

# The 2019 Annual General Meeting

By Jim Davis

The Annual General Meeting and Trade Show – or should we just call it the Autumn Meeting – of the Golf Heritage Society visited Cleveland, Ohio this year and was a notable success for its well-crafted presentations. To that in a moment.

The weekend began with a casual golf outing arranged by Bill Reed of the Hickory Golf Association on the Manakiki Golf Course in nearby Willoughby. The Donald Ross design was a splendid, if rather long, test of hickory golf with greens that were fast and devilish. Many thanks to Mr. Reed and assistants for a terrific start to the weekend.

The PBA auction followed at the hotel, the Holiday Inn-Rockside, with spirited bidding for several very historic volumes. Two books by C. Clapcott on the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers sold for \$2,400 each. A first edition of Robert Clark's *Golf: A Royal and Ancient Game* sold for \$510 – a bargain! And a first edition of Robert Forgan's *The Golfer's Handbook* sold for \$4,800. And so it went with happy buyers scoring several handsome volumes.

That Thursday evening, by the way, room trading was brisk on the third floor with many items changing hands and at least a good early look at what might be on the trade show tables on Saturday.



## The Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the GHS on Friday morning was encouraging for the reports by various committees that suggest a renewed spirit of activity on the part of the Board to enliven membership with enhanced value and a revitalized emphasis on marketing and outreach. In 2020, for example, the Society's 50th year, a membership campaign will offer new memberships at \$50 (\$50 for the 50th year) and for all

members to receive a printed copy of each quarter's edition of *The Golf*.

President Jim Jeselnick reminded members of the accomplishments of the past two years:

- the GHS has transformed from a hobby to a service organization with over 800 members
- new mission statement and new by-laws
- new non-profit status as a 501(c)3 organization that makes possible contributions from members and others
- new website
- new format for the quarterly journal and a new name, *The Golf*
- new dues structure, with our first Lifetime Member, Mr. Philip Truett
- first female board member, Gillian Alexander
- emphasis on partnership with fraternal golf societies
- greater emphasis on social media to reach new members

Marketing and communication committees are planning better use of social media platforms to reach new members. Website and magazine, too, are hoping to continue improvements with new features and better membership values.

The ambitious goal is to achieve 2020 members in the year 2020. If all extant members brought in just one new member, the GHS would be more than halfway there. So, we say, give it a try. Look round and encourage a friend to join, or pay for him/her yourself as a gift. There's a lot going on and new members should be pleased with the many efforts being made to improve and modernize the Society, as should we all.

John Butler let us know that, officially, George Petro was re-elected to the board, Curt Fredrixon was



*Frank Cantrel Jr., GHS membership director, shared the Society's goals for attracting new members in 2020.*

re-elected as secretary, Kirk Watson was elected to serve Region 7, Rob Rendely has stepped into the VP role, Dr. Bern Bernacki is now the president, and Jim Jeselnick is now the immediate past president.

Pete League let everyone know how well the First Tee partnership is going in the Austin area. A First Tee Hickory Championship is starting up with four players each from nine chapters to be represented. Trophies are being arranged. Stay tuned, he says, this is an exciting time for the kids and the adults.



*AGM presenters. From left, GHS VP Bern Bernacki, Ron Luster, GHS president Jim Jeselnick, and Mike Hurdzan.*

## Presentations

Golf architect **Mike Hurdzan** began with a “fractured fairy tale” look at the building of Erin Hills, site of the 2017 U.S. Open. Slides and graphs complemented his, as always, eloquent presentation. Everyone in the very full meeting room, arranged in a stadium-style seating, were engaged from the first, learning some of the background stories to Erin Hills that only Hurdzan could offer. We certainly know more about glacial moraines and California greens than before. We also learned of a spate of tragedies associated with the course, from the economic ruin of the course’s founder and suicide of his son, to the death of a close associate



*Dr. Mike Hurdzan points out some of the features of the Erin Hills GC during his talk.*

of Hurdzan’s and even the death of a U.S. Open spectator. Despite these sorrowful incidents, the course has weathered the worst and is considered a gem of modern course architecture. Mike has every reason to be proud and pleased of his work in the hills and valleys of middle Wisconsin.

**Ron Luster** followed with a most engaging talk on the repair and maintenance of antique hickory golf clubs. “It’s the enjoyment of what we do,” he says. Based in Omaha, Neb., the retired engineer has worked for several years with hickory golf’s foremost champion Randy Jensen to discern the playing characteristics of hickory golf shafts. In direct and common-sense language, Luster described his methods – not yours, his – from working with the all important shaft, to cleaning and re-pinning heads, and even a modest approach to applying new grips. “I want to know what makes these things work,” he says. Luster was appreciative of Jensen’s availability in helping him explore these techniques. The two of them might be the hickory golf equivalent of the Lennon-McCartney song writing duo in terms of expertise and accomplishment.



