

SCHWARTZ *Report*



DIRECT: 302-234-5202 • OFFICE: 302-239-3000
www.charlieschwartz.com

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THE OOLEY-COW

It is April and by the time you see this, that little golf invitational down in Georgia, the “Tune-a-ment” as my friend Joe Guillebeau calls it, will have been played for the nth time. It’s playing kicks off the golf season for those of us in cooler climes, just as it did for many a sports writer in bygone days. Masters founders, Bob Jones and Clifford Roberts, were smart about the scheduling of their tournament. After baseball’s spring training concluded, Augusta was a convenient stopover on the train ride north from Florida and a little extra publicity from the newspapers wouldn’t hurt.



what should the aggrieved do about it? Or as Popeye was heard to say when reaching for the spinach: “That’s all I can stands I can’t stands no more!”

This being golf month, somewhere in the literature of golf there must be a suitably

illustrative story. Off to my bookshelf I went. The Dewey Decimal System does not operate there so it took a while before I finally found what I was looking for. Charles Van Loan wrote this short story in 1918. As most of golf is a allegory for life, his tale is as appealing today as ever.

Between baseball and golf, you could not think of a better lineup of story tellers. John Updike, George Plimpton, Dan Jenkins, P. G. Woodhouse and Bernard Darwin’s names come immediately to mind. Most of them wrote about the game better than they played it. I have collected and enjoyed quite a few of their stories. Over the years I have also collected enough golf and baseball memorabilia, books, films and periodicals to fill a small museum which my friends call “the bunker.”

Reflecting on last month’s dour and disheartening Schwartz Report, I thought there must be a moral to that story. Who is taking advantage of whom and

Entitled “The Ooley-Cow”, it is the story of a well-to-do gentleman, Wesley J. Perkins, hailing from Dubuque, Iowa. He is the ooley-cow, a nickname made more appropriate by his appearance of bovine placidity. Mr. Perkins moves to sunny Southern California. He takes up golf and gulibilly falls prey to a couple of old hustlers, Uncle Billy Poindexter and Old Man Sprout. Mr. Van Loan describes Wesley Perkins as “the easiest, softest pickings that ever strayed from the home pasture... With care and decent treatment [just like John Q. Public] he would have yielded an enormous quantity of nourishment... The ooley-cow was a good thing, but Uncle Billy and Old Man Sprout did not use any judgement. They piled it on him too thick.”

Such treatment became the thing which made "the gentlest old mooley in Iowa kick over the bucket, upset the milker, jump a four-barred fence and join the wild bunch on the range." Economically speaking, are you getting the point of this?

Seeking redress after the last straw was piled on, Wesley Perkins brings in a ringer from his old home town. The resulting golf match "strews the entire golf course with the mangled remains of the two old pirates before mentioned... Now they have to sign tags for drinks and their golf balls the same as the rest of us. They have killed the goose that laid the golden eggs."

Cows and geese, perhaps I have introduced too many farm animals here. Sorry, I won't reveal how the "old pirates" got their comeuppance. Rather, suffice it to say that the ooley-cow was willing to go on being milked for golf balls, drinks, cash, lunches, and caddy fees indefinitely, if treated fairly. However, when pressed without mercy, "he kicked over the bucket, injured the milkers and jumped the fence." Sound familiar?



Charles E. Schwartz II, CRB
7234 Lancaster Pike, 100A
Hockessin, DE 19707
302-234-5202
Fax 302-234-5212
cschwartz@psre.com
www.charlieschwartz.com

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