



RIGA NEWS

Newsletter of the Rhode Island Golf Association

Up, Up and Away

by Joe Sprague, Jr.



Wanumetonomy from about 800 feet up.

I never really had the desire to fly in a helicopter. The idea of it was appealing, but to actually do it was another story. Not that I have a fear of flying. I've flown in jets dozens of times without giving it a second thought. But with a helicopter it seems like the margin for error is a lot smaller.

Somewhat surprisingly, my wife gave me an introductory helicopter flying lesson as a Christmas gift a couple of years ago. She figured that since I had gone skydiving once that I'd like to learn how to fly a helicopter. This was not necessarily the case. I was appreciative of the gift, though, and promised my wife that I would go.

Well, two years went by and I always found an excuse not to go. I was too busy in the summer and it was too cold in the winter. Finally, this year I called the guy at Newport Helicopters located at Newport State Airport. I told him I had this gift certificate for an introductory flying lesson but it had expired. I told him I really didn't want to fly a helicopter, but maybe I'd like to go up for a ride and take some aerial photos. Somewhat to my chagrin, he said no problem. I guess I really had to go through with it.

I figured that I could go up and take some photos of golf courses which I could

then use for fodder for the newsletter which you are presently reading. We made a date for the ride on a day which was forecast for clear and sunny skies. Sure enough, it was a perfectly clear, crisp November day, maybe even a little warmer than normal. I arrived at the airport not knowing what kind of helicopter I was going to climb into. I thought it might be one of those weather helicopters or maybe even some posh helicopter like the one Greg Norman flies. I began to panic when I notice only one tiny little helicopter on the tarmac. It looked like an oversized toy.

The pilot came out of his office and we introduced ourselves and made small talk for a minute. I told him I'd like to take pictures of some of the golf courses and he said no problem. But with only a half hour ride scheduled, he said we'd be restricted to Aquidneck Island. I kept staring at the helicopter. It was so small. He asked me if I was ready. "I guess so," I murmured.

The helicopter was a Robinson R-22, a two-seater with the pilot seated to the right. It was like sitting in a clear plastic bubble. To make things more interesting, the passenger side had no door. "But you've got a seat belt," the pilot piped up, trying to be reassuring. Gee, that should help if

we drop out of the sky from 1,000 feet up. He started the engine and handed me headphones which were hot-wired with a microphone, allowing us to talk to each other over the noise.

After the engine had warmed up, the pilot pulled back on the stick and we began to lift off. We pulled away slowly and the ascent was gradual. Still, my heart was in my throat. In less than a minute we were up around 800 feet and I was just trying to breathe normally and not appear too nervous. "There's Wanumetonomy," he said almost immediately. It was right in front of us. I guess I didn't have any time to be nervous. I got my camera ready and we hovered around the course as I snapped away. Everybody's seen aerial photos and blimp shots on TV, but to be up there in person was completely different. The course looked like a finely manicured field with dots of sand and trees. I tried to pick out individual holes which I was able to do eventually. Golf didn't look like such a hard sport from up here. How tough could it be to hit a ball around that tiny plot of land?

