

IKE'S "BUNKERED"

It's Burning Tree Country Club, where the Washington brass can play golf and



Some well-known members of Burning Tree. L. to r., President Eisenhower, Justice Stanley Reed, radio-TV commentator Edward R. Murrow and Rep. Charles Halleck. At far right is a Secret Service man (unidentified, as usual) bearing walkie-talkie radio

HAVEN[”]

By ANDREW TULLY

Relax with no concern for clothes, business, politics—or even etiquette



IT COMES to few men to be invited to play a round of golf at "Ike's Club," and the Midwestern banker felt a certain awe as the car in which he was riding turned into the driveway of Burning Tree Club in the Washington suburb of Bethesda. His eyes took in with approval the rambling fieldstone clubhouse and the well-manicured greens, then turned—and stopped, horrified—to a figure about to tee off from the number-one tee. The figure, human and male, was wearing a pair of old khaki shorts, sagging socks, shoes—and nothing else.

"My Lord!" exclaimed the guest. "Who in Heaven's name is that?"

His host, who happened to be George Allen, one-time White House jester during Harry Truman's administration and an old friend of Dwight D. Eisenhower as well, grinned.

"That," said Mr. Allen, "is Mr. Justice Stanley Reed of the Supreme Court of the United States."

The guest could not have received a better introduction to the club which is Dwight D. Eisenhower's golfing home. It is the boast of Burning Tree members that their club is the most distinguished and the worst-dressed in the world. They also acknowledge, with a kind of sheepish pride, that it may well be the noisiest and the one least likely to get a medal from Emily Post.

These raffish qualities, and the fact that it's an all-male institution, are what constitute the charm of Burning Tree, at least so far as its members are concerned. Wives may wish their big boys would be a little less shabbily masculine at their play, but since wives are not allowed inside the gate except on special occasions their complaints are genially dismissed.

President Eisenhower has been a member of Burning Tree since 1945. He likes it for the same friendly, informal qualities that appeal to the other members. But now that he is President he likes it even more for one of its unwritten rules—that no business may be transacted within the club's sacred precincts.

The membership realizes it would be impossible to ban all shop talk among golfers who represent the top drawer in Washington's government, military and business circles. But the rule is that all such talk must be casually conversational and entirely theoretical. No deals may be made, no promises given or asked, no contracts entered into at Burning Tree.

And members know that punishment for violation of this rule is swift and severe. There was the club member several years ago, when former Ambassador to Russia Joseph E. Davies was president of the club, who asked a senator if he'd made up his mind how he was going to vote on a certain bill. He didn't ask the senator how he was going to vote, merely if he'd decided how he'd vote. But the question was ruled illegal and the member was suspended for a year. Earlier, a member was forced to resign when he insisted, after several warnings, on pursuing his lobbying.

Of course, members do ask their highly placed partners highly confidential questions—but only to gain their own golfing ends. Some time ago, for example, General Nathan F. Twining, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, was lining up a difficult putt when his partner put it to him bluntly:

"What are you going to do if Chinese Commie planes attack Formosa and then run away to the Chinese mainland?" he asked. "Is there going to be hot pursuit by our guys?"

General Twining pursed his lips impatiently and a growl came up from his toes. He knew the question

hadn't been asked seriously and he knew his partner expected no information. But he knew the question was supposed to knock him off sufficiently so he would miss his putt—and he did.

They say the air around that green was enveloped in a blue haze for days.

This incident is merely a casual example of an ancient art which has been developed to near perfection at Burning Tree. It is the art of nagging your opponent into defeat without actually cheating. At Burning Tree it is as much a part of the day's play as hooked drives and replaced divots, as much a part of the club as the outlandishly comfortable attire of its members.

One of the most accomplished at this art is Robert V. Fleming, president of Washington's solid and fashionable Riggs National Bank. When on the golf course, Mr. Fleming perpetually wears the innocent air of a new kid in a kindergarten. He forever seems ripe for the plucking, a perfect fall guy for the golfer with an eight handicap who is seeking a 12.

Mr. Fleming has parlayed this lamblike demeanor into sizable success at Burning Tree. Like the day he was playing against Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark. Justice Clark had waltzed through the first nine holes, largely by means of some phenomenal putting.

"Boy, you're really dropping them in today," said Mr. Fleming, awe dripping from his unctuous tones. Then, innocently, "But what are you doing with your right thumb?"

