

# RIGA FLASHBACK

Many top amateurs pass through Rhode Island each year while competing in the Northeast Amateur. While quite a few are career amateurs, a large majority are college players who aspire to play the PGA Tour. **Leonard Thompson** (R) is pictured playing in the 1970 Northeast Amateur where he nearly drove Wannamoisett's par-4 seventh hole. Now in his second year on the Senior PGA Tour, the long-hitting Thompson was a three-time champion on the regular tour with over \$1.8 million in career earnings. He finished 40th on the '97 Senior Tour money list and is off to a good start this year.



If not for **Mark O'Meara's** back nine heroics, **David Duval** may well have won this year's Masters. Duval is pictured here after his 1992 Northeast victory sharing a laugh with then tournament chairman **Bill Lunnie**. Although a few have flirted with winning The Masters, **Ben Crenshaw** is the only Northeast past champion who can claim a green jacket, two actually, with his victories in 1984 and 1995.



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# RIGA NEWS

Newsletter of the Rhode Island Golf Association

## DONALD ROSS SOCIETY: PRESERVING GOLF'S PAST FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

By Joe Sprague, Jr.



have been tinkered with over the years by uninformed green chairmen or revisionist architects. In some cases, there's not much left of the course that resembles Donald Ross.

The Donald Ross Society was formed in part to help preserve and restore the golf courses of the venerated golf course architect. The primary goal of The Society is to provide information to those people who are on the front lines in caring for Ross' courses - executive boards, green committees, members, pros and superintendents. The Society has an Historical Committee which helps clubs obtain historical information and original course designs to aid them in any restoration project.

The beginnings of the Donald Ross Society can be traced to a 1988 round of golf. Ross devotee Mike Fay was playing with fellow club members Barry Palm, Steve Edwards and Bruce Taylor at their home club Wampanoag CC in West Hartford, CT. The four had spent a day the year before watching the 1987 U.S. Girls Juniors at The Orchards Club, a classic Donald Ross course in western Massachusetts. They remarked at the time on how well preserved they found The Orchards compared to their own Ross course back home which had undergone various redesigns over the years.

During that 1988 round of golf, Mike Fay and his compatriots talked about what a good idea it would be to have an organization which could provide information for people with an interest in preserving Donald Ross golf courses. In early 1989 the four men kicked in one thousand dollars apiece, drew up a set of by-laws and The Donald Ross Society was born. To

solicit potential members, they placed an ad in *Golf World* and *The Met Golfer*, the official magazine of the Metropolitan (NY) Golf Association. The response was immediate. "Ben Crenshaw was the fifth or sixth member," recounts Acting Secretary Fay. "That really struck a chord."

### THE ROSS METHOD

Donald Ross' main tenet in designing a golf course was to favor Mother Nature whenever possible by using the natural lay of the land. Part of Ross' true genius was his ability to visualize golf holes on a piece of land not unlike a master painter surveying his blank canvas before mixing his paints. And he often began by picking what appeared to be natural green sites and working backwards from there. These were often crowned greens which he built on top of natural elevations, and many were left open in front to allow for the pitch and run shot.

Before coming to America in 1899, Donald Ross learned the basics of club making and golf course maintenance from Old Tom Morris. Already a fine player, Ross further honed his game while at St. Andrews, eventually finishing as high as fifth in the U.S. Open. Always one to keep the championship player in mind when designing a course, Ross believed that a true championship course should test all the shots in a player's bag. Long before the advent of the 7-wood or Tight Lies woods, Ross also believed the ability to play the long irons was the true test of a good player.

### CHASING AWAY FAKERS

A golf course representative will usually contact The Donald Ross Society if there is an interest in learning more about

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## President's Message



Welcome to spring and to the 1998 Rhode Island Golf Association season. Although Mother Nature was very kind to us during this past winter, it is still nice to be able to play golf on green grass and smell the fresh air of spring.

