

## **History of Beaver Meadows Compiled by Len Cooper (last update December 2003)**

In the early 1960's, the original concept for what became Beaver Meadows Golf and Recreation Association began with Ted Lebro of Phoenix, NY. Ted was a real estate broker with his office at Fulton, NY, and was interested in developing about 50 acres of land he owned on the west side of the Oswego River at the intersection of County Route 46, State Route 48 and the Pinnacle Hill Road.

Soon, the idea of a golf course in the Oswego County area of Phoenix became firmly planted in the minds of a small group of people headed by John Harder. This was during the time that the United States Government was subsidizing farmland which was taken out of production.

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The group purchased a 200 acre site (our present location) for \$22,000 on Barnard Road, which included a house (destroyed by fire) and a barn, which was taken down in 1991. The amount of the purchase was considerably less than the original asking price of the Lebro property, which was only about 50 acres and had no buildings. Of the 200 plus acres, about 175 acres would be used for the Golf Course, Swimming Pool, Club House and Parking Lot and an area reserved for the future addition of Tennis Courts. This area of the Town of Schroepfel was known to the natives as Beaver Meadows, thus the creation of the Club's name

This small group of people (some of whom, in addition to John Harder, were Bud Arnold, Jeanette Ausman, Silvio "Chip" Cardineli, Leonard Cooper, Lester Gowdy, Robert Jarvis, Carroll Kelly, Thomas Pierce, Stephen Surdell, Gordon Tyler, Harlod Van Epps, and Leon Vickery) began to meet regularly and often at the Phoenix Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5540 making plans, securing financial backing and also seeking persons interested in a challenging opportunity to play golf. A minimum of 200 interested persons/families was required, 135 of whom had to come from a rural area, in order for James Reeves, Manager of the Baldwinsville NY office of the Farmers Home Administration (FHA) to formally begin the loan process. This (the requirement that 135 come from a rural area) excluded places like the City of Fulton and the Villages of Liverpool and Baldwinsville, which represented three of our four largest drawing areas (the fourth being Phoenix). The original 200 were required to commit to a non-refundable twenty dollars which was to be deducted from their first years' membership dues.

In order to purchase the property, the committee first approached the Marine Midland Bank. Marine Midland's loan offer would have required 22 of the original group to co-sign for the \$22,000 needed to purchase the property. This idea was rejected and the committee was requested to look further. About this same time, the First Trust and Deposit Company arrived in Fulton. They agreed to loan the needed money for the finances to secure the property purchase. Willie Stevens and Ron Blanding were the Bank's Manager and Assistant at the time, and were very helpful and offered needed encouragement. William Tumbridge, then President of All Tel Telephone Company (with headquarters at Fulton), was a dynamic behind-the-scenes force with the Bank's management.

James Reeves then began to seek out the necessary requirements to secure a guaranteed FHA loan in the amount of \$250,000 to finance and construct the original Club House, Golf Course and Pool with Tennis Courts to be built later. For the land purchase, it was necessary to secure an Attorney. John O.

Conway of Oswego was chosen. He also was Chairman of the Oswego County political party which was the Majority Party in Washington, DC at that time. Mr. Conway was very cooperative and the loan was processed rapidly. A picture of the Offices and Directors, who were present the day of the presentation of the check, appears in the Club House Foyer above the Plaque honoring Beaver Meadows original Officers and Board of Directors. Beaver Meadows Certificate of Incorporation was granted January 4, 1965. All who were members on that date were given a copy of the Certificate and classified as Charter Members. The original Logo was developed by Jay Garbutt, a Phoenix Commercial Artist and Charter Member. The Logo and the Name of the Golf Course were about the only decisions the original group of Founding Directors had complete agreement on, which becomes evident as one peruses minutes of those early meetings. The Beaver on the plaque on the stairway landing wall, was captured by Marty Allen of Phoenix, then a Conservation Office at Old Forge.

The original Club House was of bi-level, two story construction and was built by Homer Bowman and Sons of Phoenix at a cost of \$50,000. The blueprints were drawn up by Stephen Surdell. The only change required by the FHA to Steve's design was changing the spacing of the floor joists to 12 inches on centers. The Golf Course was designed and laid out by Bailey Associates of Utica, and was contracted out to Joseph Lindsey of Old Forge for approximately \$120,000. This included a partial watering system which it was hoped could be expanded to a fairway watering system when more money became available and a larger water source was obtained. The lack of three phase power was always a problem for such further development, primarily due to the initial financial outlay required by Niagara Mohawk Power Company. Eventually, this cost went down considerably and three phase wiring was put in about 1975.

The original Guest Green Fees for the 1966 opening season were \$2 on weekdays and \$3 on weekends. The original locker fees were \$12 for a full and \$6 for a half locker.

In 1968, the Golf Course was pretty barren, and the Club began planting trees. Donations of money were solicited from the Members. A number of Members secured a flat bed truck and went to a tree farm in Port Byron. They dug up many Spruce Trees, returned, and replanted them all in a single weekend. Other members replanted trees from their own homes.

Beaver Meadows, due to soil conditions and poor drainage was always late to open in the spring and early to close in the fall. Therefore, in the early 1970's, the first Membership assessment of \$40 was made to install drain tiles on the Golf Course to extend the playing season. This helped immensely.

