

# THE HISTORY OF SCHWETTY

From Beginnings to Now



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Schwetty Founder

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## Introduction

Schwetty has humble beginnings and truly is the definition of a 'Grass Roots Organization'. Beginning with just a few, Schwetty now boasts many participants and volunteers and is known by most throughout our region. Schwetty's growth hasn't been easy and has endured many ups and downs throughout the years. Schwetty as of January 1, 2025, has contributed over \$60,000 to local families and individuals dealing with cancer. Schwetty's embrace 'The Gift of Giving'.

## Humble Beginnings

There was no grand plan when Schwetty began. Schwetty's origins simply began as a fun golf outing on Schwetty's founder, Jon McLaughlin's birthday. For years Jon invited friends to go golfing on the last Friday of June for a birthday golf get together. The golf outings were simply five or six friends and some years as many as sixteen. There were no prizes for victory but often the defeated would buy the victors drinks at the 19<sup>th</sup> hole.

## Schwetty Balls

In 2016, Jon McLaughlin changed his birthday golf outing a little. He called the golf outing the 'Schwetty Balls Golf Tournament'. Jon had 'Schwetty' golf balls made up for all the attendees. Edgewood Golf Course was where the Schwetty was held and sixteen friends, four teams, attended the scramble tournament. Each team came up with a name and prizes were given out to the winning team, longest drive, closest to the pin and longest putt.



2018, Last year at Edgewood

## **Schwetty Balls Charity Golf**

The Schwetty Balls Golf Tournament was greatly enjoyed by all the participants. The following Wednesday after the tournament, Jon attended a weekly event that several of Jon's friends attend called 'Boys Night'. Several of the Schwetty participants were present. The golf tournament was a major topic of conversation and one of the gentlemen that was present, Craig Dresser, suggested that we should make the Schwetty Balls Tournament a charitable fundraising event. The seed was planted. That weekend Jon and his wife Wanda were having coffee on their deck on a glorious Sunday morning. Jon mentioned to Wanda that several of the guys from 'Boys Night' had suggested that we should make a charity out of the 'Schwetty Balls Golf Tournament'. Wanda thought it was a great idea as well and suggested maybe we should do it for Testicular Cancer. The second seed was planted. Jon immediately did online research on Testicular Cancer and was amazed at how little attention it was given and that it was the leading cancer among young men. After a couple hours of research on Testicular Cancer, Jon went onto GoDaddy and purchased several domain names of which Schwetty Balls Charity Golf was one of them.

## **Onward and Upward**

Domains were reserved, now what? Jon informed all his friends of the decision to go forward with the charity golf tournament and asked for advice and input on the preferred domain name and how to do a website. SchwettyBallsCharityGolf.com was the preferred domain name and Kris Cummings volunteered to do the website.

Jon put together some information on Testicular Cancer, goals, and the mission of Schwetty. One Saturday afternoon in July of 2016, Kris produced the first 'Schwetty Balls Charity Golf Tournament' website. The website has evolved over the years but much of what was produced that Saturday in July remains.

## **ND Attorney General**

We have a mission, a goal and a website. Now Schwetty needs to become a legal charitable organization. Jon went to an attorney friend, Rick Linnerooth, and hired Rick to file the Articles of Incorporation with the state as Schwetty Balls Charity Golf, Inc. After several months, the ND Attorney General's Office sent us a letter of denial, stating our name was inappropriate. The ND Attorney General's Office certainly is under major scrutiny as of late and has been accused of many improprieties throughout the years. As you can imagine Rick was furious and offered to sue the State of North Dakota for free on behalf of Schwetty Balls Charity Golf. Rick insisted that this was an abuse of power and really wanted to go after them. Rick stated "Can you imagine Schwetty Balls Chairty Golf vs State of North Dakota? It will get national attention". I told Rick that was not the kind of attention we wanted so I advised him to refile the Articles of Incorporation, under Schwetty, Inc. Finally, in 2018 our Articles of Incorporation were approved. Schwetty, Inc. was a legal charitable organization. After approval from the state, Jon obtained Schwetty, Inc.'s EIN number and filed with the IRS for 401 (c)(3) non-profit status. Rick Linnerooth has continued to file Schwetty, Inc.'s annual report with Attorney General's Office.

I digress here but think it is important to note that Schwetty through the years has had several run ins with the ND Attorney General Office. All run ins are the result of uninformed and misuse of power by this states Attorney General's office. I could go on and on about my dismay with the ND Attorney General's Office but that is not the purpose of this article.

## **Schwetty, Inc.**

As the Articles of Incorporation for Schwetty, Inc. was going through the approval process, Schwetty had its first election of officers.

- President- Jon McLaughlin
- Vice President- Kris Cummings
- Secretary- Mike Nygaard
- Treasurer- Stephanie Aalund

Two committees were formed, a Golf Tournament Committee and a Fund-Raising Committee and The Schwetty, Inc. By-laws were generated and approved. Schwetty, Inc. established a checking account at Western State Bank, West Fargo

In April, May and June of 2017 weekly Schwetty meetings were held at Rookies Sports Bar and Grill in West Fargo. Often these meetings had 10-20 Schwetty attendees. The foundation for what Schwetty is today, was laid during these meetings. Barry Dresser designed Schwetty Logos that are still used today. Much was learned and much was accomplished during this time. I look back at our beginnings and am in awe at times at the wisdom and all the hard work of the original Schwettys

## **Rookies**

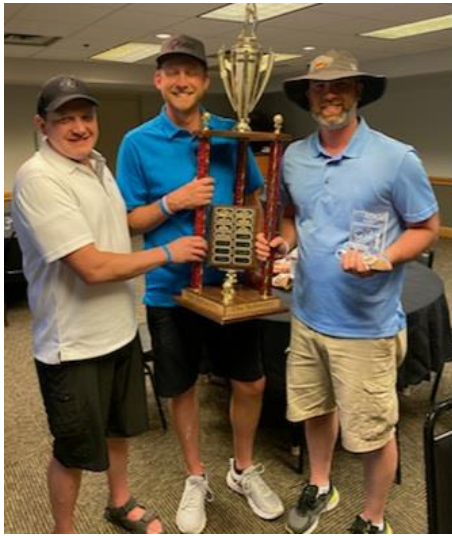
Rookies has been Schwetty, Inc.'s biggest supporter and advocate through the years. Schwetty has many of its meetings at Rookies and Rookies has several fundraising events for Schwetty throughout the year. I guess you could say Rookies is Schwetty's home base. You will see Rookies referenced many times in this article. They are part of our beginnings and an integral part of Schwetty's success.

