

DAVID OWEN / THE MUNY LIFE

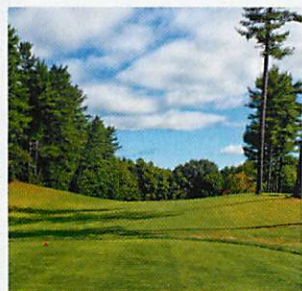
THE TALE OF BEAVER MEADOW

IN THE FALL OF 1896, three young women and a young man met near a cemetery on the outskirts of Concord, N.H., to try a suddenly popular game: golf. They liked it, and a few months later they hired Willie Campbell, a Boston-area professional and clubmaker, to create a nine-hole course in a field between the cemetery and the Merrimack River. Campbell had come to the United States from Scotland a few years before and had laid out some of the early holes at The Country Club, in Brookline. He traveled to Concord by train and charged \$50 for his design.

The course was called Beaver Meadow, and it was private until 1930, when most of its members left to found Concord Country Club. The city took possession, and in 1967 it hired Geoffrey Cornish to rework the original holes and add a second nine. Not all of Beaver Meadow's old-timers view all of Cornish's modifications as improvements. Tinker Foy, who has been a regular since the late 1950s, told me that the best way to play the original ninth, a par 3, was to bank your tee shot off the roof of the clubhouse—a shotmaking thrill that's no longer available, because the hole, the green and the old clubhouse are gone.

Beaver Meadow's annual member-member tournament was underway when I arrived, and I joined (or, rather, became) the gallery of the foursome that included Foy's son,

Denny, who is in his early 50s. His partner was Dave Andrews, a retired television-news reporter, who swings righty but putts lefty. Foy and Andrews had shot themselves out of contention the day before, and they were shooting themselves further out of contention now, but they were having a good time. On the tee of the 12th, a short par 4, Andrews said, "This is the easiest hole on the course,



although you wouldn't know it from the scores."

Andrews' cellphone rang, and Russ Matthews, another member of the foursome, said, "It's probably Hannah." He was referring to Hannah Yun, a player on the Symetra Tour and a favorite of the guys at Beaver Meadow. Yun was leading that week's tournament, in Florida, Andrews told me, and he had brought his laptop to the course so he could monitor the leader board when his



From top: Yardage marker on the second hole, Russ Matthews, Marshall Irving's tattoo, the 12th hole and Dave Andrews.

round was over. (She held on to win.) Beaver Meadow hosts a Symetra event every summer—the Northeast Delta Dental International—and Andrews has served for two years as the tournament's (volunteer) caddiemaster. He met Yun in 2008, when she was 16, and has caddied for her several times. "I love her like a daughter—like a granddaughter," he said. Caddieing for Symetra players, he added, has turned many of the men at Beaver Meadow into fans of women's golf. "They're nervous if they haven't caddied in the tournament before," he said, "but once they've done it they want to do it every year."

Each winter, Andrews, Matthews and Lee Cormier, another regular, rent a house in Port Orange, Fla., where they spend several months playing

golf, eating unhealthy food and making room for Concord buddies who are fed up with the weather in New England. They attend some women's mini-tour events and the final stage of the LPGA Tour Qualifying School, which is held nearby. Andrews has written and self-published a novel, called *Pops and Sunshine*, about a middle-age guy who helps an aspiring young woman tour pro pull her life together, and vice versa, and bits and pieces of Beaver Meadow are discernible throughout.

I joined Andrews for a non-tournament round the next morning, and when we had finished playing we sat on the patio and waited for the other groups to come in. Marshall Irving, who works as a bartender in the clubhouse, told me he'd grown up at Beaver Meadow. "I got dropped off in the morning and picked up at night," he said. "The beauty of golf, if you were a kid, was that if you got out of line you got yelled at, whether it was on the course or in the clubhouse, and it got your attention because the old guys talked to you in a way your parents never would. I realized really quick that if I acted like a grown-up, I'd be treated like a grown-up." (It takes a grillroom to raise a child.) In 1974, Irving founded a tournament at Beaver Meadow called the Harvest Invitational, to raise money for junior golf. It's still played each fall, and when Irving turned 60, a few years ago, he had the tournament's original logo tattooed on his forearm. "I love this place," he said. He rubs cocoa butter on the tattoo each morning, to keep the image sharp. ♣

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