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On the Road Again

by
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I've received several e-mails requesting more information on the trip to Israel and it will be forthcoming as soon as I gather all my notes and the thoughts that go along with them. For me it was such an important trip in my life I don't want to water down its impact by writing about it too soon. I'm sure I will omit something important if I rush it. North Lake Presbyterian Church was the sponsor of the trip and we met some great people as a result of being part of their group. So stay tuned for future reports on what went on.

Retirement is nothing as I pictured it to be and I'm sure it can't be what many of you who haven't reached that magic point in your life think it will be. Anticipating retirement my mind was always filled with thoughts of "What will I do to keep myself occupied during all that down time?" Judy and I have had absolutely *no* down time since we married 2 ½ years ago.

Immediately upon our return from Israel we had exactly one day to get our act together, wash a few things, and take off again for Bonita Springs, FL, located between Ft. Myers, FL and Naples, FL off I-75. Friends of ours from WV had a condo for two weeks and had invited us down for a few days so we took them up on it. A beautiful place it was, located in the Bonita Bay development and it gave us time to truly unwind from our Israel trip and get our bodies re-adjusted to Eastern Daylight Time which is 11 hours behind Israeli time.

It was our second trip to Bonita Springs and as it is throughout Florida many new housing developments had sprung up all through the area. Everywhere you look there are new homes and businesses and with every development there seemed to be a new golf course to challenge one's skills. My buddy Steve and I decided to take the challenge and reserved a tee time at Stony Brook Golf Club. The temperature was typical of Southern Florida weather for this time of year... hanging around 86 – 94 degrees in the shade. The golf course was in good shape although the lack of rain was showing with a lot of brown spots throughout, especially on the greens. In spite of that the course was well maintained and very challenging to play with water hazards on each hole.

We were paired with a nice couple from Boston, Mass., Linda and Frank, who were visiting the area for a week. They had already played five other courses in the area and ranked Stony Brook somewhere in the middle of the difficulty range. Frank was a pretty good golfer but Linda was the most consistent of all of us... hitting her ball straight and her ability to get out of bunkers. I told her it was getting pretty boring watching her ball go straight down the middle of the fairway everytime she got up to hit. After I said that she did knock a few of her balls into the sand, but it seemed she

did it just to get us to feel good about our errant shots. I let her know I appreciated her thoughtfulness.

The most impressive thing about the golf club was its carts. Now keep in mind I'm just a poor little country boy who hasn't been around that much and it doesn't take much to excite me but these carts were really something special. They had an onboard GPS system with a large monitor mounted in the roof and it could do anything. It gave the exact yardage from the cart to the pin while at the same time giving you the distance to each of the carts that were in front of us. It also would give specific distances to the front and back of every trap on the course and the same for the water hazards.

If you desired it would pop up a score card and keep your score for you and as you rounded the turn on the front nine a screen would come up asking if you were hungry and give you an opportunity to place an order for food to be waiting on you. It would wash your balls and clubs and if you would park it just right it would help line up your putt.

The most amazing thing I encountered was after it told me my ball was 92 yards to the pin I pulled out my eight iron and proceeded to hit the ball. Well, the ball went about 15-20 yards over the green I climbed back in the cart and looked at the screen just as the screen's message read, "You dummy, everyone knows you should hit a wedge from that distance." So much for people skills... Well, even though it's not perfect it sure made it easier to choose the correct club. Okay, maybe I'm turned on to technology so much I tend to embellish just a bit. Come back next week for another adventure in this life called retirement?

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