Justice Clark shot a glance from the corner of his eye at his right thumb. He kept doing it for the next nine holes and Mr. Fleming won going away.

A Rugged Day for Corporation Executives

Former club president John L. Sullivan, who was Navy Secretary under Harry Truman, has only one such coup to his credit but it gave him the biggest day ever enjoyed by a member. It was during World War II, when Mr. Sullivan was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, and he was delayed in getting to the club because he'd been called to the White House to witness a wartime executive order limiting incomes from corporate salaries to \$25,000 a year.

Mr. Sullivan took a copy of the order to the club with him. When he got there 18 fellow members—all corporation executives—chided him for his tardiness and demanded that since he was late he should give them some extra strokes that day. As usual, Mr. Sullivan told them, "Take all your pride will allow you." One of the executives, who usually was allowed two strokes, took 12. The others took from 5 to 8 above what they usually got.

Then, before the round started and after all bets were in, Mr. Sullivan casually asked his pals if they'd heard about the new executive order limiting salaries. Howls of incredulity and anguish filled the air. Mr. Sullivan showed them his copy of the order—then led the trembling wretches to the slaughter. That day, for the first and only time in his years of membership, John Sullivan won every bet he made.

Then there was the late Senator Pat Harrison of Mississippi, a sort of club patriarch who was kind to children and dumb animals but whose golfing heart was jet black. He played in a famous foursome composed of the late Steve Early, press secretary of President Roosevelt, Merle Thorpe, then editor of *The Nation's Business*, and the late John J. Pelley, president of the Association of Amer-

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY DEVLIN

The President, like other members, plays to win. He once made a congressional opponen



It's a tough course. Senator Homer Capehart once shot 148, a club record

ican Railroads. Senator Harrison showed up at the first tee one day with his right thumb bandaged three inches thick. When bets were made, his opponents sympathetically made allowances for his thumb.

Whereupon the senator calmly removed the bandage and threw it away. "I hate a man who carries a joke too far," he told his red-necked pals.

Members like to feel that the reason for Burning Tree's informality and delightfully outrageous atmosphere is that it is strictly a golf club. There is no swimming pool and no tennis court—it is dedicated solely to the golfing male. And it was born of male impatience.

Its birth pains occurred one peevish summer day back in 1922 when four Washington men were playing golf on a local course and had to wait 45 exasperated minutes on the tenth tee. They were Isaac T. Mann, a financier, Marshall T. Whitlach, an engineer, John H. Clapp, a bank director, and William M. Ritter, a well-to-do businessman.

"Dammit," said Mr. Mann. "This is ridiculous. We ought to start a new club with a limited membership so a man doesn't have to stand around all day waiting on a bunch of damfool women. Whit, why don't you start it?"

Next day, Mr. Whitlach began his search. He rode and tramped all over the Maryland and Virginia countryside until, three months later, he found what he wanted. It was a site on a farm five miles northwest of the District of Columbia line near the Potomac Hunt country in Maryland. Adjoining the farm was a plot of 30 acres owned by an enthusiastic golfer named Walter Tuckerman. Mr. Tuckerman tossed his 30 acres into the venture and the project was under way. The original charter members put up \$10,000 each and other members, including today's, put up a \$1,000 initiation fee.

The club took its name from a legend which says that a big tree on the site of the course smoked and flamed in Indian days to call the warriors together for a council. Much of the site was wooded and the first nine holes were cut through the forest, leading one visiting golfer to snort, "Burning Tree, indeed! The trouble is you didn't burn enough trees."

As might be expected, the clubhouse is a big, casual building full of the well-worn leathery comfort of most men's clubs. In the dining room, which

serves only breakfast and lunch, the members sit at long tables seating 14 to 16 people, a device to make sure no new and timid—or high-hat—member can sneak off and eat by himself, or even with an individual pal.

The big meal of the week is Sunday breakfast, which is served from 8:15 to 8:45 A.M.—and the word big is the only adjective applicable. Members are offered a fare that would stagger a herd of elephants. There are, of course, ham and eggs and bacon and eggs. There is sausage. There are hot cakes. There are kippers, creamed chipped beef, grits and fried apple rings, and dozens of assorted breads and hot rolls.

