

“A Senior Perspective”

by

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I’m always talking about the fantastic lifestyle we residents of The Villages enjoy... here in the middle of the beautiful state of Florida, with almost perfect weather but more importantly, within easy driving distance to so many things of interest. We’ve got many of the major league baseball teams holding their Spring Training a little over an hour’s drive away; we’ve got access to hundreds of natural springs spewing forth millions of gallons of pure, clear water that is available for snorkeling, canoeing, swimming, scuba-diving, rafting and fishing; several major beaches are ours to enjoy after only a short drive; we have theme parks within an hour’s drive that are the most popular in the nation; and we have literally hundreds, if not thousands, of professional grade golf courses on which to play, not counting The Villages’ own 30+ professionally maintained courses only minutes away. Who could ask for anything more?

People who live in most areas of the United States can only hope to view a PGA Professional tournament close by, maybe once a year. However, not only can we who live here visit several such tournaments a year, we can also participate as volunteer workers because of our close proximity to so many of them.

Judy and I were fortunate to be able to visit such a tournament this past Friday outside of Orlando... the Arnold Palmer Invitational, at Arnold Palmer’s Bay Hill Golf Club. Because of the largesse of two new friends, Fred and Sally, who gave us two free passes to the tournament, we were able to see “The Man of Golf,” Tiger Woods in the flesh... only fifteen feet away from where we sat. I’m not easily wowed by individuals or their talent but we all know Tiger is in a realm all his own. One can’t help to be impressed by someone with his superior talent.

We were up at 5 am and arrived at the course at 7:30 and had our seats permanently set on a little knoll, greenside, 50 feet from the pin. After walking around a little to determine the best way to view a PGA event it didn’t take us long to figure out the best way to see everyone in the tournament was to return to our seats and stay on the green for the entire day.

Trying to follow one man was filled with too many obstacles, i.e., being able to keep up with players that are walking straight down the fairway while we were forced to take the circuitous route to the green. Never could be at the right place at the right time. And if we did get there at there at the right time the crowd was too large to be able to see.

Rather than trying to take ourselves to where the players were, we decided to sit down and allow them to come to us. And you know what, every single golfer, all 120 of them had to come to our green, and from where our chairs were placed we observed their fairway shot to the green, and their putting in the birdie, par, bogey, double bogey, or, in Corey Pavin's case, a triple bogey,

Our chairs were also situated where the players exited the green and entered the next hole's tee box where we could observe, unobstructed, the same player's drive down the next fairway. It doesn't get any better than that. During the day's round we saw great shots by many of the golfers but three spectacular chips into the hole for birdies, from as many as 20-30 yards off the green. Although the weather was not as cooperative as it could have been we had a great time and got to talk with many of golfing fans and the 4 people who will probably be our new closest friends... Fred, Sally, Rich and Geri.

Folks, the list of available "things to do" above doesn't even scratch the surface of what is available for someone who is seeking exciting and different things to do... all I'm asking you to so is get off your duffs and go explore all the possibilities. You'll be glad you did.

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