The Rhode Island Golf Association has been busy putting together a full schedule of events for the 1998 golf season. This year

the Mixed tournament will be held at Warwick Country Club where participants will be able to experience all the latest renovations to the golf course. Point Judith Country Club, which has also completed many renovations, should prove to be a great match play course as they host their very first State Amateur.

The Rhode Island Golf Association has established packages for the weekly tournaments. These packages have been very successful and while there are some openings available, we are all very pleased with the response of our membership to this new method of selling the weekly tournaments. Thank you for your support and we look forward to a wonderful golf season.

Patrick J. Shanahan, Jr.

## Executive Director's Report



The 1998 season got off to a flying start with the playing of the Allie Chatterton Memorial at Pawtucket Country Club. For the first time in the past 13 years we had two great golf days for so early in the season. Let's hope this is a harbinger for things to come.

The "packaging concept" for our Weekly program has been well received. The majority of the play-

ers seem to like the opportunity to select and purchase a package up front - no waiting on the phone and no shutouts. Packages C and D were the players' favorites for whatever reason.

Since our last newsletter, RICC and Potowomut have instituted a non-metal spike policy for '98 which now makes the majority of our clubs adopting non-metal spikes.

We've had much positive feedback on our recent newsletters which was most welcomed. We're attempting to communicate with the many members who have given us their continued support.

The Fred Malcolm Memorial and the Scoring Average have caught the players' attention. Hopefully they will add some excitement to the schedule.

Regarding my own game, I've gotten all the latest in equipment and technology. The only thing lacking is that swing secret which I discovered at the end of '97 and I've misplaced.

- Joseph J. Sprague

## Book Review: *Fathers, Sons & Golf*

Fathers and sons have a long legacy in the game of golf. Dating back to Old Tom and Young Tom Morris at St. Andrews, the game of golf has always been something of a treasure passed on through the generations. At this year's Masters low-amateur Matt Kuchar played all 72 holes with his father, Peter, on the bag. At last year's Masters, the most enduring image was of a victorious Tiger Woods hugging his father, Earl.

Golf literature has always been dotted with father and son references. A new book out entitled *Fathers, Sons & Golf* further explores the subject, and it should be of particular interest to Rhode Island golfers. Author Andrew Shanley grew up playing Warwick Country Club and he refers to his Rhode Island upbringing throughout the book. An autobiography of sorts, the book is subtitled, *Lessons in Honor and Integrity*. Shanley writes about his experience of introducing golf to his two sons, Colin and McLean. What starts out as a teaching experience for a father ends up being a learning experience for both father and sons.

Shanley, 46, is a partner in an advertising firm in Saratoga Springs, NY. A 1969 graduate of Warwick Vets High School, he previously worked as a reporter for The Vineyard Gazette and Worcester Telegram. His father, Joe Shanley, is still a member at Warwick Country Club. Joe reports that the book is already a success. A golf coach in Maryland made it required reading for all his players. An insurance company in California hired Andrew to speak about the book at its annual meeting. And Joe is also quick to add that his son still sports a 10 handicap.

Some of Andrew Shanley's favorite golf related quotes are featured before each chapter. There are quotes from Fred Couples, Charlie Sifford, Bobby Jones and Harvey Penick. In fact the design of the book is vaguely reminiscent of Penick's *Little Red Book*. All in all it's an enjoyable read which can be enjoyed by all golfers, not just fathers and sons. It's published by Hyperion Press and retails for \$22.95.

Excerpt: *When I was a boy playing golf at Warwick Country Club, we would often go out onto the course very early. I can vividly recall the roll of the ball making lines across the green, shooting out a little fantail of dew as it made its silent journey to the hole. The world was redolent of the freshly cut grass piled near the back corners of the greens. As we stood on the ninth tee alongside Narragansette Bay, I would watch the fishing boats fight their way through the chop as I considered how the strength of the wind would affect the flight of my ball.*

## ASSOCIATION NEWS & MISCELLANY

There are several large-scale projects being undertaken at area clubs, both on and off the golf course. In a move that will eliminate the need to use East Providence city water for course irrigation, Wannamoisett CC has enlarged its pond on the 14th hole to almost double the size. The pond, which will have water pumped into it from various wells on the course, will hold an estimated three million gallons of water. A new maintenance building is also under construction which should be completed by early summer.

