

Generations

Conroy grandson opens Golfshape

BY TRACY BIRKENHAUER
STAFF WRITER

All golfers can use some help, whether they admit it or not. After 23 years in the industry, PGA professional Bruce Conroy decided to capitalize on that fact. Golfshape, in downtown Farmington's Village Commons, offers 2,100 square feet of equipment, training aids and personal instruction. And the Golf Channel is always on.

"A fair amount of golfers know they need fitness," Conroy said, straddling a barstool in the center of his new business. "They're not looking for a body building facility, but this might be a motivator that will benefit their golf and their lifestyle."

Golfshape employs a physical therapist/golf exercise specialist and a couple of Professional Golf Association teaching professionals. Depending on what package they purchase, golfers can get one-on-one personal instruction, a body flexibility analysis, a golf-specific personal exercise session or a video golf lesson. Packages are \$25 and up.

"Our priorities are flexibility, strength, balance and endurance," said Terry Heaton, Golfshape's orthopedic physical therapist. "The idea that golf doesn't require exercise has been thrown out the window, especially with the recent fitness boom."

The exercise equipment in Golfshape is designed for circuit training. Each station is numbered, one through 18, for each hole of golf. Each area challenges the body to stretch, strengthen or adjust to correct form.

There are the standard rubber exercise ball and treadmill, but there are also more "golfy" (as Conroy terms it) machines. The golf swing emulator is a hybrid lat pull. Instead of pulling bar, users swing a club against weight resistance.

Nestled in the back of the store is the "golffiest" machine of all. The track trainer is a large orb featuring an 8-pound club. The shape of the machine forces users to demonstrate correct form.

Golfers who really want to know what their swing looks like can perform in

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Judy Downey

—Downtown Development Authority executive director

front of dual cameras for a take-home video and on-screen analysis. Conroy can download the video and compare their form to models of four players. Of course, most golfers' swings don't emulate Tiger Woods', but it gives them somewhere to start. The system stores thousands of swings, so users can get before and after video of themselves for comparison.

"We can make it fun, but very educational," Conroy said. "We don't want to promote this as a medical-type environment. We tried to stay away from that. We tried to make it really golfy."

Conroy didn't conduct market analyses to determine his business location.



Fore! Bruce Conroy takes a swing on a machine that helps improve your golf swing.

The Canton resident knew from the start that Farmington would be his locale. It has proven successful for generations in his family.

His grandfather, Tracy Conroy, owned Conroy's Market for about 30 years. His father, William Conroy, co-owned Clappison and Conroy, now called the Farmington Insurance Agency. Golfshape occupies the storefront his mother, Sara Warren, rented for her gift shop, Warren's Village Store, which she recently closed.

"I think it's a good market for golf," Conroy said. "Besides, I'm a third-generation Conroy in downtown Farmington. That must mean something."

It means everything to Judy Downey, executive director of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority.

"I think it's wonderful when people in the same family wish to keep on doing business in this community. There is great depth of family and history in Farmington. It just proves that it's a great place to live, work and do business."

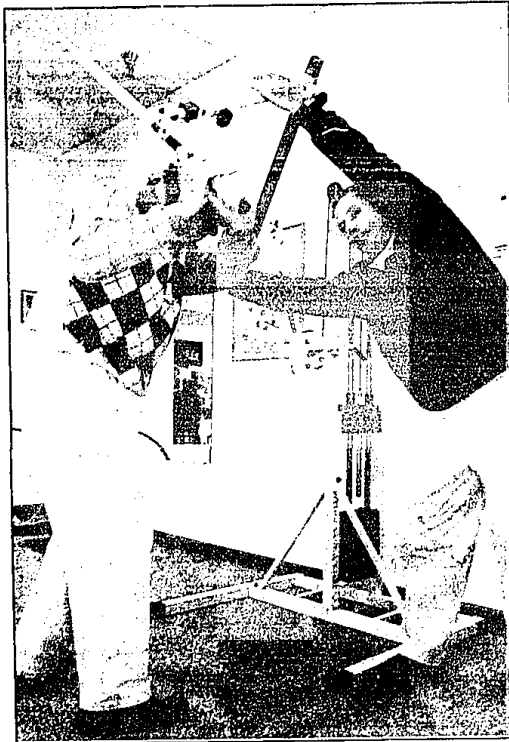
As far as relying on his good family name, one local historian doesn't think that will bring Conroy much business.

"Bruce is known by name with a lot of the older timers," said Dick Carvell, member of the Farmington Historical Commission. "But there aren't as many old timers around anymore. Whenever I get into a local group, people don't seem to know much about the area because they haven't lived here that long."

Nevertheless, Carvell predicts Golfshape will prove successful.

From a historical perspective, he said specialty stores have done well in Farmington, frequently out growing commercial spaces available. That's why some businesses have left.