From Wanumetonomy we headed over to Newport Country Club which took

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USGA Qualifying Results

OPEN-Local

Warwick Country Club
May 13 • Entries: 46

Larry Demers	70
Rodney Butcher	71
John Paesani	72
Webb Heintzelman	72

AMATEUR-Sectional

Valley Country Club
July 30 • Entries: 53

Mike Capone	69-69-138
Paul Quigley	76-70-146
Mike Soucy	70-76-146

1997 RIGA Player of the Year Final Points Standings

Player	Club	Points
1. Mike Capone	Quidnessett	695
2. Joey Iacofano	Metacomet	680
3. Bill Lunnie	Wannamoisett	490
4. Bill Campbell	Wanumetonomy	410
5. Paul Quigley	RICC	320
6. Don Wright	Potowomut	305
7. Charles Blanchard	Wannamoisett	265
8. Dr. George Pirie	Valley	235
9. Peter Laurelli	Laurel Lane	205
10. John Auclair	Kirkbrae	200
T11. Mike Soucy	Valley	195
T11. Brad Edgerton	Wanumetonomy	195
13. Rob Grossguth	West Warwick	185
14. Andy Calcione	Metacomet	180
15. Pat Lyons	Winnapaug	175
16. Jim Stallman	RICC	160
17. Mike McCormick	Triggs	145
18. Bryce Wallor	Wannamoisett	140
19. Jim Bjorge	Triggs	135
20. Fred Schick	Point Judith	125
T21. John Pellegrino	Triggs	110
T21. Greg Richard	Wannamoisett	110
23. Peter Angelone	Triggs	100
T24. Marc Brocato	Triggs	95
T24. Shane Rice	Valley	95
T24. Joe Fogarty	Triggs	95
T27. Jim Mahoney	Point Judith	85
T27. Norm Lutz	Pawtucket	85
T27. Derek Breau	Laurel Lane	85
T30. Kevin Clary	Potowomut	80
T30. Charles Hayes	Newport	80

(Top 30 players plus ties are exempt from pre-qualifying for the 1997 State Amateur.)

1997 RIGA Membership Report

Club	1995	1996	1997
AGAWAM	66	63	69
ALPINE	87	85	94
CRANSTON	173	163	142
CRESTWOOD	118	124	128
FOSTER	63	68	40
GLOCESTER	56	75	84
GREEN VALLEY	76	75	84
KIRKBRAE	116	107	112
LAUREL LANE	92	99	61
LEDGEMONT	64	56	53
LINCOLN	69	81	80
METACOMET	118	114	108
MISQUAMICUT	19	17	22
MONTAUP	146	147	129
NEW ENGLAND	-	-	18
NEWPORT	17	15	9
PAWTUCKET	118	122	128
PT. JUDITH	112	112	98
POTOWOMUT	126	126	125
QUIDNESSETT	108	102	117
NO. KINGSTOWN	12	17	24
RICC	94	110	109
SAKONNET	7	5	4
SEAVIEW	55	39	36
TRIGGS	218	210	202
VALLEY	153	113	122
WANNAMOISETT	181	182	185
WANUMETONOMY	106	87	82
WARWICK	108	117	112
WEST WARWICK	114	99	87
WINNAPAUG	60	67	65
WOODLAND GREENS	174	180	195

TOTALS

1995: 3,026 1996: 2,995
1997: 2,924

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President's Message



Edmund M. Mauro, Jr.

The RIGA's primary mission is to run golf tournaments – twelve in all, in addition to our Weeklies. From the Parent & Daughter to our most prestigious, the State Amateur, no one runs a golf tournament any better than our staff with the support of many volunteers. Led by Executive Director Joe Sprague, our reputation for well-run tournaments goes far beyond our state's boundaries. On behalf of all our participants, may I extend congratulations and a big thank you to Joe!

Two new and significant developments are underway within your organization. Led by Chairman Bill Cooke, the Long Range Planning Committee met to review all practices and policies of the RIGA. Highlights of their findings include the following: • To pursue opportunities for new revenue through a more active finance committee; • To assist the executive director in implementing the organization's annual plan by meeting quarterly with an operating committee; • To hold joint Rules Committee meetings with USGA personnel; • To institute two-year terms for President.

The committee unanimously agreed that a one-year term did not provide enough time for the President to make a meaningful contribution. The executive director might require more help, particularly with matters such as revenue enhancement and the procurement of tournament sites. We see the problem of course availability becoming more challenging. Regretfully, in some quarters of our state, golf is not respected in the traditional sense in which most of us were raised.

Secondly, a small committee has been hard at work exploring the feasibility of an RIGA sponsored short-course, driving range and headquarters site on the old Dyerville State Park land on the Providence/Johnston line off Manton Avenue. We're very close to an announcement. Hopefully, by the time you read this we will have been able to go public on this exciting project.

