



# MSGA Newsletter

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February 2017 - Volume 7, Issue 2

## MSGA Executive Director Receives USGA Honor

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director



Eleven longtime USGA volunteers were honored with the Ike Grainger Award at the 2017 USGA Annual Meeting in Washington D.C. Grainger served on the USGA Executive Committee and served as USGA President in 1954 and 1955.

Montana's own Jim Opitz, executive director of the MSGA, received the Ike Grainger Award, thanks to his 25 years as a USGA Volunteer.

March's newsletter will include an interview with Opitz about his visit to the nation's capital for the USGA's Annual Meeting and his years as a volunteer.



Jim Opitz (Back Row, 2nd from the Left)

## Annual Polar Bear Classic at Lake Hills GC

Three dozen brave golfers bundled up for the Polar Bear Classic golf tournament at Lake Hills Golf Club in Billings on New Year's Day. Temperatures were in the single digits with snow up to the knees in places along the fairway.

The rules for the Classic are simple. Players are allowed three clubs and two brightly-colored balls. They then have several hours to play one hole. Just finishing is pretty difficult considering the conditions!



Lauralee Marchant tees off as friends (from left, Alicia Lee, Susan Johnson, and Donna Timmerman) look on. - Photo by Casey Page

In the past, some have attached streamers to their balls, or lost them altogether in the snow. Many of these lost balls don't reappear

until the spring once the snow melts!

The annual event raises money for the local PGA Junior League and the First Tee programs at the golf club.



Alicia Lee holds three snow-crust golf clubs in the annual Polar Bear Classic golf tournament - Photo by Casey Page



Try the MSGA Smartphone APP in the [Apple](#) or [Android](#) Stores.

### Montana's Official Golf Season: April 1 to October 31

Off-season scores played in Montana should not be posted. Scores played where it is in-season are valid and should be posted, via the online handicap system, smartphone app, or membership linking.



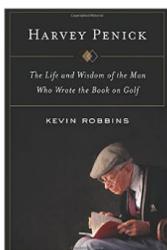
## WINNERS FOR 2016 HERBERT WARREN WIND BOOK AWARD



For the first time since the award was established in 1987, the USGA has selected two winners for the 2016 Herbert Warren Wind Book Award. The award recognizes and honors outstanding contributions to golf literature while attempting to broaden public interest in, and knowledge of, the game of golf.

Kevin Robbins, author of **Harvey Penick: The Life and Wisdom of the Man Who Wrote the Book on Golf**, and Peter Lewis, author of **Why Are There Eighteen Holes?: St. Andrews and the Evolution of Golf Courses, 1764-1890**, both received the Herbert Warren Wind Book Award at the USGA's Annual Meeting and Service Awards in Wash., D.C., on Saturday, February 4. "Frankly, it's not likely to happen again – but this year, after much discussion, we decided that we had two books worthy of the 2016 award," said Adam Barr, director of the USGA Golf Museum. "Each contributes something distinct and valuable in terms of research and narrative style, two attributes that always rank high in our deliberations."

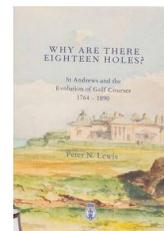
In **Harvey Penick: The Life and Wisdom of the Man Who Wrote the Book on Golf**, Robbins tells the story of Penick, the late golf coach, competitor, and instructor who in 1992 with Bud Shrake penned the **Little Red Book: Lessons and Teachings From a Lifetime**, considered by many the quintessential golf advice and instruction book. Robbins provides the first biography of the iconic and revered Texan who caddied for Francis Ouimet, served as the longtime head golf professional at Austin Country Club, played with Ben Hogan and Bob Jones, shaped Ben Crenshaw, and distilled his golf wisdom into *The Little Red Book*, bringing simplicity to a complex yet beloved game.



"Kevin Robbins brings a storyteller's approach to the book, which includes passages worthy of Herbert Warren Wind himself," said Barr. "Given that Harvey Penick wrote one of the best-selling sports books ever (*The Little Red Book*), his life and the book are both subjects deep enough to be worthy of the award." Millions of people were charmed by the homespun golf advice dispensed in Penick's *Little Red Book* and its three sequels. Yet, beyond the Texas golf courses where Penick plied his trade for the better part of eight decades, few people knew the man who coaxed the best out of countless champions – Tom Kite, Crenshaw, Betsy Rawls, Mickey Wright, Davis Love III – all of whom considered Penick their mentor and lifelong friend.

"It is an enormous thrill and tremendous honor to receive an award named after Herbert Warren Wind, who was the greatest storyteller that the game has ever known," said Robbins. "Harvey Penick spoke to so many people through the words in his *Little Red Book*. I wanted readers of my book to understand what golf actually meant to Harvey by exploring his backstory." Robbins is a senior lecturer at the University of Texas School of Journalism. He joined the university in 2012 after 22 years in daily newspapers and currently teaches courses in sports journalism and feature writing.