With Membership growing to over 350 in 1973, the original Club House was too small for all who wanted – and all wanted – to partake in the almost weekly social events. In 1974, it became obvious that the Club House needed enlargement. It became quite a controversial subject due to the necessity to borrow more money and take a second mortgage. It was finally agreed that the enlargement was necessary, so the work began. The original porch was enclosed and a new entranceway (the present one) and dining room extension were added. A new Pro Shop with club storage facilities and the existing Snack Bar and Dining Area were created. Both locker rooms were also increased in size with areas and private shower areas in the Women's Locker Room. This project required about \$125,000.

It was just after this completed project that the United States was hit with a recession of sorts and Membership took a sharp decline. The new loan for the Club House expansion became heavy for the

remaining members, so for many years, the FHA accepted and was paid interest only with no money being paid against the original principal.

The Chit system which was used through 2000 began in 1972 at \$50 for the full year. In the late 1970's, one of the attempts to get Beaver Meadows thriving again was by bringing in Touring Golf Professionals for a one day exhibition and clinic. This drew many visitors and gave them an opportunity to see the facilities, in the hopes that some would join. The Touring Pros included Peter Jacobsen, D.A. Weibring, Bobby Clampett, George Burns, "Big Car" Williams (a long driving champ) and Jerry Pate. (Jerry Pate was here the week following his infamous jump in the lake after a Texas PGA Tour Event victory.) Many signs and pictures were present on number 10. Big Cat hit a ball from the practice tee onto the 10th green. This was prior to the big drivers of today, and the balls weren't as good.

During the 1990's decade, emphasis was placed on general maintenance, beautification and manicuring the Golf Course and repairing, replacing and building new traps. Old trees were removed and new ones planted. (Many were Memorials to deceased Members.) Many new bridges over waterways were constructed. A new maintenance facility was completed in 1993 between #2 and #9 fairways. This put our equipment in the center of the Golf Course. Golf course equipment was replaced, upgraded and added.

During 1994 and 1995, the Men's and Women's Locker Rooms were completely gutted and rebuilt. New toilet fixtures, sinks and plumbing, together with individual showers were installed. About 500 new lockers were added after removal of the existing. The dining area in the Restaurant was completely refitted with lighting and the Air Conditioning was replaced. Improvements on the landscaping around the Club House are an ongoing project.

During 1998 and 1999, cart paths were added to much of the golf course to extend play during the wet springs and falls. The completion of additional cart paths as may be required will follow recommendations of our course architect Barry Jordan and completion of the project described in the following paragraphs.

During the early years of the 21st Century, with the Membership flourishing, the cash flow and waiting list at an all time high, many more improvements and updating of facilities and equipment were completed. The original 20 year FHA Mortgage was paid off early and taking advantage of a low interest rate environment, new lines of credit and a new mortgage were secured for needed projects. Our payment for debt service remained substantially the same. Computer systems for the Pro Shop, Restaurant and Handicapping were installed. Our fleet of riding carts was updated from 40 to 50 all with roofs, bag covers and windshields. The majority of restaurant and serving equipment was replaced. The dining room was completely renovated and two additional restrooms were added. The furnace, fuel storage tank and roof were replaced. A new telephone system, with voice mail capability was installed.

In 2001, a Course Architect, Barry Jordan, was chosen (from several firms that submitted ideas) to beautify, redesign and work toward remedying our poor drainage in the areas of holes #4, #5, #6 and #7. This major renovation was begun in July of 2002 and opened officially June 6, 2003. The project included the complete replacement of #4 green. The green was elevated about 8 feet and the fairway from 150 yards to the green was completely redone to blend in with the elevation of the green. An enlarged pond to the left of #4 fairway and green, and a new pond to the rear and right of #4 green, were incorporated into the design. This latter pond was tied into the new storage pond which extended from the right of

the #4 green, to the right of #5 hole and right of #6 and #7 fairways. The addition of these holding ponds helped alleviate our drainage problem, and have doubled our water reserves for course irrigation. Besides hole #4, the fairways on holes #6 and #11 were rebuilt and elevated to eliminate previous poor drainage. Other changes made on these holes included tree removals, relocations and additional sand traps. The Contractor on this project was Hubbell Company from Margaretville, NY. The total cost was approximately \$400,000.

The refinancing of the club allowed much needed repairs to the swimming pool. A major expenditure of \$70,000 was made, the majority of which was install stainless steel gutters to replace the original carbon steel gutters which had been patched to the limit. New concrete decks have brought the pool back to near new conditions.

The club is currently upgrading all the tees on the golf course. Five tees were refurbished in 2003. The club uses (started 2002) a five tee system with Green for children, Red for women, Gold for seniors, White for men and the Blue are Championship Tees.

A listing of past presidents of the Club is included annually in the yearly Membership Directory, together with that year's current Officers and Directors. The original Officers and Board of Directors are honored on a plaque in the main foyer of the Club House. The various Golf Professionals and Golf Course Superintendents that have contributed to growth and development of Beaver Meadows are listed below:

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Golf Professionals		
Frank Murray	1966-1967	2 years
James Doherty	1968-1990	23 years
Tom Iorizzo	1991-1993	3 years
Robert Whetsell	1994-1997	4 years
Rick Bronson	1998-2000	3 years
Scott Webster	2001-2002	2 years
Alex Smith	2003-2017	14 years
Scott Russell	2017	.5 year
Ryan Reynolds	2017-Present	

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Superintendents		
Frank Murray	1966-1969	4 years
John "Shorty" Wallace	1970-1983	14 years
James Crandall	1984-1992	9 years
Jay Yanchisin	1993-1998	5.5 years
Robert Turnmyer	1998-2000	5.5 years
Zenon Hayduke	2001-2001	1 year
Chris Cartini	2002-2014	12 years
Ash Gough	2014-Present	