North Kingstown Municipal GC is erecting a new clubhouse building which will also house a new dining room and pro shop. The old structure will be torn down and a much larger parking lot is also planned.

Warwick Country Club has completed its bunker renovation program which has also included adding some bunkers. Many trees have been pruned or cut down, and there are plans for further tree work during the course of the season.

The Misquamicut Club began major renovations last fall on holes #11-17 which are the seven holes close to the ocean. Much of the work has to do with drainage and raising the level of the land closest to the water.

Feeling a little crowded on the golf course lately? Nearly three million people tried golf for the first time in 1997 according to a recent report by the National Golf Foundation. This figure represents a 51.2 percent increase from 1996. The report cites Tiger Woods, new courses, savvy golf commercials and a strong economy as contributing factors. The report also indicates that



Wannamoisett's Pond at #14 Under Construction.

hundreds of thousands of novice golfers also drop out of the game each year, and that the current frenzy is likely to level off.

The current golf boom is also impacting the USGA. Because of the dramatic increases in entries into its championships, golf's governing body has reduced the handicap limits into six men's tournaments. The Open, Amateur, Senior Amateur and Juniors have all been reduced by one stroke while the Senior Open and Mid-Amateur have both been reduced from 5.4 to 3.4. In addition to ensuring that the entrants are players of bona fide ability, the USGA also hopes that their action will curb the need for securing additional qualifying sites which the larger-than-expected fields has forced some officials to do in recent years. Entry requirements for the USGA's women's championships will be unaffected.

Speaking of the USGA, they continue to demonstrate their commitment to the game. In addition to their ongoing crusade to make the game more affordable and accessible to people, they have made generous donations in the form of goods and services to regional golf associations. The RIGA was fortunate to be the recipient of a state of the art computer package last year. This year the USGA has provided training and funds for a computer assistant who will assist the RIGA office with computer support. The RIGA has retained the services of **Jim Beck**, a computer programming student at Rhode Island College. After spending four days of training at the USGA's Golf House in March, Jim will spend three hours per week at the RIGA office through October 9th.

OK, for all you golfers with computers, some internet news: USGA entry applications are now available online at their web site [www.usga.org](http://www.usga.org). However, entries will still have to be mailed in a good ol' fashioned envelope. Check out Pawtucket Country Club's website at [www.pcc.com](http://www.pcc.com). It's very well done complete with photos and tournament schedules. You can even see what head pro and new dad, **Jim Maynard**, has in his shop. Finally, if you'd like to e-mail a message to the RIGA you can do so at [rigolf@usga.org](mailto:rigolf@usga.org). No web site yet but we've working on it.



How the hole looks to Brad Faxon . . .

## FROM PERSIMMON TO TITANIUM, HAMPTON'S SEEN IT ALL



Bob Hampton has seen everything in his 32 years of repairing and making golf clubs. Back in 1962 when his late father, Darrell, started a club repair business life was much simpler in the world of golf clubs. Irons were either made of forged or cast metal. Woods were either persimmon or laminated. And shafts were pretty much available in steel only.

Bob took over the business from his dad in 1967 and made a name for himself in building custom clubs. He was also known to have some of the finest persimmon club heads around. And if you needed your own beat up old wood refinished? No problem. You brought it to Bob and he made it look like new.

The graphite shaft, first introduced in the 1970's, ushered in the new era in golf club technology which has reached a fever pitch today. No one could have predicted then that wooden headed clubs would soon be replaced by metal. All of a sudden Bob Hampton's business was changing. "By the late-80's wooden clubs were pretty much dead," laments Hampton. "The big companies gave up on wooden clubs. They saw the craftsman as a dying breed and with metal coming in, all the clubs were being made at the foundries."

