

My foray into the world of golf

If you had asked me a few years ago if I played any sports, I would have said no.

I think I lost interest in organized athletics during junior high when I had to stuff myself into a Chairman Mao-issued royal blue gym suit, with socks mandated to be no taller than three-inches above the ankle bone. With clean sneakers, hair pulled back in a taut pony tail, I was marched twice a week to be inspected before the gray-haired, whistle-blowing, hulk of Mrs. Palmer. Her varicosities glistening and bulging over her sculpted calves, she blew once when she wanted us out on the gym floor. Two blows on the whistle indicated that we had to be toe-ing the out-of-bounds line,

lined up by height. I was always third shortest in my grade, so one of the first to be picked on since she always insulted us from left to right. I can't even remember what we did next, I was so traumatized. In those days, gym equaled hygiene and discipline.

It didn't get any better in high school. My one foray into organized sports at my high school was signing up for the volleyball team. The team consisted of nearly all the teachers, both men and women, plus about a half dozen brown-noser kids. On the first day of practice, we all drove up in my science teacher's VW Bus to the Salvation Army gymnasium to learn the fundamentals of volleyball. Mitch, a good friend, went up for his first-



Flotsam and Jetsam

By Donna Drago

ever spike and came down elbow first into my cheekbone. A black eye and a lot of swelling deterred me from any further action on that court.

Fast-forward some 25 years. I am married to a man who likes to play golf. He suggests one day that I should learn to play, too, "It would give us something to do

together," he encouraged. A few years go by and we decide to buy a second home down south—on a golf course! I had no excuse. I learned to play golf.

During the winter I took lessons from a good ole Southern pro who always called me Ma'am and even when I whiffed, nodded his head and said "not bad, not bad," no matter how bad things got. Well, a funny thing happened after a few lessons. I started to get it. Golf was no longer something to be feared. It was a challenge. I looked forward to playing as often as I could and began giving myself new, attainable goals, to make it through, even when my hips, knees and shoulders were saying, "Ahem, you are not in shape for this."

At first, I told myself that if I finished the game with the same ball, I was a winner. Next, the objective was to make one good shot per hole. That was my husband's idea. I am still trying to work up to actually keeping score, but can boast making par once in awhile.

My Baby Boomer eyesight is making the game a real challenge. If I wear my bifocals, I lose the ball at the moment it's supposed to be struck with the club. If I wear my distance-only glasses, I can see the ball most of the time, it's just reading the numbers on the club heads that's an issue.

In my short time as a golfer some interesting things have happened. I have hit a line drive off

See "Flotsam" on page 23

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