There are so many people to thank, but space will not allow individual recognition. So to our staff, officers, vice presidents, club officers and personnel, our club pros, superintendents and managers . . . thank you all for making 1997 a banner year for Rhode Island golf. Thank you all for keeping the RIGA strong in order that we might "enhance golf's reputation of being a game of SPORTSMANSHIP, HONOR and INTEGRITY".

Executive Director's Report



What a year! Because of the great golfing weather and golf's continued popularity, the Association enjoyed a banner year. The Weekly Invitational program had more than 5,000 rounds played while the major tournaments scene was quite active as well. The GHIN handicap service was in operation at 28 of our 32 member club with Jules Cohen, our consultant, coordinating everything between the USGA and the clubs. The Player of the Year race was exciting throughout the season with the final determination in doubt until our last event with Mike Capone edging Joey Iacofano.

Already, we're planning for 1998 with a few new wrinkles on the drawing board which we hope will enhance our tournament programs – both Weekly and Majors. We listen to what is being said by the players and then attempt to implement changes, additions or deletions in our overall operation to make things better. Time will tell.

Let's hope the winter isn't too severe, and we have an early spring. I can't wait to put into practice that new found secret I discovered at the end of the '97 season. If only I could find that paper I wrote it on.

Keep on swinging, everyone. Nineteen-ninety-eight will be the best ever.

– Joseph J. Sprague

Mike Capone - 1997 RIGA Player of the Year



It was a tight race most of the year between Mike Capone and Joey Iacofano. The two were neck-and-neck all year in their battle for RIGA Player of the Year until Mike pulled ahead for good with his victory in the Stroke Play. After all the dust had cleared, a mere 15 points separated the two.

Mike started his year off with a bang by advancing through local qualifying for the U.S. Open in May. After not playing as well as he'd hoped in the Northeast Amateur, Mike was out to repeat as State Amateur Champion in July which was being contested on his home track, Quidnessett. He waltzed through the field in qualifying to gain medalist honors, but struggled, albeit successfully, in match play. He required 19, 20 and 19 holes to win his first three matches. All the extra holes finally caught up with Mike in the semi-finals as he fell to eventual runner-up, Peter Laurelli, in 22 holes.

Later in the month, Mike travelled to Lewiston, NY where he finished 10th in the Porter Cup, a prominent national event. He followed up that strong performance by blitzing the field by eight strokes with a pair of 69's at U.S. Amateur qualifying.

A strong eighth place finish at the A.T. Cross Open left Mike with just one more tournament before returning to Wake Forest, and he made sure no one would forget him while he was away, either. In the Stoke Play Championship at Crestwood CC, Mike shot rounds of 66-68-69 to capture his second RIGA major by nine shots and put an exclamation point next to his record year.

1997 RIGA Championship Results

Ed Perry Senior Four-Ball

Cranston Country Club • May 21-22 • Entries: 41 Teams

GROSS DIVISION

Joe Iacofano & Brad Faxon, Sr.	70-71-141
Bob Pezzullo & Ted Tavernier	70-76-146
Joe Pieranunzi & Harry Edmonds	73-74-147

NET DIVISION

Manny DePointe & Ralph Apici	63-63-126
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Mid Amateur Championship

Wanumetonomy Golf & Country Club

Newport Country Club

May 28-29 • Entries: 119

Bill Lunnie	72-72-144
Paul Quigley	69-77-146
Fred Schick	74-74-148
Jim Stallman	70-80-150
Brad Edgerton	75-76-151
John Pellegrino	77-74-151
Dr. George Pirie	76-75-151



Joey Iacofano & John Auclair

Four-Ball Championship

Triggs Memorial Golf Course • June 9-10

Entries: 109 Teams

John Auclair & Joey Iacofano	70-65-66-201
Bill Campbell & Brad Edgerton	66-70-71-207
Rob Grossguth & Mike Dounetos	68-72-68-208
Fred & Paul Schick	71-68-70-209
Cosmo Minicucci & Peter Angelone	69-68-73-210
Charlie Blanchard & Bill Lunnie	72-68-71-211