Caricatures and Flags in Locker Room

But for the golfer the sanctum is the locker room, a huge English mañor hall with vaulted ceiling, a room designed both for comfort and for a little genteel showing-off. The walls are covered with caricatures of the most prominent members—starting with President Eisenhower—done by Charley Dunn of Nation's Business magazine. And from the ceiling beams hang the flags of past and present Cabinet members and flag officers, and the flags of foreign nations represented in the membership by ambassadors and ministers. These include the banners of Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Twining, General Eisenhower, General Omar N. Bradley, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the late Navy Secretary Frank Knox, the late Defense Secretary James V. Forrestal, former Defense Secretary Louis Johnson and the late Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg.

Also on display in special racks are the golf clubs of those Presidents who have been club members. Harry Truman, a nongolfer, was not a member, but there are the clubs of four other Presidents—William Howard Taft, Woodrow Wilson, Warren G. Harding and Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was a golfer in the days before poliomyelitis crippled him.

During the 1952 campaign, three members battled for, among other prizes, the right to be represented in these racks. They were President Eisenhower, Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee and the late Senator Robert Alfonso Taft of Ohio. Before he died, Senator Taft wistfully told a friend during a round at Burning Tree, "I wish I could have gotten my sticks in there."

The course itself is beautiful, spread out over lush green countryside that rolls like gentle ocean waves. It was designed by the Scottish firm of Colt, MacKenzie & Allison with a minimum of traps but with a devilish use of the natural contours to test the hardest golfer's skill—and patience and cussing vocabulary. The par is 72, but the difficulty of attaining this goal is attested by the recent horrible expedition of Senator Homer Capehart, the roly-poly Republican from Indiana, who set a club record with a gruesome 148 one Sunday morning.

Ike Eisenhower, a man whose patience has never rivaled that of Job, loves the course but sometimes he wishes they'd break it up and cover it with three-bedroom homes. Ike plays in the middle eighties, but he has had some titanic struggles with the 430-yard fourth hole, which is corrugated with gullies, and he seldom speaks fondly of the 18th.

Once, indeed, the President of the United States slammed into the locker room in such a pet that he swore he'd never play at Burning Tree again "unless they smooth down that blankety-blank fourth."

Then there is the marsh on the 18th hole which is known as McIntyre's Lake. It is so called after the late Marvin Hunter McIntyre, President Roosevelt's White House Secretary, who never managed to lift a ball over it.

But at least the charter members achieved their goal of soothing the impatience of the male golfer. There is no waiting at the tees at Burning Tree. The

clubhouse is in the middle of the course, and members can start from any one of five tees.

The President, whenever possible, allots Wednesday afternoons and Saturdays to golf at Burning Tree. Possibly, he enjoys the Wednesday session more since generally he has just come from his weekly news conference and a man needs a golf ball to knock around after such an ordeal.

He is driven out in his White House limousine shortly before lunchtime, with the usual following of Secret Service men. During the 20-minute ride he generally polishes off some business with one of his staffers, who rides along in the car with him. Usually this is Bernard Shanley, his appointments secretary, who always has a few more documents for the President to sign, although often it is Press Secretary Jim Hagerty, who likes to seize a chance to have 20 uninterrupted minutes for the purpose of briefing the boss on public relations.

Ike lunches at one of the big tables in the dining room, and joins in the general discussion. He laughs uproariously at the high jinks and often throws a small verbal dagger himself, but whenever he is around, the members censor their stories down to parsonage levels. The members, most of whom Ike has known all his public life, always address him as "Mister President," but there are times when, in the free-and-easy atmosphere, somebody slips—as lawyer John McClure did one afternoon when he was just coming out of the shower and Ike was coming in from the course. When Ike hailed him, "Hello, John," the attorney shouted back a "Hi, Ike," before thinking. Members kidded him for days about that, since it is an unwritten law in the club never to speak familiarly to the President, no matter how well you know him.

"We're not being stuffy," explains one member. "It's just that even out here you owe respect to that office."

As a result, Ike Eisenhower is not subjected to the same kind of artful heckling other members suffer. Nobody ever is seized with a fit of coughing when he's putting, or smothers a laugh in the middle of his downswing. But after the stroke has been taken, the President takes his verbal beating just like any other member.