*Ron Luster shared some of the finer points of working with wood shafted golf clubs.*

## The Golf at Sleepy Hollow

What can we say? It is golf and played with hickory shafts or otherwise, it is always a delight to share the game



*Sleepy Hollow GC.*

with good friends, some seen all too infrequently. The Stanley Thompson design of often tricky routing did not disappoint, though some of the layouts seemed “forced” to many participants. Several blind shots, both from tee and fairway, necessitated a quick race to the top of a hill to determine the proper routing. All good fun and we can’t thank the staff at Sleepy

Hollow enough for making us feel quite welcome. Many thanks, too, to Pete League, Pete Georgiady, and others for organizing this. It is not an easy thing to do, but Messrs League & Georgiady are among the best at this. (Just look at the success of the Onion Creek Hickory Classic and the National Hickory Championship, for examples!)

### The Banquet

Lively as always, the GHS banquet was a “good un” this year. GHS Executive Director Pete Georgiady announced the formation of the GHS Hall of Fame, which has taken the place of the Founders Award. Early recipients of that honor were each inducted in the Hall’s inaugural class. These included: Gene Bolden, Lee Crist, Ray Davis, Dick Donovan, Frank Hardison, Bob Kuntz, Bob Labbanca, Joe Murdoch, Janet Seagle, Fred Smith, John Whittemore, Charlie Yaws, and Frank Zadra. The good Mr. Georgiady explained why each was special to the Society.



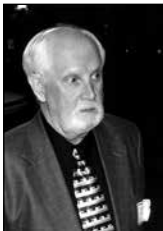
Gene Bolden



Lee Crist



Ray Davis



Dick Donovan



Frank Hardison



Bob Kuntz



Bob Labbanca



Joe Murdoch



Janet Seagle



Fred Smith



John Whittemore



Charlie Yaws



Frank Zadra

## 2019 Inaugural Class of the Golf Heritage Society Hall of Fame

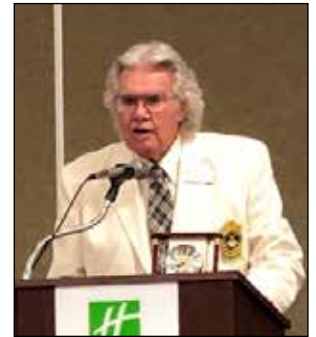
Also this evening, Mr. John

Fischer received the Society’s first Golden Quill award, given by the current president to an outstanding contribution to *The Golf* journal. Fischer was recognized for his article on Henry Cotton and his round of 65 at the 1934 Open Championship (*The Golf*, No. 4, Summer 2019).



*John Fischer III, golf writer and historian, accepts the inaugural Golden Quill award from GHS president Jim Jeselnick.*

*The Golf* editor, Jim Davis, introduced the 2019 Harris-Wolke Award recipient, Mr. Bill Reed, who, in a first, found himself at a loss for words. He recovered quickly. The award recognizes a member’s generosity of time and talents to help other members further their collections and interests in golf history. Reed has been a constant and welcome force for good throughout this country and abroad in matters appertaining to both hickory golf, golf collecting and history. Very few there are in the Society, of the Society of Hickory Golfers, who do not think fondly of Bill and his readiness to help, share advice, or even a glass of good single malt, should the latter be available.



*Bill Reed, recipient of the 2019 Harris-Wolke Award.*

Keynote speaker Renee Powell, a member of the LPGA, a long-time teacher, and advocate for both women and minorities in golf, was a wonderful addition to the evening. Her narrative with us was remarkable both for the history she shared and for its sincere and honest delivery. She did not speak to the audience, she spoke with us. In the warm embrace of Powell’s talk, we journeyed with her from the early days of her father’s building of Clearview Golf Course, to her time on the LPGA Tour, and her surprise at receiving an



*Renee Powell with good friend Gene Bolden.*

honorary degree from the University of St Andrews and of the university naming one of its residence halls after her.

Outgoing GHS President Jim Jeselnick then turned his badge of office over to Dr. Bern Bernacki who will shepherd the GHS through the challenges of the next two years, including our 50th anniversary year in 2020.

An auction of donated items hosted by Dick McDonough and conducted by PBA's Christopher Dunlap, and the next day's silent auction at the trade show brought in about \$4,000 for the Society. Thanks to Dick and all who purchased items. The Society is stronger because of you.

