

# BLYTHEFIELD ENTERTAINMENT CIRCA 1953

By Brent D. Rector

*"You've come a long way, baby!"*  
**Virginia Slims advertisements**

As 2023 ends, it's time for DYK to wrap up our memories from the 1953 Western Amateur. If you missed earlier installments covering that major tournament, go back to March and August 2023. Before we leave the early 1950's, here's a bit more, focusing on entertainment at our Club back in 1953. How times have changed!

Our members were very involved in making the '53 Western Am a success. We hosted several social activities during the third week of August that year. There were banquets and parties, along with exhibitions from our head golf professional and by a trick shot artist. General co-chairmen were former club president Russell Jervis and Hermie Miller, Sr., who was an accomplished amateur and a BCC member. Miller played in the Western Am that year.



*Newspaper clipping courtesy of Hermie Sr.'s son, Bob, a former BCC member.*

The Western Golf Association (WGA) hosted a cocktail party and supper buffet during the tournament, on Thursday evening after the round-of-32 Thursday matches. The guest list included WGA officials, Blythefield members working at the tournament, members of the press covering the tournament, and the 16 contestants still in the tournament. It appears from these photos that this dinner was an all-male event.



*The Western Am banquet in our clubhouse*



*Note the lavish spread, the candelabra, and a member of our waitstaff.*

There was an exhibition on the driving range featuring our head professional, John Barnum. Nicknamed for his tall stature, “Big John” came to Blythefield CC in 1949 after a sterling amateur career. He was already considered one of the top golf pros in the Midwest. Here is Big John demonstrating shots on the range. Note the old Golf Building in the background.



The women of Blythefield—mostly wives of members—were also involved in the '53 Western Am, typically in helper roles. Back then we had very few members who were women. Those few were mostly widows of deceased members, such as Mrs. Augusta Brewer, wife of BCC's founder, Joseph Brewer.



**WILL ACT AS WESTERN AMATEUR GOLF SCORERS**—Among preparations for the classic Western Amateur golf championships, booked for Aug. 17-22 at Blythefield Country club, are details being carried out to handle adequately all the scoring in the huge tournament. Women of Blythefield met Wednesday and started organizing to handle the work. Mrs. Howard O'Meara and Mrs. Elmer L. Kinsey are cochairmen. Approximately 50 women, many from other Grand Rapids clubs, will serve as scorers. Those attending the meeting Wednesday are shown above. Seated, left to right, Mrs. R. E. Shipp, Mrs. Richard H. Sidell, Mrs. Thomas Kouchovek, Mrs. C. A. Smith, Jr. and Mrs. O'Meara. Standing, left to right, Mrs. Kinsey, Mrs. Edwin F. Curley, Mrs. Harvey M. Rasmussen, Mrs. G. Donald Albers, Mrs. Charles Crane and Mrs. Willard A. Miller.

The ladies of Blythefield oversaw scoring for the tournament. This photo (L) is from the *Grand Rapids Press* on July 30, 1953.

Blythefield women also arranged a “dinner dance” party, a popular social event back then. It was held on Saturday evening, before the final match on Sunday.

THE GRAND RAPIDS HERALD, FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 1953

## Blythefield Plans Dinner Dance for Saturday

Blythefield Country Club will be the scene of a dinner dance Saturday evening climaxing the week's playing of the Western Amateur tournament. The Rythmaires will play for dancing.

Dr. and Mrs. Richard H. Sidell and Dr. and Mrs. G. Donald Albers are in charge of arrangements for the party.

Reservations have been received from Mr. and Mrs. Herman E. Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert E. Tegpp, Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell J. Tangney, Mr. and Mrs. Keith M. Talsma, Mr. and Mrs. Willard Talsma, Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Crane, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Hunting, Mr. and Mrs. Howard R. O'Meara, Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Cholette and their guests Dr. and Mrs. Stuart Yntema of Saginaw.

Others making reservations are Mr. and Mrs. Richard McCormick, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Jack J. Behler, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen R. Hicks, Mr. and Mrs. Roland J. O'Brien, Mr. and Mrs. Carl S. Herrud, Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. Howald, Mr. and Mrs. Rube Jordan, Mr. and Mrs. Duane Kress.