## **First Annual Schwetty Balls Charity Golf Tournament**

In 2017 Schwetty had its first official Schwetty Balls Charity Golf Tournament at Edgewood Golf Course in Fargo on Friday, June 30. Fargo golf courses did not allow shot gun starts for golf tournaments on Friday, so tee times for (8) four person teams were staggered 10 minutes apart. Kris Cummings and Stephanie Aalund were invaluable at the first tournament. They organized and handled registration, swag bags, awards as well as many other tasks. Kris and Stephanie still handle registration and organize the prizes today.

Many of the traditions we still enjoy today were born at the First Schwetty.

- The tournament is always held on the last Friday of June. Many participants plan vacations, time off work and make travel plans to participate in the Schwetty Balls Charity Golf Tournament.
- Schwetty T-shirts. In the beginning Schwetty provided each golfer with a T-shirt for that year's Schwetty. Schwetty viewed T-shirts as the most economical way of advertising. Schwetty hadn't been around long enough, nor had it proven itself enough to solicit media attention. Barry Dresser and his company provided T-shirts to Schwetty for cost in the beginning. As the Schwetty has grown, T-shirts are given to volunteers and large donors. Each year Schwetty comes up with a unique Schwetty T-shirt. Some of the shirts are:
  - Get Ready Fore the Schwetty
  - Don't Be a Sad Sack
  - What's under Jon's Kilt
  - WEEEE WEEEE It's the Schwetty23
  - Doing More In 24
  - Stayin' Alive In 25
- Schwetty Balls are still distributed to each golfer in a swag bag.
- Prizes are awarded to winning teams and golfers.
- Hot Dogs are distributed to golfers during the tournament. General Siding and Supply contributed the hotdogs for the first years. After Covid in 2020 Nathans Hot Dogs and Baker Sales have contributed the hotdogs for Schwetty. The hot dogs are lovingly prepared by Dan and Kathy Lewin. Nathan's hot dogs have become one of the most treasured traditions of Schwetty. Schwetty purchased a grill because of this tradition and Dan and Kathy Lewin have made Nathan's hot dog hole their own by organizing it, running it and making it better every year by adding their own personal touches. Nathan's Baker Sales Hole, handled by Dan and Kathy Lewin, is the model of what Schwetty wants its volunteer's participation to be. Dan and Kathy handle everything on the hole from start to finish, including sending Baker Sales Thank Yous and updates throughout the year of Schwetty's activities. THANK YOU, DAN and KATHY.
- Fireball girls (Wanda McLaughlin and Trish Kaul were the first Fireball girls) distribute Fireball shots to golfers. This tradition is still alive and well but has changed to 'Rookies Party Tent' and is always located on the First Tee. Fireball shots are still distributed and have also become a treasured Schwetty tradition that the golfers enjoy and look forward to.
- Awards ceremony at the 19<sup>th</sup> hole. Directly after the Schwetty, participants and volunteers celebrate a wonderful day with food and drink and prizes are distributed to the day's victors.
- The 'Schwetty' traveling trophy. Sean Eagleson provided the traveling trophy. Each year's winning team is displayed on a plaque on the trophy.



## The Schwetty Tradition Continues

The first years were not very prosperous for Schwetty, Inc. Besides contributing time, many Schwetty's contributed much more. Kris Cummings and Stephanie Aalund contributed and made the hole sign inserts, contributed silent auction items and many of the items needed for silent auctions. Barry Dresser contributed logo designs and T-shirts, hats, bracelets and many other items to Schwetty for cost. Wanda and Jon McLaughlin paid most of the original expenses

including \$1000 for Articles of Incorporation, money to open checking account, website fees, golf balls, trophies, annual filing fees and administration fees, printing costs, The Day After Schwetty event, as well as many other expenses. I know others contributed much as well but the preceding list is what I recollect at the time of this article. We did generate a little profit in the beginning and Schwetty gave several organizations checks from its profits. American Cancer Society and a few Testicular Cancer organizations. We didn't realize that these Testicular Cancer Organizations were like us, regional organizations trying to inform their communities of Testicular Cancer. Many lessons were learned at the beginning. Stephanie Aalund asked a very important question, "When we give these organizations checks, where does the money go?" The seed was planted for Schwetty Cares. Schwetty Cares wasn't officially introduced until 2021 but the seed of giving money directly to local people in need where Schwetty knows where the money goes was sown. Schwetty's funds, although limited, were used to try and fulfill our mission and goal of informing the region of Testicular Cancer. Schwetty purchased brochures and informational materials on Testicular Cancer as well as Testicular Cancer bracelets from other organizations. This was very expensive and Schwetty decided to generate their own brochures. Jon McLaughlin generated a trifold brochure that is still in use today. Barry Dresser designed bracelets and provided the first bracelets at cost to Schwetty. Bracelets are still used today.



## **Kris and Steph**

Along with being Schwetty Officers and vital for the golf tournament. Kris and Stephanie also generated Flyers and many documents that Schwetty still use today. Kris and Steph also organized the first fall fundraisers at Rookies. Silent Auction items, raffles were held and generated much needed money for Schwetty in the early years. The fall event took a few years off after covid but in 2024 was reintroduced by Mary Jo Brennan, Christi Hughes and others.

## **The Schwetty Grows**

Schwetty continued to grow and in 2019 we had outgrown scheduled Tee Times, and a shotgun start tournament was needed. Edgewood would not allow a shotgun start, so Ritchie Kaul and Jon McLaughlin (Golf Tournament Committee) searched for a new home for Schwetty. Rose Creek said they were interested but we needed Park Board and City Commission approval to hold a shotgun start tournament on Friday. Ritchie and Jon met with the Park Board to present Schwetty and we were approved as the very first Shotgun Start Tournament on a Friday by a public golf course in Fargo.