Bob Hampton was a wooden club craftsman of the highest order, but if he was going to survive in the new marketplace he had to change. So change he did. He purchased a loft and lie machine and a shaft frequency machine. Hampton will be the first to tell you that the shaft is the most important component these days. "The shaft is the motor of the club," asserts Bob. "In the world of \$400 drivers you've got to know what shaft works with what club."

Hampton goes on to explain further that the companies which produce the most popular titanium club heads on the market today use up to five different shaft companies. So five people could have a 9 degree, stiff flex titanium driver and, quite possibly, they could be swinging five distinctly different clubs. Bob points out that it's important for everyone – and especially the better player – to have his or her clubs evaluated because what you think that you're buying isn't always what you're getting. Many of the area's better players come to Hampton just for that reason. Bob has even worked on clubs for Dana Quigley, Billy Andrade and Jay Sigel.

Most people might figure that titanium is the end of the line for technology, but Hampton is quick to point out that there's a new metal on the horizon called LiquidMetal. Discovered in the labs of the California Institute of Technology, LiquidMetal is an alloy of titanium, zirconium, nickel, copper and beryllium. In layman's terms, it is harder than titanium while providing a softer feel. "Japanese companies are using LiquidMetal faces in clubs right now," Hampton points out. "It's the metal of the future."

Hampton acknowledges that technology may be reaching its limit before the game is adversely affected. "We can't have everyone hitting 350 yard drives," Bob admits.

So whether you have a dusty set of persimmons in need of refinishing, a set of irons that need reconditioning or you've just purchased the latest hot club off the rack, chances are Bob Hampton will know what you're talking about. His shop is still located at 71 Warren Avenue in East Providence and his phone number is 434-8607.

### SHORT COURSE UPDATE By Ed Mauro, Jr.

As many of you have probably read in *The Providence Journal* in recent months, the RIGA is involved with the development of a golf course on the Providence/ Johnston town line. The site is the former Dyerville State Park which the local kids commonly refer to as "Button Hole". The idea behind the proposed "short course" is to provide an opportunity for city kids to learn the game at a place that is both affordable and accessible.

After many hours – probably more than 3,000 to date – Button Hole is reaching a point where our committee can say, "It's going to happen." Before reporting on our progress, I would like to acknowledge our committee: Vice Chair Tim Harrington and committee members Scott Cooke, Ron Rene, Fred Schick, Dick Schoon, Joe Sprague, Jr. and Bill Tracey. They seldom miss a meeting; they arrive on time and they always have a lot to add in a very constructive manner.

All major items have been resolved regarding our land lease with the State of Rhode Island. The nine-hole short course has been routed. The driving range/teaching center will be 250 yards long. It will be two-ended with 30 stations at one end and grass at the other. The range is our income producer to support, in part, the play of the neighborhood kids.

As you also may have read in *The Providence Journal*, Billy Andrade and Brad Faxon have agreed to be Honorary Chairs for a \$1.5 million fundraising campaign. The balance of the committee will be announced soon.

If anyone would like to volunteer their services in producing a video to be used for fundraising, we would welcome your contribution.

If you have any suggestions regarding Button Hole or any suggestions regarding our plans, please call me at 334-6803 or Tim Harrington at 738-6400.

**Donald Ross**

*Continued from page 1.*

the restoration process. Rather than advising a golf club about a particular project, The Society, as Acting Secretary Fay relates, "has had more impact on raising consciousness at these different clubs to what they really have. We've also chased a lot of fakers out of the business." By fakers, Fay refers to the people who may try to pass themselves off as skilled practitioners of golf course restoration or architecture but who have little experience in either field. If the club is interested The Society will also recommend names of architects who are knowledgeable in Ross restoration.