In **Why Are There Eighteen Holes?: St. Andrews and the Evolution of Golf Courses, 1764-1890**, Peter Lewis takes readers on a journey through the 18th and 19th centuries to discover why there are 18 holes on a course. Drawing on a wide range of contemporary sources, he reveals that early courses had varying numbers of holes and were judged by the quality of their turf, putting greens, and hazards. He shows why, during the 1880s, as golf became more popular, the ideal number of holes was increasingly seen as being 18.



Beyond the question that serves as the book's title, Lewis documents the history of golf courses in Britain before 1890, exploring how a young game found its footing – and the role that St. Andrews and The R&A played in that story.

"Peter Lewis' scholarly reputation goes side by side with his love of the game, and it shows in this work," said Barr. "Deeply researched yet engaging and accessible, this volume will be pulled off shelves again and again by those seeking insights into some of the game's most hallowed traditions."

"I am deeply honored and absolutely delighted to win this award," said Lewis. "When writing the book [currently out of print], I set out on a journey to discover why 18 holes became the ideal number for a golf course, why St. Andrews was considered 'the home of golf', and how the Royal and Ancient Golf Club became a governing body of the game. These are simple questions that turned out to have complicated answers. It is very gratifying that the Herbert Warren Wind Award Committee enjoyed musing over my conclusions." Lewis was the director of the British Golf ...*Continued on the next page*

## **BOOK AWARD ... from previous page**

Museum from 1988 to 2009, when he became The R&A's director of film archive and then director of historical research. After retiring last year, Lewis was given the title of emeritus historian of The Royal and Ancient Golf Club. He has written or co-authored numerous books, including a three-volume history of The Royal and Ancient Golf Club.

Established in 1987, and named for the famed 20th-century American golf writer, the Herbert Warren Wind Book Award recognizes and honors outstanding contributions to golf literature. Presented by the USGA Golf Museum, the Book Award is the top literary prize awarded by the United States Golf Association.

## **BOB FORD SELECTED AS 2017 BOB JONES AWARD WINNER**

The USGA will present its highest honor, the Bob Jones Award, to longtime Oakmont Country Club (PA) professional Bob Ford in a ceremony on June 13, 2017, during the week of the 117th U.S. Open Championship at Erin Hills in Erin, Wisconsin. Presented annually since 1955, the Bob Jones Award recognizes an individual who demonstrates the spirit, personal character, and respect for the game exhibited by Jones, winner of nine USGA championships. Ford, considered one of the game's great ambassadors, served as the head professional at Oakmont, a nine-time U.S. Open host site, for 37 years before retiring in October. He continues to work in a similar capacity at Seminole Golf Club in Juno Beach, Florida.

"We are proud to recognize Bob Ford with the USGA's highest honor, for exhibiting the ideals and traditions of the game brought forth by Bob Jones," said Diana Murphy, USGA president. "Bob has set the gold standard in his profession and has left an indelible mark on countless young club professionals whom he has mentored. He has instilled in each of them a passion, love, and appreciation for the game through his exemplary character, humility, and respect for people. He is the best at what he does and uses his skills and time to bring out the best in them."



*Bob Ford*  
Photo courtesy of USGA

"I was blown away by President Murphy's call," said Ford, who started at the club in 1975 as an assistant to 1947 U.S. Open champion Lew Worsham. "Being selected as the first PGA club professional to win the award makes it ever more special. I'm not so sure I belong in the company of former recipients, but nonetheless I'm very flattered and humbled. Bob Jones has impacted all the lives of those who serve and play this great game. Arnold and Jack were his friends and hold him in the highest regard and they both have handed the game down to my generation as Bob Jones did for them."

## **DIANA MURPHY ELECTED TO SECOND TERM AS USGA PRESIDENT**

Diana M. Murphy has been elected to serve a second one-year term as the 64th president of the United States Golf Association. The election took place at the Association's Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. Murphy will continue to lead the 15-member volunteer USGA Executive Committee, which provides strategic direction and oversight to the Association through its full-time staff, based in Liberty Corner, N.J. Officers and members of the committee were also elected at the Annual Meeting.

"Getting to work with so many of you during this past year has been a deeply rewarding experience," said Murphy upon her election. "What I have observed is a community of golfers who are passionate about the game and who want it to be even better. 2017 will be a year of action for the USGA, and we look forward to working together with the community to continue to transform the game." The full text of Murphy's speech can be found [here](#).



### **Congratulations to our JANUARY WINNERS!**

**TRIP to Las Vegas, Nevada -  
Steve Williamson, Billings**  
**\$200 cash - Rick Flotkoetter, Miles City**

[www.msgagolf.org/raffle-fundraiser](http://www.msgagolf.org/raffle-fundraiser)

**\*\* FEBRUARY'S PRIZE is two airline tickets (U.S.) \*\***

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