

Hills man tees off, wins prize money

By TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Sunday's hole-in-one competition at Top of the Tee driving range in West Bloomfield literally enabled golfers of all abilities to take their best shot at a million bucks.

No one struck the jackpot at the "Million Dollar Hole-in-One Shootout," sponsored by Enterprise Rent-A-Car. But David Wood of Farmington Hills came closest — his seven iron shot stopped only two feet and 10 inches short of the white-flagged cup — and collected a \$5,000 check for his efforts.

"It's kind of like the lottery, but it's actually better," said event spokeswoman Jennifer McMillan. "The odds are 1-10,000 for people to get a hole in one."

Even though 40 finalists, including Wood, were unable to hit major paydirt, McMillan said approximately \$31,000 was raised for the Mental Health Association in Michigan, a United Way agency. The funds will help MHAM provide state-subsidized facilities with occupational and recreational equipment such as ping-pong tables and musical instruments.

Before taking a crack at the grand prize, Wood and the other finalists had to qualify as follows: For \$1 per shot, golfers took as many shots as they wanted, having to land them inside a three-foot circle around the cup, McMillan said.

"Some people would go up there and buy a hundred dollars worth of shots," she said.

Those 40 participants who came closest with their 130-yard shots advanced to the Sunday evening championship round and also won a number of complimentary prizes,

including a free weekend car rental from Enterprise.

Two finalists who couldn't save their best for last were Dale Kort and Richard Tripper, who both sank their tee shots during the qualifying round but failed to duplicate their accomplishments in the finals.

Meanwhile, McMillan said nobody managed to do the next best thing to winning a million — dropping their tee shots into any of the 12 red-flagged cups located around the green.

Area resident named to Japan trade team

Charles Drake, a Farmington Hills resident and president of Medar Inc., is one of six appointments made by Gov. John Engler to Michigan's Japanese Bi-Lateral Trade Team.

Drake said he feels he's qualified to be on any trade team dealing with Asian countries. "We've been dealing with Japan and other countries in Asia for 13 years," he said. "Most of our products go outside the United States. I've been there (Japan) every year for 13 years."

Medar Inc., founded by Drake, designs and manufactures computer-controlled automation equipment including vision inspection systems and resistance welding controls.

Drake earned a bachelor of science degree in engineering and a master of business administration

degree from the University of Michigan. He has been a lecturer at the University of Michigan's Industrial and Systems Engineering Department.

The trade team's mission is to promote the export of Michigan products and services abroad by using the cultural and business ties of the state's leading citizens.

"Expanded exports to Japan and other countries create jobs here in Michigan," Engler said. "The experience and expertise of this trade team will make them a catalyst in helping job providers find new markets in Japan."

Others appointments to the trade team are Aikars Hara of Detroit, Tomoki Ikenaga and Kyoko Miyazaki, all of Detroit; Bill Hemmer of Branch; and Michael D. O'Donnell of West Bloomfield.

FLANDERS BEGINNINGS

Flanders Elementary school celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. Here's a history of who owned the land prior to its acquisition by the Farmington Schools.

In 1831, the United States government gave the land that Flanders School sits on to Timothy Allen. At that time the land was complete wilderness.

Ownership of the Flanders neighborhood changed hands several times over the next 50 years. From 1867 to 1924 much of the land was owned by the Wilber family.

George Wilber and his wife Jane Lapham were early pioneers to the area when they came to Michigan from New York in 1834. They settled first in Livonia and then made Farmington their home.

James L. Wilber, son of George and Jane, was born and raised in Farmington. For some time he was a teacher in the Farmington schools but most of his life was spent as a dairy farmer. He ran the Maple Grove Cheese Factory 1866-67, the first factory in eastern Michigan.

Clinton Wilber, son of James and Sarah Wilber, was an early businessman. He was a partner in Wilber, Cook & Co. with Fred Cook and Fred Warner. They owned Cook Drygoods which sold shoes, crockery, firearms and many other necessities of the time. Clinton Wilber later became a banker in the Farmington Exchange Bank.

From the late 1800's to 1936, most of the land in the Flanders neighborhood was owned by Louis Esch. He came from Germany in 1888 to take up farming and lived in his Eight Mile and Farmington Road home until his death in 1940.

In 1957 the Farmington Public School District acquired the land to build Flanders.

In September, 1962 Flanders Elementary opens its doors to the students of the district.

Source: Flanders Elementary

HANDY BERRY/OBSERVER & EVENING

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The school is also special to former students. McLean said he remains in touch with a student who was in his first class in 1962, who is now an attorney in Ohio. Despite changes at the school, McLean said his philosophy has remained the same: "The thrust of what I've tried to do is improve attitudes . . . and to teach them to extend themselves."

Many of today's changes center around having more classes packed into the school day, and the large increase in technology now seen in Flanders and throughout the Farmington district.

One of the memories past years is that of a large tulip tree, one of the state's oldest which provided shade on the playground. Whether diseased or hit by lightning — no one can remember exactly what happened — the tree had to be taken down. But its legacy was a caring for trees in upcoming generations of

Flanders students.

Each Arbor Day in the spring, students, teachers and the Flanders community celebrate the day by planting one or more trees on the school property.

Last spring, when the Flanders community kicked off the 30th anniversary festivities, Delewsky said he was invited back to help plant two new tulip trees on the school property.

He also donated to the school a piece of the original tulip tree, which retired teacher Marion Spencer had given to him.

Parents helped to organize a 30th anniversary birthday party this month, and the school's fall open house will center around the 30th anniversary theme. Students began the celebration last spring by doing historical projects which were highlighted in the district's "Showcase" activity at Harrison High School, Reader said.

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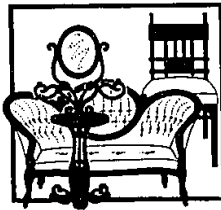
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