Schwetty19 had (32) four person teams, (SOLD OUT). Schwetty purchased hole signs (that we still use today). Kris Cummings and Stephanie Aalund were the driving force behind the hole signs. Their model is still used today.

Other changes:

- Party Tents were first introduced, beginning of the Rookies Party Tent (Fireball girls manned the tent and distributed Fireball, a Schwetty tradition).
- Hole sponsors were allowed and encouraged to have a game at their designated hole. This lasted one year. It was decided that this made the tournament too long. Jon McLaughlin had the stupidest game (blind putting with a wobbly ball). Mike Anders painted the wobbly balls blue and which he says was very challenging to paint dancing golf balls. All of you should ask Mike to tell this story, it is very comical. Since 2019 Schwetty has limited Party Tents and sponsor's games to just a few. It was determined that the tournament should not last more than 5 hours. A 10:00 am shotgun start with awards ceremony beginning at 3:30 pm.
- Dixon Golf participated in the Golf Tournament providing games at a couple of holes. Schwetty received a percentage of the profits for their participation. After the Schwetty19 It was discussed that Schwetty could do these contests themselves and keep all the profits. In 2021, Schwetty Challenges were introduced and remain today. The challenges change periodically after it is determined that new challenges are needed to keep the tournament fresh and be more profitable for Schwetty.
- Sandwiches on the golf course and an expanded Awards Ceremony were introduced. Hors d'oeuvres were included at the awards ceremony. This was our first year of providing food for participants and volunteers, besides the traditional hot dogs. Much was learned, we did not budget or provide enough food. We estimated we had less than half of the food needed for the Awards Banquet. Schwetty decided the \$100 entry fee would be increased to \$125 for future tournaments to budget appropriately. Many of the golf tournament participants have informed us that the awards banquet and serving lunch on the course is what differentiates us from other charity golf tournaments.
- Schwetty19 was the first time Schwetty used media to advertise.
- Schwetty introduced online sign up with Cheddar Up. A lot of research was done to find the most reasonable way of doing online sign ups. Several organizations were investigated, and Cheddar Up was selected as the most economical. Percentages on credit cards were the most reasonable and they allowed electronic payment at a very small fee as well as a very small monthly fee. We still use Cheddar Up today for registration of the golf tournament.
- Dan Swenson and Mike Anders had their first Schwetty Adventure that has become an annual event. You will have to ask them about the details.



## Schwetty and the Media

Schwetty19 was the first time media was used by Schwetty. Schwetty had been around for several years and was growing. With a 32-team shotgun start tournament, it was time to go to the media. Below are some

- Tyler Axness- KFGO, Afternoons with Tyler Axness. Tyler is one of Schwetty's biggest supporters and gives Schwetty airtime several times throughout the year. Tyler has also had live feeds at Schwetty since 2019 (less covid year).
- Jack Michaels- 740 The Fan. Jack Michaels was one of Schwetty's first radio interviews, Mike Anders, Joel Cummings and Jon McLaughlin were participants. Schwetty was still unknown at the time, and I think Jack was curious to see if we were for real. Since that

first interview, Jack has been a huge supporter of Schwetty and has us on his program often.

- Jeff Kolpack- 740 The Fan, The Golf Show. Jeff has been a big supporter through the years and usually has Schwetty on his golf show for a segment.
- Derek Hanson- KFGO, Couch Potato Radio. Derek has had Schwetty on his program several times. One of the most memorable was the first interview with Schwetty. Mike Anders, Joel Cummings and Jon McLaughlin attended. Mike Anders (UNO) had everyone in stitches. Derek still comments on how hard he laughed.
- Alex Taylor and Kevin Flynn- The Flag, The Need-to-Know Morning Show. Alex and Kevin have interviewed Schwetty numerous times and were live at the tournament in 2022 and 2023.
- Jay Thomas- WDAY, The Jay Thomas Show. Jay has welcomed Schwetty on his show many times. The show is usually entertaining. The Testicle Festival show is a classic.
- Pike and Amanda- The Big 98.7, Pike and Amanda in the Morning. 2024 Schwetty did its first show with Pike and Amanda. Lindsey Ness lined the interview up.
- Dan Cole- KFAN, Minneapolis, 740 The Fan, Fargo. The Common Man Show. Dan contributed a silent auction item for Schwetty21, 'Golf with Common'. Our very own, Joel Cummings, Dan Swenson and Mike Anders, won the bid. The guys had a great time with Common and many stories that they will have to tell themselves. After the event Common referenced Schwetty on his radio show and poked fun at the guys.



## Election, New Officers

In March of 2019, new officers were elected

- President- Eric Hillman
- Vice President- Sean Eagleson
- Secretary- Mike Nygaard
- Treasurer- Stephanie Aalund
- Past President- Jon McLaughlin

The golf tournament committee would be co-chaired by Ritchie Kaul and Jon McLaughlin

## A New Tradition Emerges

The Schwetty Balls Charity Golf Tournament takes a lot of work behind the scenes. After the tournament can be a little anti-climactic for the volunteers that contributed so much time and energy preparing for the tournament. “The Day After Schwetty” began in 2019. Jon and Wanda wanted to reward the people that worked so hard by holding a get-together on Saturday, the day after Schwetty, at their home. The tradition continues today. Games and music are played, clever conversations are held, many stories about the tournament are told and food and drink are enjoyed. A Fish Fry Contest is also held where the winner is awarded a traveling trophy plaque called the ‘Day After Schwetty Fish Fry Champion’.



## Covid Year

Perhaps our most challenging year was 2020. Covid hit. Schwetty was growing and was considering expanding into Arizona and Florida. Work was underway to Franchise Schwetty. Tye West was going to head up the Phoenix chapter. This got past the planning stages and close to initiating but was stopped cold in its tracks because of Covid. This has not been given any further attention to date.