Mike Fay knows of what he speaks. He has played more than 150 Donald Ross golf courses himself and helped in the collection of historical data at 225 courses. He has spoken to representatives at 25-30 courses and spoken to green chairmen at another 40-50. The Donald Ross Society now boasts more than 1,600 individual members.

The Donald Ross Society also operates a scholarship fund which grants money to college students pursuing degrees in agronomy, landscape design or turf grass maintenance. They also sponsor an internship program where a student in the aforementioned fields can study under a golf course architect or superintendent.

In the ever-changing sea of modern golf The Donald Ross Society is anchored in the past with its eye on the future.

Last year Golf Week magazine put together a special section listing America's 100 best classical courses and 100 best modern courses. In the classical category Donald Ross either designed or remodeled an astounding 23 of the 100 golf courses selected. The list of Ross courses and their corresponding rankings are as follows.

- 11 - Pinehurst CC #2 - Pinehurst, NC
- 15 - Seminole GF - North Palm Beach, FL
- 19 - Oakland Hills CC (South) - Bloomfield Hills, MI
- 22 - Wannamoisett CC - Rumford, RI
- 24 - East Lake GC - Atlanta, GA
- 28 - Inverness Club - Toledo, OH
- 32 - Oak Hill CC (East) - Pittsford, NY
- 36 - Salem CC - Salem, MA
- 38 - Scioto CC - Columbus, OH
- 43 - Interlachen CC - Edina, MN
- 44 - Holston Hills CC - Knoxville, TN
- 51 - Newport CC - Newport, RI
- 52 - Franklin Hills CC - Franklin, MI
- 53 - Pine Needles Lodge & CC - Southern Pines, NC
- 59 - Plainfield CC - Plainfield, NJ
- 71 - Minikahda Club - Minneapolis, MN
- 72 - Aronimink GC - Newtown Square, PA
- 76 - Oyster Harbors Club - Osterville, MA
- 78 - Longmeadow CC - Longmeadow, MA
- 79 - Broadmoor CC - Indianapolis, IN
- 82 - Skokie CC - Glencoe, IL
- 88 - Linville GC - Linville, NC
- 99 - Worcester CC - Worcester, MA



*Donald Ross' house in Little Compton where he spent his summers.*

Professing the importance of traditional golf course architecture in general, and Donald Ross' in particular, their hope is to keep the great golf courses great by leaving well enough alone or restoring what was once there in the beginning. That way, golfers can have - as closely as possible - the same experience on the course in the year 2098 as those who played in 1998 or even 1948.

If you are interested in becoming a member of The Donald Ross Society, you can call (860) 243-1433 or write to P.O. Box 403, Bloomfield, CT 06002. Initiation fee is \$100 and annual dues are \$50. Every member receives a bag tag, newsletter and national directory of Donald Ross golf courses. The highlight of each year is the annual meeting and scholarship tournament held each spring in Pinehurst, NC.

**DONALD ROSS COURSES  
IN RHODE ISLAND**

AGAWAM HUNT (Remodeled)	1911*
METACOMET COUNTRY CLUB	1921*
THE MISQUAMICUT CLUB (Remodeled)	1923*
NEWPORT COUNTRY CLUB (Remodeled)	1915
POINT JUDITH COUNTRY CLUB	
(Remodeled) 9 Holes	1927
(Added) 9 Holes	1927
RHODE ISLAND COUNTRY CLUB	1911
SAKONNET GOLF CLUB	1921*
TRIGGS MEMORIAL GOLF CLUB	1930*
WANNAMOISETT COUNTRY CLUB	1914*
(Remoldeled)	1926*
WARWICK COUNTY CLUB 9 Holes	1924*
WINNAPAU G COUNTRY CLUB	
(Remodeled) 9 Holes	1921
(Added) 9 Holes	1928

(\*Indicates Donald Ross was on-site during planning and construction of the course.)