"I think it's definitely a specialty busi-



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BIRKENHAUER

Here's how: Emil Coolidge still plays golf at age 75. PGA professional Bruce Conroy instructs him on the use of a conditioning machine at Golfshape.

ness and a way for golfers to keep up their interest, especially in the winter time," Downey said. "Anything that diversifies and brings people in to discover the other shops we have is a wonderful addition."

While Golfshape hasn't shaped up too many golfers since its Feb. 1 opening, Conroy is confident his business will take off.

"Every golfer needs help," he said. "Even the good ones."

The following are activities planned at the Farmington and Farmington Hills branch libraries. For more information, contact the Hills library at 553-0300, or the Farmington branch at 474-7770.



Discuss Great Books
Join your friends and neighbors at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 16 for a discussion of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" at the main library.

Children

Bring the whole family to enjoy the Johnson Marionettes presentation of "Neptune's Kingdom" at our annual dinner theater. The presentation is scheduled at the Farmington Branch on Tuesday, March 7 and at the main library on Wednesday, March 22. Performances start at 7 p.m. Please arrive by 6:30 p.m. and bring a paper bag dinner. The library will provide drinks and dessert. Recommended for ages 5 and up. This program is made possible by the Farmington Friends of the Library. Registration is required.

"Safe On Your Own" is a program designed for elementary and middle school children and their parents. It will provide helpful tips for children who need to take care of themselves at times, includes a presentation of an American Red Cross video and a workbook on how to be "Safe On Your Own." This program will be at the Farmington branch at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 16 and on Tuesday, March 28 at the main library. Registration is required.

Fourth and 5th graders are invited to join in the discussion of Pam Munoz Ryan's "Riding Freedom" 10:30-11:15 a.m. March 18 at the Farmington branch. Parents are welcome to join in.

Computers

"How to Find Stuff on the Web" will teach users what search engines are and how they work at 7 p.m. March 23 at the Farmington branch.

Learn how to use the Info Trac Search Bank to find and print articles in the library or by modem 7-9 p.m. at the main library and 9:15-10 a.m. March 18.

A new "Spinning Seniors" class will feature basics for older adults, including instruction for the library Catalog 2-3 p.m. at the Farmington branch.

Tax assistance and forms

Tax assistance for seniors is offered now through April by local representatives from the AARP noon-2 p.m. every at the Farmington Branch. The library provides free copies of the most popular state and federal forms. Other forms are available at the information desk for photocopying. For internet users, copies of state forms are available from the Michigan Department of Treasury at <http://www.treasury.state.mi.us/tax/maypub/tmindex.html> Federal forms are available online from the IRS at <http://www.irs.gov/irs/forms/pubs/index.html> Selected Detroit forms are available from the city of Detroit online at <http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/fish-cometax/income.html>

New parenting collection

A new collection of books aimed at parents of preschool children is now available in the Children's Department at the Farmington branch. Library staff hope that by offering these materials in the Children's Department parents of young children can have materials near at hand while they are visiting the department with their youngsters.

Investments

Be sure not to miss the remaining two sessions of the Winter Investment Series at 7 p.m. Tuesdays at the main library. Call to register.

Mark Smith will let retirees know how to better manage their financial situation and retirement fund, and whether or not they need to update their wills and trusts in the session, "Retired and Now What?" on March 7.

Terry Roberts will discuss "Long Term Health Care" including who will take care of you if your health fails, and will your disability cause a financial hardship on your loved one in the March 14 session.

Chamber executive honored

The board of directors of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce Executives has recognized Carleah Flaherty, president of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, with a Michigan Chamber Professional Award.



Carleah Flaherty

The award is given to those who have achieved specific educational and training goals. The program was developed in 1990 to encourage and maintain high standards among chamber of commerce executives in Michigan.

The Michigan Chamber of Professional program requires recipients to meet certain minimum educational requirements annually in order to maintain the designation. Eighteen chamber executives from throughout Michigan received the award Feb. 16.

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce Executives is a statewide organization of individuals involved in the management of chambers of commerce. Its purpose is to promote excellence and high ethical standards for chamber professionals through education, information and networking opportunities. It represents more than 100 local chamber executives in Michigan.

Mother of the Bride or Groom

Spring 2000 Collection

Saturday, March 11

11 am to 4 pm

Fashion Shows

11 am and 2 pm

Livonia

Come find the perfect dress or evening separates for the happy occasion. We'll show you the newest colors, fabrics and styles, from contemporary chic to classic elegance. Confident that you look just right, you can relax and enjoy the big day!

Includes selections from Dresses, Pettites and Clairewood.



March 15 is deadline for appeals

Notices of local property tax assessments for the year 2000 have been mailed to all Farmington Hills residents.

Residents who wish to protest their assessments may file an appeal by letter or in person. Letters of appeal must be received by the Assessing Office by March 15.

Those who wish to appeal in person must make an appointment to appear before the Board of

Review. To schedule an appointment, call the Assessing office March 6 through March 13.

The Board of Review will meet:

9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 6 p.m. Monday, March 13; 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 14; and 1 to 5 p.m. and 6:30 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, March 15.

For more information call the Assessing Office at 473-9584.

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