Many charitable organizations were hit hard by Covid, and many did not survive. Schwetty decided to go on with the tournament if possible. Schwetty needed to find a new home. Rose

Creek (or any other Fargo Public Golf Course) would no longer allow a shotgun start tournament on a Friday. Schwetty had the one and only Friday tournament on a Fargo public Golf Course. The Meadows Golf Course, Moorhead, was interested in having Schwetty. Schwetty had a special meeting remotely and decided to hold a limited tournament. Schwetty would use the registration money from the tournament for prizes. The prizes would be purchased from Schwetty's main supporters and donors. Golf being an outdoor event was allowed during Covid, but shotgun starts were not. It was decided Schwetty20 would be a (12) team, four-person scramble with scheduled tee times and would be held at The Meadows Golf Course, Moorhead. There would be no solicitation for donations. All money from registration would go to the golfers as gift certificates purchased by Schwetty from its loyal supporters (Rookies, Happy Harry's, Maxwells and Bar 9). We had an awards banquet at Bar 9 after the event in their new event room. The Schwetty20 had no bells and whistles, but it was held with a few traditions enduring. Schwetty Balls were distributed to each golfer at registration by Brandy Myrvik and Marc and Kathy Halvorson purchased Fireball shots for each golfer. Many events were canceled during Covid, but the Schwetty endured. Schwetty even had several radio interviews in May and June 2020, remotely, to inform the world that Schwetty was still here. Schwetty20 was going to happen and that Schwetty would move forward.

## **After Covid**

Schwetty had survived Covid but there were many unknowns and questions. To name just a few, did Schwetty lose its momentum, what volunteers would come back, would people come back to the tournament, could Schwetty survive? Many of Schwetty's growth plans were stopped in their tracks. How would we try to regain our momentum?

Schwetty21 would go on as a 32 team 4-person scramble at The Meadows Golf Course on Friday, June 25, 2021, with the traditions that had been established throughout the years, but with a few new wrinkles. 1. Schwetty Fishbowl was introduced (Jeannie Camarillo) and remains a very successful part of the tournament. 2. Schwetty Challenges were first introduced and remain today.

You all remember Covid hair during 2020. This gave Jon McLaughlin an idea. Jon decided to grow his hair for one full year and have it shaved after Schwetty21. Jon got his hair cut June 22, 2020, (before Schwetty20) and let it grow until June 25, 2021, (after Schwetty21). Jon did this to try to gain momentum for Schwetty because of Covid. Jon figured this would draw attention and would help with media attention. The goal was to let the world know Schwetty was moving onward and upward and if we raised additional money, that would be a bonus. I guess this would be the definition of a publicity stunt. Jon lined up a couple other volunteers to cut their hair, Brandon Bearstail and Adam Gustafson. Josephs School of Hair Design provided students to do the hair cutting. After Schwetty21, the hair shaving event was held at Bar 9 Event Center. Over \$1000 was raised. Bar 9 provided a band in the events center after the hair shaving and Schwetty had several silent auction items.



The day was successful but exhausting. Schwetty lost many volunteers because of Covid so much was done by very few. Jay McLaughlin, Brandy Myrvik, Dan Swenson, Sean Eagleson and Jon McLaughlin after working until wee hours in the morning organizing for the Schwetty21 spent from 7:00am June 25 (setting up Schwetty21) until 3:00 am June 26 (tearing down Bar 9 event). Too much was done by too few.

The Fall 2021, Jeannie Camarillo, Brandy Myrvik and Jon McLaughlin took over the Fall Fundraiser. Kris Cummings and Stephanie Aalund had to reduce the time spent on Schwetty. Kris and her husband Joel had moved to their new home by Pelican Lake and Stephanie Aalund had just taken a new position at work that would be more demanding on time as well as raising a teenager as a single mother. Brandy, Jeannie and Jon tried something new for the Fall Fundraiser, an online auction. Money was raised but an important lesson was learned. Some traditions should remain, the online auction was not liked by many.

## Website/Social Media

After Kris Cummings built the website, she also maintained it until 2020. Jon McLaughlin took over keeping the website updated as well as Cheddar Up account updated. Jon also took over updating and creating all Schwetty Flyers, Forms and literature. In 2021 Schwetty sought someone to take over the website. Sean Eagleson informed us Kindra Mahler from the Fargo Jet Center would take over the website and totally redo it and Sarah Lienemann from the Fargo Jet Center also volunteered to take over Schwetty's Facebook account. Keeping the website and Facebook updated is a lot of work. Kindra and Sarah maintained them until 2023. Jon McLaughlin took over the website again in 2023 and still maintains it. Facebook has been taken over by a host of others, Lindsey Ness, Mary jo Brennan, Mike Anders and Christi Hughes are the main contributors.

## Elections

Elections were held in March 2021

- President- Sean Eagleson
- Vice President- Scott Rosenfeldt
- Secretary- Brandy Myrvik
- Treasurer- Scott Hegge

- Past President- Eric Hillman

Golf Tournament Committee Co-Chaired by Jon McLaughlin and Sean Eagleson. The Executive Committee also opened a Schwetty, inc. checking account at Bell Bank, since Bell Bank has been a big supporter.

## Sweet little Kathy

Schwetty lost one of its sweetest, dearest and most respected members on Saturday, October 30, 2021, Kathy Halvorson. Kathy, we love you and miss you. Her smile, laughter, wisdom and selfless work were truly special. One of my favorite memories of Kathy was in 2019, Kathy Lewin and Kathy Halvorson operated Jon McLaughlin's hole (the blind putting of a wobbly ball). The two Kathy's wore blue tutus which were amazing, and their fun was infectious. Kathy never missed an opportunity to poke fun at Sioux fans, especially her neighbor and fellow Schwetty, Brandy Myrvik, Caw Caw! Marc, Kathy's beloved husband, still is an invaluable member of Schwetty.



## Schwetty Cares

The idea of Schwetty Cares was started several years prior, but the name had not been born yet. Jon McLaughlin came up with the name and got approval from Executive Committee to order a new domain, Schwetty.org with an email [care@schwetty.org](mailto:care@schwetty.org). Jon also designed the Schwetty Cares Logo which is still used today. After the election in March 2021, Schwetty Cares issued its first checks to two recipients for over \$1000 each. Prior to 2021 Schwetty had distributed \$2500 to several organizations as well as \$3000 total to several people dealing with cancer.