Mixed Foursomes Championship

Green Valley Country Club • June 23-25 • Entries: 74 Teams

SEMI FINALS

Bill Johnson & Dara Rittman <i>def.</i> John Pellegrino & Jo-Ann Martins	3-2
Rob Grossguth & Becky Mailloux <i>def.</i> Jack Ellis & Kerry Minior	2 up

FINALS

Grossguth & Mailloux <i>def.</i> Johnson & Rittman	1 up
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MEDALISTS

Norm Levesque & Marisa White / Marc Carrier & Charlene Petrone	76
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State Amateur

Quidnessett Country Club • July 7-11 • Entries: 286

QUARTER FINALS

Mike Capone <i>def.</i> Greg Richard	20 Holes
Peter Laurelli <i>def.</i> Derek Breau	4-3
Don Wright <i>def.</i> Jim Mahoney	2-1
Joe Iacofano <i>def.</i> Paul Quigley	2-1

SEMI FINALS

Laurelli <i>def.</i> Capone	22 Holes
Iacofano <i>def.</i> Wright	3-2

FINALS

Iacofano <i>def.</i> Laurelli	5-4 (36 Holes)
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MEDALIST

Mike Capone	71-72-143
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A.T. Cross Open

Green Valley Country Club • August 4-5 • Entries: 146

(x) Scott Trethewey, Pleasant Valley	\$5,000
Rodney Butcher, Potowomut	\$3,750
(a) Bill Campbell, Wanumetonomy	
72-68-74-214	
Tim Duffy, Grand Cypress	\$2,750
72-70-73-215	
Tom Johnson, West Warwick	\$2,750
75-72-70-217	
(a) Bill Lunnie, Wannamoisett	
72-73-72-217	
Phil Fecteau, Firefly	
70-71-76-217	\$2,100
Paul Parajeckas, Woburn	
72-75-71-218	\$1,450
Rusty Gunnarson, Bay Pointe	
72-75-71-218	\$1,450
(a) Mike Capone, Quidnessett	
73-76-69-218	

x - won play-off a - amateur

1997 RIGA Championship Results



Frank & Jane Toole

Parent & Daughter Championship

Pawtucket Country Club • July 15 • Entries: 38 Teams

SENIOR DIVISION

Vin Petrarca & Marisa White	75
Frank & Jane Toole	75

JUNIOR DIVISION

Fred & Allison Schick	75
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Father & Son Championship

Alpine Country Club • July 28-29 • Entries: 202 Teams

SENIOR DIVISION

Joe & Joey Iacofano	72
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JUNIOR DIVISION

Mike & Tom McCormick	75
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Junior Amateur Championship

Laurel Lane Golf Course • July 21-24 • Entries: 81

SEMI FINALS

Eddie Yoon <i>def.</i> Antonio Giorgi	2 Up
Tom McCormick <i>def.</i> Nick Gernt	4-3

FINALS

McCormick <i>def.</i> Yoon	4-2
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MEDALIST

Mike Sutcliffe	71
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Stroke Play

Crestwood • August 12-13 • Entries: 143

Mike Capone	66-68-69-203
Don Wright	65-71-76-212
Joey Iacofano	69-76-68-213
Bill Lunnie	74-69-71-214
Rob Grossguth	75-70-70-215
George Pirie	72-72-73-217
Marc Brocato	74-71-74-219
Pat Lyons	73-74-74-221
Bill Campbell	74-72-76-222
Kevin Clary	75-74-74-223
John Auclair	75-74-74-223

Senior Amateur

Agawam Hunt • September 8-12 • Entries: 155

SEMI FINALS

Ted Tavernier <i>def.</i> Bob Pezzullo	4-3
Norm Lutz <i>def.</i> Arthur Lewis	3-2

FINALS

Tavernier <i>def.</i> Lutz	1 Up
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MEDALIST

Rick Wilson	72
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(L-R) Eddie Yoon, Bob Mulligan and Tom McCormick. This year marked Mr. Mulligan's 44th year working at the Junior Championship. A long-time member of the USGA Junior Committee, he is also a past president of the RIGA and Pawtucket CC. The Mulligan Inter-Club Tournament, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 1998, is named in his honor. Bob retired to Ellenton, FL several years ago but still makes a trip to RI each summer to help the RIGA.