There was, for example, the day Ike was playing with Representative Charley Halleck, the Republi-



Business is forbidden, but ribbing is okay, as Gen. Nathan Twining learned

ay out of a poison ivy patch

can House Whip from Indiana, and one of the President's favorite partners. Halleck laid a drive down the middle for a good 250 yards. Ike hit a pop fly that went a mere 100.

Ike looked up apologetically. "I really ruined that one," he said.

Charley Halleck peered down the fairway at his distant golf ball, and then blew nonchalantly on his fingernails.

"Class," he said, "always tells."

The President is a tough competitor who hates to give quarter, as he demonstrated one day when playing another congressman—Representative Les Arends of Illinois. Les sliced a drive into the rough and, upon approaching the miniature jungle, discovered his lie was in the middle of a patch of poison ivy.

"I can't play that lie," said the congressman.

"Yes, by golly, you can," Ike told him. "If you get poison ivy I'll have Doc Snyder treat you free." (Snyder is the President's personal physician, Major General Howard Snyder.)

Ordinarily, Ike will choose his partners in advance, making a date by telephone before he goes to the club. He particularly enjoys playing with members of Congress like Halleck and Arends, but he also plays often with John McClure and Tom Belshe, a retired Army colonel and an old military pal. His most frequent Democratic partner is John Sullivan.

Ike's locker is plain except for an American flag on the door, stuck there by one of the caddies. After a round of golf he sits around for a while chatting with other members, then takes a long—and noisy—shower, filled with snatches of song hummed in a kind of roar. Afterward, like other members, he wanders around with a towel draped about his middle, replaying the tough holes or talking about trout fishing in Colorado or quail hunting in Georgia. Sometimes he sips an orange juice or a soft drink; he never takes a drink of whisky at the club. After he's dressed, if there's time, he may play a rubber of bridge.

Secret Service Men Camouflaged with Golf Bags

It's a security secret how many Secret Service men guard Ike at Burning Tree, but he always has one man ahead of him, another just behind him and two at each side—all about 50 yards distant. All the agents carry golf bags and in the bag carried by the first one is a walkie-talkie outfit which can receive phone messages from the clubhouse. In the course of an 18-hole round Ike usually is called three or four times for answers to questions.

Like other governmental bigwigs such as Cabinet members and members of the Joint Chiefs, the President now has an honorary membership in the club—although when he joined in 1945 he forked over his \$1,000 initiation fee, and still pays \$300 a year dues. He also is charged \$5 for every nonmember he invites to play with him. His caddie fee is a flat \$3.

The Burning Tree membership, which is limited to 250, is nicely representative. There are businessmen like Frank R. Jelleff, owner of a big Washington women's store, and Richard P. Dunn, of the specialty store Julius Garfinkel & Company. There are lawyers like former New Dealer Paul Porter and Ellsworth C. Alvord. Sports is represented by Gene Tunney and Del Webb, co-owner of the New York Yankees. Journalism has Pete Brandt of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, David Lawrence of U.S. News and World Report, William H. Lawrence of The New York Times and Ed Murrow of CBS. Vice-President Nixon is an honorary member (and a constantly improving golfer) and numerous other less well-known government functionaries belong, such as the fast-rising young Deputy Attorney General, William P. Rogers.

These men belong to the club because they like to play golf in a men-only atmosphere and because they enjoy being with their fellow members. For the members who are in public life Burning Tree offers something else which they can get nowhere else but in their own homes. It is sanctuary from the pressures and lobbying of the outside world.

This precious privacy sometimes causes members to become somewhat emotional about their club. They speak of it in tones that are almost reverent, and quite unashamed.

John Sullivan, for example, was so moved by his affection for Burning Tree that in his last annual report as president he tossed off a verbal ecstasy in its honor. It was a paraphrase of John of Gaunt's famous speech about England in Shakespeare's Richard II:

*This royal throne of golf, this bunkered haven,
This earth of majesty, this seat of pars,
This other Eden, demiparadise,
This fortress built by nature for ourselves
Against intrusion, boredom and self-seekers.
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious gem set in the emerald sea,
This blessed sanctuary—Burning Tree.*

Dwight D. Eisenhower read this, penned a message at the bottom and sent it off to John Sullivan.

"Dear John," read the note. "That's how I feel, too. DDE." ❁ ❁ ❁

Collier's for August 5, 1955



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MARRIAGE

on

Location

By JEROME WEIDMAN

When we ran across Nick's wife, Nick was off shooting a picture with Gaby Pagini, one of those fiery-tempered Italian stars . . .