Also, Mr. and Mrs. Edward L. Lawyer, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Neiboer, Dr. and Mrs. O. Lee Rucker, Mr. and Mrs. Chester Olson, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Osborn, Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Peters, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Rasmussen, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Marcus, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Brink, Mr. and Mrs. John H. Sharp, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph P. VanBlooy, Mr. and Mrs. George B. Nelson, Dr. and Mrs. Donald P. Moore, Mr. and Mrs. William A. Tebbel, Mr. and Mrs. John W. Bailey and their guests Mr. and Mrs. Harvie Ward.

Reservations have also been made by Mr. and Mrs. George J. Cadey, Mr. and Mrs. David Ralston and Mr. and Mrs. Jack Kruzenza whose guests will be Mr. and Mrs. Robert Morrissey and Mr. and Mrs. John Yeakey. Mr. and Mrs. Edwin D. Wolf will have as their guests at the party Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Fernald, Harry Nylan, Mrs. Berniece Baldwin and Robert Wolf.

Out of town guests will include Mr. and Mrs. John Levinson of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. James Jackson of Glendale, Mo., and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Foreman of Highland Park, Ill.



—Herald Photograph

## Miss Barbara M. Kaminski to Become Bride Sept. 12

Miss Barbara M. Kaminski and Sacred Heart Church. The rites Airman Raymond Kalinowski will be solemnized at 9 o'clock

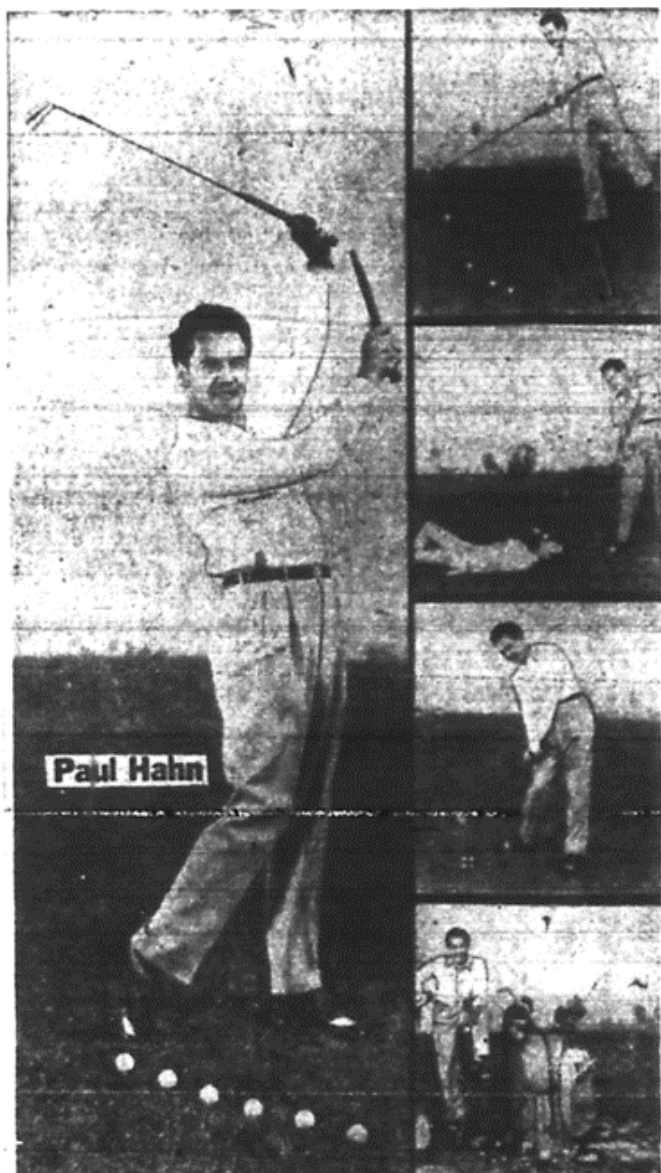
## Women Complete Arrangements for Party

Arrangements are being completed for the dinner dance which Blythefield Country Club will give Saturday evening at the conclusion of the Western Amateur Tournament. Members of the club working on table decorations for the party are (left to right) Mrs. Duane E. Kress, Mrs. E. A. Ruhl, Mrs. Elmer L. Kinsey and Mrs. Richard H. Sidell.