## Testicle Festival

April is Testicular Cancer Awareness Month, and we have an event at Rookies where we distribute literature and use it to kickoff off the golf tournament. Our President, Eric Hillman wanted to have a Testicle Festival for our April (Testicular Cancer Awareness Month) event. This was a great idea in theory, but no one had ever prepared Rocky Mountain Oysters before let alone have a feed, so everything had to be learned. Rookies agreed to have the event, testicles were purchased from Dave Smith, Baker Sales, and a date was selected as Saturday, April 23, 2022, with a trial run Wednesday April 20 at Rookies. Preparation of the nuts included skinning them and cutting them into small pieces. Marc Halvorson, Dan Lewin, Dan Swenson, Dan Bjur, Eric Hillman, Jay McLaughlin and Jon McLaughlin did nut prep.

The event was held with a 50/50 raffle and was a cool event, but at the end of the day, we netted less than \$1000 including the 50/50 raffle. A ton of work by a few volunteers and it became obvious that we needed more volunteers or needed to reduce the work/events by these volunteers. Burnout was setting in.



**Come have a BALL!**


**Time to Go Nuts – The Schwetty Ball's Testicle Festival is ON!**

4/23/22 – ROOKIES 715 131st Ave E, West Fargo

Serving Starts at 6p – 7:30p  
\$15.00  
Rocky Mountain Oysters, Schwetty Swedish Balls, Mashed Potatoes w/ gravy & Green Beans, ~~Hot Sauce, Ranch & AI~~  
Or \$1.00 to try 1 Nut

All Proceeds will go to our Schwetty Cares nonprofit organization where it will help its brothers and sisters fighting Cancer.

**LIVE music Mick Klein 8:30p-11p**



A cartoon illustration of a brown bull with horns, standing and facing left. It is positioned to the right of the text in the flyer.



## Charity Navigator

Charity Navigator is an independent evaluator of non-profit organizations. In 2022, Jon McLaughlin applied for evaluation and filled out many forms which Jon updates annually. Charity Navigator in 2023 gave Schwetty, Inc. a 4 Star, 100% rating for its positive impact on the community and being 100% volunteer.

## 2022

It was obvious that changes needed to be made with Schwetty. Burnout was the rule and not the exception. Brandy Myrvik resigned due to burnout and Jon McLaughlin assumed Brandy's Secretary duties. After Covid we lost many volunteers, and Brandy did the job of many. Brandy contributed countless hours, and I don't know if Schwetty would have survived without her effort. After the Testicle Festival the Golf Tournament should have been in full preparation mode but because of the burnout not much was being done. Dan Swenson one day finally said, "Are we going to have Schwetty this year or not"? I told Dan that I was not sure, no one seemed interested, and no one was responding. Dan pleaded with me to take it over and get it done. I contacted the Executive committee and told them I was taking over the tournament because nothing was happening, and I was told to get it done. With Dan's and my brother Jay's help along with Marc Halvorson, Dan and Kathy Lewin and a few others help, Schwetty22 happened. A footnote from Schwetty22, Jon and Wanda purchased T-shirts for the Schwetty22, 'What's Under Jon's Kilt?' Jon wore a kilt at the tournament but never revealed what was under his kilt. Even today it remains a mystery.



Jon McLaughlin knew help was needed. Rumblings were occurring about getting paid for doing work. Schwetty is 100% volunteer but could pay for services as an independent contractor or could apply for a different 401 (c)(3) rating from the IRS. Jon knew we couldn't afford to pay for services unless we made a lot more money. Jon began investigating the possibility of Schwetty doing charitable gaming. Jon spent hundreds of hours researching this and concluded that it was very possible. Jon contacted Eric Halvorson with Bell Bank and asked if it would be possible to get a line of credit for gaming and Eric informed him that they have done it for many, so it

was very possible. Jon contacted the Executive Committee to inform them of what he had found out and ask for their support. The overwhelming response was that sounds great, but it was obvious that Jon was not going to get any help. Jon continued to work on charitable gaming and may have found a home with Nasser Hamammi (former owner of Bar 9). Jon knew for this to happen he would need help and continued to inquire and work on it. Jon finally put this on hold in 2023 to get ready for the Schwetty23. Hopefully, others will see the value in this and will carry on the torch. It would be great to have a recurring income and be able to pay a CEO and/or CFO to run charitable gaming and handle day-to-day affairs of Schwetty. This would ensure that Schwetty would continue and would give Schwetty a lot of money to help a lot of people.

## **First Schwetty Cares Event**

Schwetty had its first Schwetty Cares Event at Bar 9 Event Center in August of 2022. Schwetty distributed \$12,500 during the event and an additional \$2000 throughout the year. The Schwetty Cares Event was very successful. It is important for recipients to be able to get together and share their stories and it is important for Schwetty's to see their hard work in action.

This was our first Schwetty Cares event, and we nailed it. The timing in mid-August was perfect. We were contacted by a couple recipients that receiving the funds before school were a lifesaver. A single mother (breast cancer) of a teenage girl told us she didn't know how she was going to handle school supplies or school clothes for her daughter until she received Schwetty funds. Another family with two young boys indicated that they were able to do some important family things 'guilt free' because of the money they received. The format of inviting the nominators and nominees to the event to tell their stories was also spot on. To be able to get together with a common purpose and the recipients to share their stories is therapeutic for them but is also very inspirational for all that attend. We recently had a young man attend a Schwetty Cares Event with his mother that has cancer. This young man stood in front of the whole group and talked about the courage of his mother, how proud he was of his mother and how much he loved her. That moment for that mother was priceless and was touching to all of us. I could go on and on about stories but want to let everyone know how proud I am of how the Schwetty Cares Event has progressed.

## **Schwetty Cares Board**

Schwetty was getting nominations but most of the nominations were from friends of Schwetty or someone Schwetty members knew. It was obvious we had to make Schwetty more accessible and more transparent. We did not want to get accused of nepotism. The Schwetty Cares Advisory Board is formed in 2023. The intention of the board is to be an independent board made up of lay people from the community to accept nominations and to distribute the money given from Schwetty. Inc. to the nominees. The board is to have five independent members with one member from the Executive Committee.

The First Schwetty Cares Board members.