Northeast Amateur Invitational

Wannamoisett Country Club

June 19-22 • Entries: 80

273-Brad Elder, Overland Park, KS	71-64-68-70
276-Paul Simson, Raleigh, NC	68-68-73-67
277-Joel Kribel, Pleasanton, CA	72-69-70-66
Trip Kuehne, McKinney, TX	71-67-68-71
278-Tim Spitz, Pittsford, NY	67-74-67-70



Newport Country Club



Green Valley Country Club

Up, Up And Away

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almost no time at all without the Bellevue Avenue traffic. We approached from the water over Ocean Drive. It looked just beautiful with the waves crashing below us and the Newport Bridge in the distance. We flew directly over the 4th green towards the clubhouse. There didn't appear to be anyone out playing. I snapped a few pictures and we headed over to Jamestown for a few minutes. The harbor there was tranquil with only a few boats dotting the water.

After our quick flyover of Jamestown, the pilot suggested we head over to Green Valley and then call it a day. Green Valley was the only one of the three courses that I couldn't fit into one picture frame from 800 feet up. It's spread out on such a huge expanse of land which is hard to visualize unless you're viewing it from this height. I was also amazed at how close the water is to Green Valley. When you're playing the course you never encounter a water view, but it's not really too far from the 13th green. The pilot said we had to head back even though it seemed like we had just left. The incredible view was even more exhilarating without the confinement of a door or window.

As we started our descent it was like waking up from a dream. The world began to take on its familiar tone again as I was gradually whisked back into everyday reality. Everything seemed more beautiful from the bird's eye view. And that blasted sport of golf, seeming so benign when hovering over the tame fairways and greens, how tough could it be? From ground level, we all know too well.

RIGA Benefits from USGA's Generosity in '97



Bobby Acciaro at work.

The Rhode Island Gold Association received a generous donation of goods and services from the United States Golf Association during 1997. The one-time grant was part of the USGA's \$3 million capital support initiative to more than 100 state and regional amateur golf associations around the country.

The RIGA received a computer hardware and software package valued at more than \$6,000. Part of the

software was designed by the USGA specifically for golf associations which, among other things, will allow easy e-mail communication between golf associations. The USGA has also implemented a help desk at their headquarters in Far Hills, NJ to handle any computer problems which may arise.

The RIGA also received a laser measuring device and 12 state-

of-art radios. The laser will be used for measuring during course rating and the radios were put to use at this past season's championships.

In addition to the above mentioned equipment, the RIGA also was granted \$5,000 for use in hiring an intern as part of the USGA's P.J. Boatwright Internship Program. The program, which started in 1991, is named after the USGA's late and legendary golf administrator and Rules expert and is designed to give experience to individuals who are interested in pursuing a career in golf administration, while assisting state and regional golf associations.

Former Barrington High All-Stater Bobby Acciaro served as the RIGA's intern during the 1997 season. Bobby attended a week-long orientation with other interns at Golf House in Far Hills. The entire trip was paid for by the USGA.

During his few months with the RIGA, Bobby was exposed to all facets of running golf tournaments. Anyone who played in or attended a tournament would have noticed Bobby performing any number of duties: starting players on the first tee, working in the scoring tent, announcing on the p.a. system. Bobby did a bit of everything, and he did it very professionally. He also worked behind the scenes in the office where most of the prep work takes place, and he was also exposed to course rating.