The secret life of movie star Nick Brewster came in two versions: the studio's and this one—

WHENEVER I see a guidebook I am reminded of a remark I once heard a woman make about dictionaries. "They're all right if you know how to spell," she said bitterly. "But what good is one to me? I spent hours trying to find 'giraffe' under the letter j!"

According to our guidebook, *the Villa d'Este* (16th cent.) on Lake Como is a former residence of Caroline of Brunswick, when she was Princess of Wales.

"Who was Caroline of Brunswick?" my wife said.

I didn't know, and the lack of knowledge seemed curiously disconcerting. We had just arrived. Everything was exactly as our friends had told us it would be. In fact, it was better. The management had apparently mistaken us for honeymooners. They had given us a corner room on the second floor. Thus we had two views of the lake and the gaudy mountains that surround it. We also had two balconies between which we would have to choose when breakfast was served the next morning. At the moment it was late in the afternoon and my wife was unpacking while I tried to orient her, as well as myself, by reading aloud from the guidebook.

"What was she doing in Italy?" she asked.

"I don't know. The guidebook doesn't say."

"While I finish unpacking, why don't you go down to the desk and see if they've got any literature on her," my wife said. "It'll be time for cocktails soon, and I don't think I'll enjoy mine unless I know a little more about Caroline of Brunswick."

The chances of enlightening my wife from the store of knowledge possessed by the man at the desk were soon demonstrated to be slim.

"Caroline who?" he asked.

"Caroline of Brunswick," I said.

"I will look, *signore*." The man behind the desk

turned to the registry index. "There is a Mrs. Caroline Brewster," he said. "Will she do?"

"No, of course not," I said. "I'm trying to—"

"Since when won't she do?"

I turned to face the person who had asked this. "Carrie!" I said.

I put out my hand, but Carrie Brewster had been living in Hollywood since 1939. Hollywood is a community in which only prize fighters shake hands. Carrie Brewster threw her arms around me and kissed me.

"Darling!" she said. "What are you doing here?"

"Celebrating my tenth wedding anniversary."

"Good heavens!" she said. "It's been a long time, hasn't it?"

"Sixteen years," I said.

"You were always good at dates." Carrie examined me through narrowed eyes, as though she were trying to guess my weight. "You've lost some more hair. But that's about all. How about me?"

"You've had your nose fixed."

A look of concern raced swiftly across her bold, handsome face. "Is it so very noticeable?"

"No, of course not," I said. "I read about it in the papers."

"What else have you read in the papers?"

"Nothing much," I said. "I'm a family man now. I don't have much time for reading the papers. What are you doing here?"

"Nick has been shooting a picture with Gaby Pagini in San Gimignano for the last six weeks. It's one of those costume affairs about the Borgias; she wears very little and he wears tights. They're finishing up around noon. I left early and drove up with the bags. Nick will be getting in around seven. We thought we'd spend a couple of weeks just resting up and loafing before we fly home." She turned and

looked out at what the extraordinary sunset was doing to the lake and the mountains. "Isn't this absolute heaven?"

"That's why my wife and I came," I said.

"Why don't we have dinner together?" Caroline said. "We'd love to meet your wife."

"All right," I said.

"The bar at seven?"

"All right," I said.

I went back upstairs, wondering how best to explain to my wife not about Caroline of Brunswick, but Caroline Brewster. It was not going to be easy. Nick Brewster himself had never been able to explain her, not even in the early days of our friendship, when he had still been known to the world as Nat Brinker.

IN THOSE days, when neither of us was yet old enough to vote, he was an intense, sullen young man who used to play basketball in a gym to which I sometimes went for a workout. He had curly black hair and a tremendous number of muscles. We never spoke to each other beyond the few words necessary to keep the game under way. Then, one night after my shower, I found him getting dressed three lockers down from mine.

I nodded and uttered a casual greeting. It was as though some inner trigger of reserve had been tripped. By the time I was tying my necktie, he had explained to me why I was missing so many off shots, introduced himself as Nat Brinker, told me he was an actor, and asked what I was doing with the next half hour or so.

"I've got an eighty-thirty class down at Washington Square every night," I said. "I usually get something to eat first."

"How about getting it at Steeger's? I'll have

ILLUSTRATED BY J. FREDERICK SMITH