- Jay McLaughlin, Chair
- Mary Jo Brennan
- Keith Steinberg
- Corey Bjertness
- Brock Evenson
- Dave Lee, alternate
- Tyler Axness, alternate
- Jon McLaughlin, Executive Committee

## **Schwetty23**

Because of burnout and loss of volunteers from covid, Schwetty took a step back from doing the Fall Fundraiser and April (Testicular Cancer Awareness) Event to concentrate on the Schwetty23 golf tournament. Media interviews continued for Testicular Cancer Awareness Month, but no event was held at Rookies. The T-shirt of the year was WEE WEE it's the Schwetty23. Jon printed off iron on decals and on a Friday night several Schwetty's (Lyndsey Ness, Scott Rosenfeldt, LaRae Rosenfeldt, Wanda McLaughlin and Jon McLaughlin) ironed them all on the T-shirts. Jon and Wanda's air conditioning was down at the worst time, so this night is referred to as the T-shirt Sweat Shop Night. The Schwetty23 went well except for 90 degrees and 40 mph winds. After the tournament Jon Mclaughlin informed everyone that he could no longer put in 500-600 hours for the tournament. We needed more volunteers to split up the workload. Thank goodness new members have become involved and others have taken on a larger role. Doug and Mary Jo Brennan, Christi Hughes and Lindsey Ness are a few that have really stepped up to the plate. Schwetty, Inc. allocated \$18,000 to the Schwetty Cares Advisory Board to distribute to local nominees dealing with cancer.

## **Schwetty Cares 23**

The Schwetty Cares Event in 2023 was held at Cellar 624, downtown Fargo. The event was a smashing success. Schwetty Cares distributed \$15,000 to many local people dealing with cancer, food and drink were enjoyed and the recipients shared their stories and struggles with cancer. All participants really enjoyed the event, they were able to tell their stories and realize that people care, the community cares and Schwetty Cares.

At Christmas, Schwetty Cares distributed gifts and \$2500 to individuals dealing with cancer. Doug and Mary Jo Brennan contributed several gifts including a Justin Jefferson jersey to Brantlee Krsnak. Brantlee is a huge NDSU Bison and Minnesota Vikings fan, and Justin Jefferson is Brantlee's favorite player. Brantlee couldn't get the jersey on quickly enough. I am sure he slept with it that night.



## 2024 Elections

In February the annual meeting took place at Rookies and elections were held.

- President- Mike Anders
- Vice President- Jon McLaughlin
- Secretary- Mike Nygaard
- Treasurer- Doug Brennan
- Past President- Sean Eagleson

Shortly after elections Sean Eagleson resigned as Past President and Scott Hegge assumed the office of Past President

Golf Tournament Committee- Chair, Jon McLaughlin

## Testicular Cancer Awareness

Schwetty's Mission is Testicular Cancer Awareness. Schwetty has been on many radio programs and has had several events to inform, educate and spread the word on Testicular Cancer. You hope you make a difference and hope your message is being heard. In February of 2024, a man approached Jon asking if he recognized him. Jon said sorry but he didn't. The young man introduced himself as Bob Marki and that he and I had met at Rookies several years prior and were talking over a beer. Bob indicated that I had informed him about Schwetty and what it was all about and then he said, "You saved my life"! Bob said he went to the doctor shortly after our discussion at Rookies since he had some symptoms. Bob was diagnosed with Testicular Cancer, and it had spread to his lymph nodes. Bob underwent surgery, radiation and chemo treatments and presently is cancer free. Bob says that the Good Lord put the two of us next to each other that day at Rookies and it saved his life.

## DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)

Part of preparation for the golf tournament is reaching out to our loyal supporters for donations and contacting new organizations. Several large organizations offer grants for non-profits. Jon filled out several applications, on one application one of the questions was, "what is your

organizations DEI policy?” Jon had no clue what DEI was, let alone what our policy was, so he Googled it. Schwetty had no DEI policy, even though it aspired to be available to everyone in our region. Jon quickly realized Schwetty was primarily made up of individuals just like him, so Schwetty decided to start a DEI Advisory Board to try and reach out to groups in the area to inform them about Schwetty and what it is about. Even though DEI is falling under scrutiny lately Schwetty moved forward with the board with this precept “Cancer doesn’t discriminate and neither does Schwetty.” The board is in its infancy but has reached out to several groups in the community to inform them about Schwetty and Schwetty Cares.

The first DEI Advisory Board Members:

- Collins Mutegi
- Doreen Thorson
- Jon McLaughlin

## **Schwetty24**

Mike Anders, Schwetty’s new President suggested to do a golf cart raffle to go along with the Schwetty24. Everyone agreed, this would be a great idea, but no one had ever done a raffle. Mike talked to Mike Pulczynski (owner of Leonard Country Club) to get information from him on golf cart raffles. Mike Anders began looking for golf carts and Jon McLaughlin began researching raffle criteria. It was decided to move forward with the raffle. Prizes besides the golf cart had to be figured out since all the information for the raffle needed to be listed on the raffle permit. Schwetty purchased the golf cart for \$7995 and applied for a Raffle Permit. The City of West Fargo approved the permit, so we went ahead and ordered raffle tickets. It was decided to order 1200 tickets with hopes of selling 1000. A few days later, Friday afternoon, we were informed by the State of North Dakota Attorney General’s Office that the golf cart was not approved since it was valued at more than the maximum of \$8000 allowed (please note the golf cart was purchased for 7995). The Attorney General’s Office was accusing Schwetty and All-Season Motorsports of fraud. We had purchased the golf cart and raffle tickets, so this obviously was very disturbing news. Phone calls and emails were immediately sent but it was Friday afternoon, so no responses occurred. The next week, Rick Linnerooth, (Schwetty’s attorney) was contacted and he made phone calls on behalf of Schwetty to the Attorney General’s Office. All Season Motorsports (where we purchased the golf cart) also got involved. Eventually, the Attorney General’s Office changed their ruling and approved the golf cart. The kickoff of the golf cart sales began at the Schwetty April Event at Rookies. A 50/50 raffle was held at the event, F-Cancer T-shirts were sold and Rookies contributed 15% of the day’s sales. Multiple media interviews were held at the beginning of April to promote the golf cart raffle sales, Schwetty and Testicular Cancer Awareness. The day was a great success. Tickets were distributed and Doug Brennan took charge of collecting money and ticket stubs. The raffle drawing occurred at Rookies at the after Schwetty party along with several silent auction items. We exceeded our goal of 1000 tickets by a little so for our first raffle, everyone concluded it was a huge success. One thing we did learn is that the raffle should occur on a date after the golf tournament. Too much happened on one day.