Finally, Mr. Pete League awarded the prizes and medals from the day's golf outing, a procedure mercifully abbreviated from the drawn-out ceremony of previous years. Congrats, of course to all the winners. We are all about golf, after all, and it is appropriate to recognize the best of the day.

Thus endeth the evening, at least for those who went to their rooms and to bed. Several others took to the bar and nightclub for a nightcap... or two.

## The Trade Show

Thanks to the efforts of Bob Gettis and others who mounted a dedicated social media campaign to encourage more public visitors, this writer noted at least a dozen members of the public at various times during the morning hours. We hope this number will continue to rise as marketing efforts aimed at attracting more public visitors begin to take hold.

One couple said it was not quite what they were expecting, but were pleased at the variety. Another individual said he was "impressed," adding "I want a little bit of everything." Didn't have the heart to warn him that that's how it starts.

Exhibitors and sisters, Deborah and Laurel Thompson, daughters of the late GHS president Bud Thompson, had a table with a variety of items from their

father's collection. "We didn't know what to expect," Laurel said, "but we've sold several items already." The two sold a handful of replica longnose woods for \$40 each.

Collector and GHS Board member George Petro shared a look at several priceless and rare medals from his collection. Be sure to see the video of his explanation of the medals on the website.

Marvin Utsinger, of Illinois, was spotted with a just-purchased hickory club in his hands. His wife, Gloria, merely said, "I'm used to it." Apparently, Marvin justifies his purchases by saying that "It's something I've always wanted."

Elmer Nahum, of Sewickley, Pa., busily signed copies of his recently published book, *Practical Clubmaking*. His table displayed several of the older tools he

uses as well as patterns and blocks in various

stages of completion. The book completely outlines his method of making replica longnose woods using primarily hand tools and traditional methods. Writer Colin Criss promises a review for an upcoming edition of *The Golf*.

A good, busy and satisfying day. Collectors browsed, exhibitors talked, and friends all shared stories and good times.

The GHS has seen larger shows with more participation to be sure. But if the energy and enthusiasm exhibited at this show are an indication, there are bigger things to come. If you are not yet a GHS member, are considering your future membership, or wish to encourage your friends to join, this might well be the best time in a long time to make it happen.

*(Check the following pages for Trade Show photos.)*



*Bern Bernacki, left, incoming GHS president shakes hands with outgoing president Jim Jeselnick.*



*Elmer Nahum, author of Practical Clubmaking, on creating longnose clubs, is shown with the traditional tools he uses and several clubs in stages of progress.*

# GHS Trade Show 2019 Cleveland, Ohio



*Tom Johnson, left, and Stan Lapidus.*



*Keith Campbell, left, talks shop with Jim Hanen and wife.*



*Bill and Andrea Fry.*

*Frank Cantrel Jr. checks for bargains.*



*Important discussions on matters of golf and golf collecting.*



*Claudia Aaron, left, with Maggie Warren and her mother Donna Hamilton Brown.*



**Hilary Cronheim**, director of the USGA Museum, was at the show to visit with collectors.



**Ron Luster**, right, deep into his favorite subject – hickory golf clubs – with Mike (did not catch his last name!).



Often mistaken for one another, **Bob Georziade**, left, and **Pete Georgiady**, GHS exec. director, are both antique club experts.



**Christopher Dunlap**, auction specialist with PBA Galleries, chaired the 2019 auction.



Learned club men, **Alan Johnson**, left, **Colin Criss**, **Scott Petersen**, and **Scott Staudacher**, consider the worthiness of a longnose replica for sale.



Author **Kathy Fitzpatrick**, left, and **Jim Jeselnick** scouted the show for collectibles.



**Kimberly Mongerson (Steve)**, left, and **Bobbi Zadra (Frank)** take in the show while their husbands browsed the tables.



**The First Tee of Pittsburgh** was represented at the trade show by **Mary Bernacki**, left, and **Marc Field**, a director of the First Tee group.



**Phil Kostolnik** and others bargained, traded, bought and sold at a very busy 2019 trade show.



*The incomparable Bill Reed is seen assuring Ben Ellis of the value and rarity of a club from his for-sale items.*



*Sisters Deborah, left, and Laurel Thompson, daughters of the late Oliver 'Bud' Thompson, a former president of the GHS, were at the show to offer items from his collection.*



*George Petro, left, enjoyed sharing a representative sample from his extensive collection of rare medals. A video of George describing this sample can be see on the GHS website.*



*Rick Woeckener, left, reigning U.S. Hickory Open champion, and Matt Bounphrey discuss matters arcane and of great import (good area lunch spots, no doubt).*



*Marvin and Gloria Utsinger are longtime trade show participants and GHS members. Gloria says she is accustomed to her husband's collecting hobby and his usual plea of "Well, this is one I've always wanted."*