for Mike Pagnanelli. Ray hit one shot that lasted 15 glorious seconds but will be remembered for a lifetime. Pags had a weekend of many glorious seconds. Pags won both Best Ball and Gavin Cup championships.

Add two Skins to Mike's performance. He birdied No.10 and was the only "B" flighter to par the 17th hole, often referred as the Widow Maker. Others winning Skins in "B" flight on Saturday were Jamie Vernon (birdie on No.4) Kyle Willis (birdie on 8) and Steve Reed with a deuce on the 9th hole.

Then along comes Dagan. He was part of the Best Ball and Scramble winning teams. As mentioned earlier, he outdrove the field on the 12th fairway. He earned two Skins on Friday and one on Saturday. He is a DUDE. "A" flight recorded 11 Skins on Saturday. Besides Dagan's birdie on the 11th hole, other Skins included two by Rick Jonas (birdies on 3 and 8), and two by Nick Boggess (birdie on 9 and a finishing eagle on 18). The remaining six Skins were earned by Andrew Brinkmeyer's birdie on the first hole. Birdies on No.4 by Blaise and No.5 by Legend Gary Glanzman who bagged a second Skin with an eagle on the 12th hole. The last of Saturday's Skins were won with a Don Jander birdie on No.13, and Keith Boggess' 3 on the 15th hole.

Friday's Skins were also a higher number than anticipated. 7 Skins were paid, each worth \$60. With Squabbit counting scores, we were able to handicap the Friday Skins game, which may be the reason for the uptick in winners. The scores you are about to read are net totals after applying handicap. Dagan Abdon (the DUDE) earned his two Skins with birdies on 7 and 15. Three eagles captured Skin money, one produced by Bill Juenger on No.10, another by Tom Black on 12, and Rick Jonas eagled the 17th hole. Nick Boggess, as he often does, set the tone for the weekend by birdieing the first hole. Tim Black was a winner with his birdie on No.8.

All in all, 18 different guys won individual honors. Let's be honest. Although several of us did not collect a single cent, everyone had their MVP moments whether it was on the course, cruising the Strip, or just reminiscing and laughing with friends. I want to congratulate all of you on being winners in my book.