The Schwetty24 tournament went well. Christi Hughes took over as golf tournament volunteer coordinator and did an excellent job. Kris and Steph handled registration, Fishbowl prizes, silent auction and golf prizes, which went well as always. The weather was perfect, the Awards Ceremony went well. All in all, a great day.

## Schwetty Cares

Schwetty, Inc. allocated \$22,000 to the Schwetty Cares Advisory Board from the golf tournament and raffle proceeds. The Schwetty Cares annual distribution event again was held at Cellar624 in August 2024. \$17,000 was distributed to several local families and individuals dealing with cancer and the event was again well attended and very successful. The Comradery and Stories were priceless. The strength these people and families display are inspirational to all. The stories may be a little heartbreaking but also are heartwarming. The Schwetty Cares event is growing, and the 2024 event had outgrown the Cellar624 venue so a new event location will have to be selected for 2025.

Schwetty Cares had \$500 held over from 2023 so it still had \$5500 to distribute. Christmas 2024 Schwetty Cares distributed the remaining funds allocated by Schwetty, Inc. Santa and several Schwetty elves visited several families dealing with cancer and delivered money and presents. Several Schwetty's contributed gifts, Marc Halvorson and Jon and Wanda McLaughlin contributed some gifts, Fargo Force contributed a suite for a game in February as well as Fargo Force hats and Rookies contributed money to purchase additional Fargo Force hats.

Schwetty and Schwetty Cares need to step back and pat themselves on the back. Everything that they intended to do is coming to fruition.



**Fall Fundraiser**

After taking a few years off from the fall fundraiser, Mary Jo Brennan, Lyndsey Ness, Christi Hughes, Linda Meyer and others organized the fall event. Rookies contributed 20% of days sales, there were over 30 silent auction items, a 50/50 raffle and a purse raffle. The day was a big success and generated over \$3500.

**Schwetty25 and Beyond**

On January 13, 2025, I turned in my resignation to Schwetty. The desire is still there but the ability is not. I will continue as best I can for as long as I can to help or guide but only in the periphery. Schwetty will have its 9<sup>th</sup> annual Schwetty Balls Charity Golf Tournament on Friday, June 27, 2025, at The Meadows Golf Course, Moorhead and are beginning to plan the tournament but are also beginning to plan the 10<sup>th</sup> annual tournament to be held in 2026. Schwetty is enjoying new volunteers and new leadership, and I believe has turned the corner from Covid and again is gaining strength and momentum. The future looks bright so stay tuned.

## Summary By Jon McLaughlin

Through all the Ups and Downs, much has been accomplished by Schwetty through the years. Lots of blood, sweat, and tears have been shed by many over Schwetty and I hope the foundation that has been established will help keep Schwetty going on for many more years. Schwetty is a good thing, its mission, goals, and actions are something to be proud of. I hope Schwetty brings out the best in all of you. I would like to thank everyone that has contributed to this organization, volunteers, sponsors, donors and supporters. Without all of you none of this could happen.

In closing I am going to share my favorite poem which has sustained me most of my life. I recite this poem to myself daily.

### **Be the Best of Whatever You Are**

**By: Douglas Malloch**

If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill  
Be a scrub in the valley – but be  
The best little scrub by the side of the rill;  
Be a Bush if you can't be a tree

If you can't be a bush be a bit of grass  
And some highway happier make;  
If you can't be a muskie then just be a bass –  
But the liveliest bass in the lake!

We can't all be captains, we've got to be crew,  
There's something for all of us here,  
There's big work to do, and there's lesser to do,  
And the task you must do is the near.

If you can't be a highway then just be a trail,  
If you can't be the sun be a star;  
It isn't by size that you win or you fail –  
Be the best of whatever you are!

***The torch is now passed. I hope you all keep it blazing and carry it well. Don't do what I did, do much better. Love you All!***



## **Appendix: Comments and Letters**

### ***Dan and Kathy Lewin***

For many years, Kathy and I have been involved with various volunteer works as a means of giving back to our community. We found that donating our time is rewarding from so many perspectives. Volunteering solely for cancer related campaigns / fundraisers was inspired through the loss of parents to cancer and then Kathy's cancer diagnosis and successful treatment. Schwetty, Inc. has taken on the face of a brotherhood, having parallel passions to help those in need and we are most proud to be a part of it. Giving to those in need and witnessing their joy if only for a moment is priceless. In closing, if you or anyone you know has been seeking an opportunity to give back to our community, perhaps Schwetty is for you?

### ***Rookies Sports Bar & Grill by Keith Steinberg***

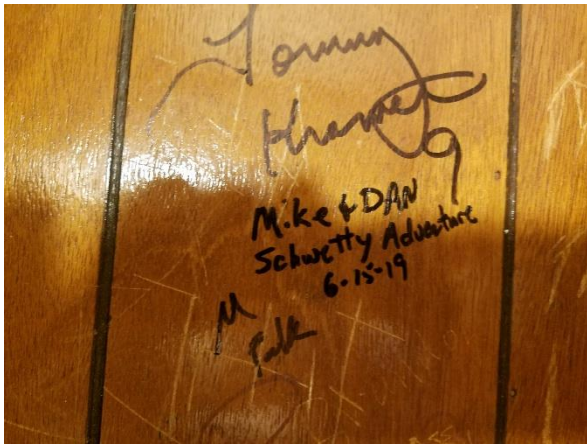
Rookies Involvement with Schwetty: A Commitment to Community

Since its inception, Schwetty has been a beacon of hope and support for countless individuals. We are honored to play a part in its mission. The funds raised by Schwetty go directly towards helping those in need within our community as well as raising cancer awareness. Schwetty offers more than just financial assistance; they also provide emotional support writing cards, arranging visits from Santa, and organizing outings to like FM RedHawks or Fargo Force games. This past year, Schwetty financially assisted a former employee of ours. When someone hears the word "cancer", its comforting to know that Schwetty will be there to provide support during this challenging time.

