

Peacock Gap and the Swinging Sixties

Contributed by Bill Braznell

Old time Gappers used to like to talk about the swinging Sixties, when Peacock Gap the golf club and Peacock Gap the real estate development were spanking new and under the super-promotional ownership and management of developer Jerry Draper and his right hand man, Ed Lee. Draper and Lee put The Gap on the map with a wild assortment of publicity getting affairs, including an annual Celebrity Golf Tournament, a political fund raiser for Nelson Rockefeller, a debutante ball, tennis exhibition matches featuring the top pro stars of the era (yes, we had a tennis court in those days), and, as they say, much, much more. Club members and residents of the area did their part, helping to make the club cocktail lounge, member grill and public restaurant one of the region's favorite gathering places.

Most of the "old time Gappers" are gone now, or retired from the local social and golfing whirl, but there are still a few, like retired radio talk show star Frank Dill, who remember the way it was. Thanks to Frank and our mutual friend, Milt Mares, for passing on this bit of nostalgia from Peacock Gap's golden age.

Dear Milt--Reading over the PG history you sent me brings back some wonderful times with some wonderful people. I recall playing in both of the "Tournament of Stars" held there in the 1960's. Maury Luxford, who was for many years a personality connected to the Hollywood group who participated in the old Crosby Pro-Am, would fly a group of celebs to Marin to play in the event. The first year I played in a foursome that included a guy that friends called "Rowdy". I didn't recognize him because I had never seen the TV show he starred in --"Rawhide." He played the part of Rowdy Yates and was in fact Clint Eastwood. Among my souvenirs is a photo of our foursome. Also in our group was a guy whose name I can't recall but he was a kingpin of the topless craze in North Beach and later went to prison on drug charges.

In the second (and final) Tournament of Stars I played with Shirley Temple's ex-husband John Agar. After our round we gathered in the clubhouse with his new wife and children and I had to laugh when his kids ordered "Shirley Temples" for drinks. He didn't think it was funny.

Some of the other "stars" who played in the event included Lucille Ball, Gary Morton, Andy Williams, and Rowan and Martin of "Laugh-In" fame. At the banquet that year Mary and I met up with an old high school buddy of mine, Bobby Eaton, and we sat with him at one of the large tables. He brought us up to date on his recent activities. Mary and I were very aware of his history as a "traveling companion" to various female actresses. As he regaled us with stories about Denise Darcel, Ginger Rogers, Dinah Shore, Lana Turner, etc. a woman seated near us said, "What do you do for a living?" He laughed and said, "I'm a gigolo." He later became Lana's seventh husband.

Obviously my memories of Peacock Gap include our Saturday group over the years. Names like Jack Madrid, Paul Lempio, Ed Kalfain, Arnie Anderson, Jim Rhode, Francois Bisceglia, Jim Pearson, Milt Mares, Bo Bjursten, etc. I recall that Bob Cousy and Bill Sharman played with our group a few times as did the Warriors' GM....can't recall his name right now.

I also remember one Saturday when I stood on the 18th tee needing a par to shoot 71. I hit it OB to the right and finished at 73, On a more amazing Saturday I stood on the 18th tee needing a par for 71 and a few minutes later rolled in a 5-footer for the only even par round I ever shot!

Please excuse my ramblings here but as I approach my 80th birthday I'm becoming very nostalgic.

Frank