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**“The Tee Box”©**

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**Commentary . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . David Failuretee, Editor**

It’s hard for me to believe . . . . . but the trees are changing, geese are flying south, cider mills are packed with people and bees, everything tastes like pumpkin spice, Octoberfests are being held everywhere, football seasons are already down the drain for some teams . . . . and the RIGC season has come to a close. It seems like just yesterday that I was approached by representatives of your club to add reporting of RIGC events to my already busy golf reporting duties. But, I responded “Yes” and am glad I did . . . or reasonably so. So this is the final issue of THE TEE BOX for 2016 and in it I’ll report on the completion of the “Quest for the JUG” competition, and the season finale consisting of a three man team shamble/scramble tournament. And then a brief wrap up of the 2016 season.

Enjoy your Winters . . . . . . . . . . D.F.

**“Quest For The JUG” race is over . . . Finally. And It’s A Tie At The Top**

It took awhile but the 2016 “Quest for the JUG” competition has finally concluded, and after all that there was still a tie and two members got to share the honor of signing the coveted JUG. Entering the final round of the JUG championship there were ten members with a realistic chance to win the JUG, and the top three of Smith, Hansinger, and Fair were comfortably at the top. But, there was still one round to play and lots of JUG points still available. After the dust settled Smith found himself in 5th place, Hansinger and Landis tied for 4th, Karam made a move up to 3rd, and Fair produced a valiant effort to repeat as the JUG champion but had to settle for 2nd place. To come all the way from 4th place and 6th place to win the JUG would require exceptional rounds, which is exactly what took place. Please say “Hello” to the 2016 JUG co-champions, John Gross and A. J. Polizzi! Gross shot one of his best ever RIGC rounds with a nifty 79, and RIGC rookie Polizzi did likewise with an excellent 83. Congratulations to both! They then proceeded to affix legible signatures on the cherished JUG.

I’ll commend the JUG competition for 2016, it was well organized and the standings adequately communicated. However, I have two suggestions for next year. First, shorten the competition, and second, award JUG points during the match play competition. I have been informed that the plan is to have the JUG competition concluded by Labor Day in 2017, and indeed JUG points will be awarded during the match play tournament.

**Season Finale In The Books . . . . Karam At It Again**

The grand finale of the 2016 RIGC season was contested at Boulder Point on October 19. The format was a three man team, playing nine holes of scramble and nine holes of shamble. 48 players turned out for the event which is pretty solid for mid October, didn’t hurt that the weather was magnifico as well. Scoring was solid as well with all sixteen teams carding scores easily under par of 72. Next year you might want to finagle your way onto a team headed by Karam. His team won the Member-Member with a 59, and in the finale he guided his team of Hagedorn and Park to another victory with a measly 60. Reportedly Hagedorn made a major contribution to the team’s success. There was a tie for second place with both teams turning in scores 61: Diedrich/G. Stencel/E. Phillips, and the team of Kanaan/Huizdos/and J. Phillips. The annual awards ceremony was held in the packed Gimmes Grill after the round with plaques and other honors being bestowed on the various competition winners (see below for more). All in all, it was a superb ending to the 2016 RIGC season.

**The Year In Review . . . . . . . . . . . . David Failuretee**

RIGC began the year with the largest membership total in it’s brief history, around 70 players. So obviously a successful recruiting effort transpired over the bleak Winter months. New members were introduced at the annual Spring meeting held at the 5th Tavern on April 9. After three practice rounds held at The Fountains, Sylvan Glen, and Salem Hills the season officially opened at Boulder Pointe on May 4. Early in the year a decision was made to appoint Mike Whitty as the Webmaster for the club, and he did a magnificent job all year on the club’s website, thank you Mike! After being named the Webmaster Mike then went out and won the Presidents Medallion Match Play Championship with a hard fought win over Jim Walenczak.

At the urging of my golf fashion guru, Ralph Floorin, I suggested that it was time for some official RIGC wearables. Your leaders promptly acted and arranged for an official RIGC logo to be developed and found a supplier who would affix to the logo to shirts. Thus was born the officially sanctioned RIGC golf shirts which are being worn proudly by many members. And Mr. Floorin has declared that the shirts look great, quite a compliment.

The two round club championship was held in August and it started off with a bang as Richard Schiff fired an opening round net score of 59, becoming the club’s first “Mr. 59”! As is said “The more things change, the more they stay the same”, and that was true in the CC as both defending champions, Fair and Quintana, repeated as club champs and represented the club in the GAM tournaments of club champions. Also in the CC, Filak claimed the Low Net Score title, while Hansinger was the winner of the Masters Division. The annual Member-Member was held on August 24 and at the cookout hosted by Ed Phillips the winning team was announced. That was the team of Karam/Hansinger, who turned in a head turning score of 59. Up next was the Member/Guest Invitational held at Metamora on September 14. After a playoff featuring the winning teams of each of the five flights, the event was won by the team of Fair/Wedell who claimed the prize as a result of a chip off on #18. I was amazed to hear how the Member/Guest had grown and expanded since the prior year, excellent job by all involved. On September 21 the “Mayor’s Yellow Ball Challenge” was contested at the two Birmingham muni’s, Springdale and Lincoln Hills. In that event, featuring head scratching pin placements, the two teams led by Hussong and Anderson tied for the championship.

Your club doesn’t have awards for Player of the Year or Rookie of the Year. So, allow me to offer my picks for those two honors. Player of the Year has to be Max Fair who claimed both a club championship and the Member/Guest top prize. As for Rookie of the Year my pick is A.J. Polizzi who was a co-winner of the JUG championship. So it was quite a year, and it wouldn’t have happened without the hard work performed by Rod Cooper, all of you should be grateful.

Sadly, the end of the year was saddened by the sudden and unexpected passing of Julian Almany. I’m told that Julian was one of the founding members of RIGC, a quiet and unassuming person, and who is frequently referred to as a true “Gentleman”. His loss will be felt by many members, for some time to come. I was told that In the early years of the club his friend & companion, Lisa, on the day of the RIGC events would go to Eastern Market very early in the morning, purchase fresh bread and lunchmeat, and make sandwiches which Julian brought to feed the hungry golfers. Certainly he will be missed greatly.

So now I move on, and you may be wondering what endeavors I’ll undertake. Well, for one I can assure you that palm trees and Bermuda grass is in my future. And in my upcoming environs I will be covering weekly Tour action and also happenings at several local golf organizations, including The Senior Skippers of Bassville, Ocklawaha Nine Holers, Weirsdale Weirdos, and the Lady Lake Not Ladies. So I will be busy, and am already looking forward to another season of intense RIGC action in 2017, should I be asked to again provide my commentary.

Fairways and Greens friends . . . . . . . . . D.F.