Rookies Sports Bar

### ***Dan Swenson***

My first Schwetty was in 2017, and I have been a proud member ever since. I enjoy comradery with Schwetty volunteers and supporters, giving back to the community and helping others. The Schwetty Cares event is my favorite event but there are so many that are amazing like Santa and his Schwetty Elves giving presents and money at Christmas. Every year I look forward to Schwetty Balls Charity Golf Tournament and The Day After Schwetty crab boil and fish fry. They have provided many fun times, wonderful memories and stories. A story I would like to share is during June 2019, Mike Anders and I went on a road trip to several places close to Fargo, (referred as Mike & Dan's Schwetty Adventure) Leonard Country Club, Ringneck Bar & Grill, Fort Saloon in Abercrombie and others to seek and ask for donations for Schwetty. Mike & Dan's Schwetty Adventure has become an annual event and in fact others have joined in on the adventure. We have a great time, and the stories are too many to be put here so you will have to ask Mike or I about them or better yet come to the next Schwetty Adventure or start your own.



Fort Saloon Men's Bathroom,  
 above the urinal and right below  
 Tommy Kramer's autograph  
 MIKE & DAN'S SCHWETTY ADVENTURE  
 6-15-19

**Beth Sours**

I've known Jon for a few years, and I was aware of his work on Schwetty, but I never dreamed I would end up on the receiving end of their generosity. Then in 2023, I was diagnosed with bladder cancer. The next few months were filled with racing to and from medical appointments and treatments, and I had little time to think about the financial burden my cancer was going to put on me. But when Christmas arrived, I knew I was in financial trouble, and I began to worry about how I would cover the remaining health insurance deductible. Then, out of the blue, Jon and The Schwetty came to my rescue! They presented me with the best Christmas gift of all--a check that helped me meet the deductible! It was a total surprise, but one that was very appreciated because I was able to get back to focusing on my treatments rather than the financial burden. I think about what they did for me often. I will always be grateful to Jon and Schwetty. They do amazing things, and I hope their gracious work continues into the future for others like me.

### ***Marc Halvorson***

Jon and the Schwetty Family:

I have stated this before, "You reap what you sow". Jon McLaughlin had a passion that was infectious and through his leadership, many local families dealing with cancer benefited from Jon's actions!! Thank you, Jon, for all your hard work and to all the members who made Schwetty become a reality!

Thank you for the nice tribute to my wife, Kathy.

Sincerely,

Marc A. Halvorson

### ***Lindsey Ness***

For many years now, I have been helping and volunteering with Schwetty Cares. I feel that volunteering is a powerful way to give back to the community and help others, no matter how big or small. Seeing those smiles on the family's faces with those we help makes it all worthwhile!

Volunteering has an impact as people work together towards a goal that will make a difference. This defines the Schwetty Balls Charity Golf Tournament. Not only is it a great cause, but it is also fun, food, memories, time with family/friends and golf! I look forward to this every year!

Reflection and personal growth are also a part of volunteering, especially for me. I was part of promoting Schwetty Cares on radio. I got out of my "comfort zone" and reached BIG 98.7 to help us spread the word about our event. They were grateful, supportive and had an interview with us! Just this alone helped me grow and reflect on what I can really do to make a difference!

Volunteering is important in bringing hope, happiness and so much more to all those involved. Ever thought that maybe volunteering is for you? If so, please reach out to any one of us here at Schwetty and we would love to discuss how you can help!!

Lindsey Ness

**John Lund,** (Original Schwetty)

The History of Schwetty was well written and the efforts over the years are inspiring. It has been a privilege to play in the tournament over the years and be part of the inaugural photo. Having played a small part in some of the fundraising and planning in the past it is great to see how this has evolved over the years. Our legacy is written based on how we treat others, the good works we do and how we serve others. You have done much to grow the good works over the years and all involved should be proud of the legacy they have created.

John Lund

**Jay McLaughlin**

I am Jon's brother. Jon talked me into golfing in the Schwetty in 2019, the golf tournament at Rose Creek. I was living in Sioux Falls at the time and had not golfed in about 20 years. The cause is very important to me. My sister, Patty and two of my best friends died from cancer within six months of my first Schwetty.

I am very Thankful for participating. I have made many friends and many memories. After a couple of these great weekends, I decided to move back to Fargo.

Jon and I have worked closely along with many others to make the tournament a success. There are many night before Schwetty (Thursday night) stories at Jon and Wanda's doing last minute preparations for the tournament. Many laughs, memories and sometimes "Why are we doing this?" I have many stories, but one story stands out. The night before Schwetty23, Jon was doing his normal final last-minute preparation for the tournament and a few of us were helping. Jon received last minute sponsorships and was making up signs. Jon and the board are always watching spending, so they purchased some vinyl lettering to make their own banners. The lettering was probably 1 1/2 tall. Here is where it gets funny, our buddy Charles from Arizona and I were tasked to make up the banners. We started after midnight. Jon would come out to the garage with how he wanted the banners and Charles, and I would try to find the letters on the sheets to make the banner. The letters were different colors, so we tried to match or coordinate the colors. A little alcohol was needed. After making a few banners it was getting more difficult to find the proper letters and we had to be creative. You can about imagine the jokes, laughs and cuss words that occurred trying to search for letters to make the final banners. Many of the ideas we came up with for the final banners couldn't be displayed. Keep in mind it is after 2:30am the night before Schwetty and we are still making signs and banners. Jon came out with one more sign to be made at around 3:00am and some how we got it done. After our banner making concluded now we had to load up everything for the tournament onto a trailer so we would be ready for the morning. I think we got to bed after 4:00am and were up at 6:00am. Just one of the many night before Schwetty memories at Jon and Wandas.

What makes this night so memorable is Charles and I were laughing our butts off making these signs and Friday there were 40mph winds so they couldn't even be used but we still distributed them to the proper holes as promised. Even with the winds it was another fun and successful Schwetty.

Jay McLaughlin