The Western Golf Association provided some entertainment between rounds of the Western Am's 36-hole final match, hiring Paul Hahn, a professional trick shot artist. This is from the *Grand Rapids Press*' front sports page, in a column called "Western Amateur Notes" the next day:

*The showing of Paul Hahn, trick shot artist, between rounds Sunday, was as good as expected. Hahn thrilled a big crowd by hitting shots with all types of clubs, popping the ball into the air and going through other assorted golf hijinks. His showing filled the interlude nicely while the players had lunch.*

The WGA's report of the championship noted that it "use[d] Mr. Hahn in view of the fact that spectators were not allowed in the clubhouse, and this would create a means of diversification for the gallery during the noon pause. [Hahn's] charge was \$250.00."



**From the Grand Rapids Press on August 22, 1953: EXPERT AMONG EXPERTS:** Paul Hahn of Ellinor Village Country Club, Ormond Beach, Fla., isn't a competitor in the Western Amateur golf tournament at Blythefield but he'll command plenty of attention there—including that of the title finalists—Sunday afternoon. Hahn, widely known as a trick shot artist, performs such stunts as driving a ball from a tee held in the teeth of a trusting volunteer and hitting four balls at once while using two clubs. He performs his feats at major tourneys throughout the country, including the Masters at Augusta, Ga. The Hahn demonstration will be held between 12:30 and 2 p.m., filling the interval separating rounds of the championship match.

Our BCC archives also have some photos of Hahn's exhibition on our practice tee.



Top: Hahn hitting four balls with two clubs. Center: Hahn using a whippy shaft. (Note: ladies - and even children! - in the gallery.) Bottom: Hahn's "William Tell" shot, with a ball teed in the mouth of a volunteer - a woman.

After the championship's conclusion, there was an award ceremony on our practice tee. I'm still hopeful to find the names of the caddies for the two finalists, champion Dale Morey and runner-up Dick Norton. The caddies are seated on the left in this photo. (Back then, only boys caddied!)



Partying at Blythefield continued after the Western Am. Our club was in full swing, socially, consistent with the prosperity of the time at clubs throughout the nation. We ushered in 1954 with another lavish dinner dance on New Year's Eve. The *Grand Rapids Press* covered the upcoming gala. A December 30th article announced "Many to Ring in New Year at Blythefield CC Party," with this story:

*Balloons along with many other festive arrangements will decorate Blythefield Country Club for its formal party New Years Eve. Hors d'oeuvres will be served from 7 to 9 p.m. followed by dancing. Dinner will be served from 8 to 10 p.m. and after ringing the new year in a breakfast will be held at 3:30 a.m.*  
[emphasis supplied]

It must have been an all-night party. A few days earlier there was a holiday celebration for the youth of our club, also covered by the *Press*. The band hired for both holiday parties was the Rhythmaires, a dance band from Paw Paw, Michigan.

### Party Plans for Dance at Blythefield



Mary Anderson, right, and Bob Eleveld are co-chairmen of the annual Christmas formal dance given by the teen-agers of Blythefield Country club. The dance will be held Dec. 30 from 9 p. m. to midnight at the club. Rhythmaires will furnish the music.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1953.

### Ready Blythefield for New Year



Decorating a punch table with huckleberry leaves and ribbons for the Blythefield Country club New Year's Eve party are, left to right, Mrs. Edward Lawyer, Mrs. David Ralsotn and Mrs. Harvey Rasmussen.

Clockwise from top left: *Press* clipping covering the “annual Christmas formal dance given by the teen-agers of Blythefield Country Club” on December 30, 1953; the Rhythmaires swing band with a female lead singer; a *Press* clipping highlighting BCC’s upcoming New Year’s Eve festivities.

Looking back, one can only be amused at how much the roles of women expanded over the years—not that there is anything wrong with being helpers and mothers. Consider this quote from Charles “Chick” Evans, explaining why he gave the money he had earned from golf to provide for education expenses for caddies. He started doing this on his own, and later convinced the WGA to create a scholarship trust that was named for him. This idea had come from his mother, Lena: “My mother wouldn’t think of accepting any money unless we could arrange [for] it to be trusted to furnish educations for deserving, qualified caddies.”

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P.S. Today the Evans Scholarship Fund benefits worthy caddies - both boys *and* girls. Please consider contributing to the Evans Scholarship Foundation at the Par Club level.