



**THE BARCLAYS®**

## **Volunteer Spotlight**

The Barclays tournament office is proud to bring you another installment of the “Volunteer Spotlight.” In each edition of *Volunteer 360*, we will highlight a volunteer who has a unique connection to the tournament. For our second interview of 2012, we spoke with long-time volunteer and Marshal Chairman Ann D’Avignon. We thank her for taking the time to do this interview and for all of her help over the years! Please enjoy the following discussion we had with Ann.

***Ann, you’ve been volunteering at The Barclays for over 25 years. How did you get started volunteering and have you always been interested in golf?***

I need to start at the beginning to answer that question.

The year I graduated high school was one of the worst winters that England had seen in a long time. Living in a very rural area, jobs were hard to come by. I was offered a job at Woodbridge Country Club by the head professional Les Jones. This amazing man taught me about golf.

I learned to run a tournament, be a starter and a ranger. In addition, I learned to run the golf shop, including doing the books and buying and selling all of the equipment. The skills he taught me have stayed with me to this day. One is how to hand repair and make clubs!

***You know how to hand repair and make clubs!?!***

Yes, we used to re-shaft hickory shafted putters by taking an old wooden shaft off a driver or another older unusable club and cut it down to length, put the putter head in an old potbellied stove to heat up the head in order to get a tight fit as the wood would burn a little when the putter head was hammered on. It then needed to be whipped and gripped. The string that was used for whipping was tar covered so I don't think there was a day that I did not go home without black hands! The gripping was really easy, whether it was leather that had to be wrapped or the ones we use today that have to be slipped on. We used lighter fluid to lubricate the tape to slip them on. With the potbelly stove nearby, it is a wonder I am still here today to talk about this!

We always had sets of modern clubs in the shop that need to be re-gripped or whipped, but the most challenging skill was making wooden clubs from a block of wood. The persimmon wood would arrive in an L-shaped block and have to be shaped with a hand plane, then drilled and weighted all by sight and feel. They were then "French polished" which is a hand rubbed finish.

***That really is fascinating. Did you continue to work in golf when you moved to the United States?***

Yes, my next job was at Oronoque Village Country Club in Stratford, Connecticut. Before getting that job I had been told back then that there was no place in a Pro Shop for a woman! However, I was very pleased when the head professional Paul McGuire hired me to run his pro shop.

The ironic thing about all of this, and my volunteering for The Barclays, is I don't play golf! Both club professionals loved to be able to play, practice and teach without having to worry about the pro shop and all of the jobs that go with it. So they both jokingly told me I would be fired if I stepped foot onto the golf course with a club in my hand!

***Even though you don't play, it sounds like you've always been around golf. Have you always volunteered on the Marshal Committee and were you always a Chairperson?***

I started volunteering at The Barclays as a Marshal on the 5th hole in 1986, when the Tournament was called the Manufacturers Hanover Westchester Classic. Bob Tway was our champion that year.

My husband was friends with the Hole Captain Stanley Buschel. When he heard about my job history, he immediately talked me into being a Hole Captain with him.

I went from Hole Captain to Area Captain to Marshal Chair to The Steering Committee and now back to Marshal Chair...my favorite place!



*The Marshal Committee Chairmen – From left to right, Jim Campbell, Ann D'Avignon and Chip Raymond.*

***So this is your 27<sup>th</sup> year volunteering at The Barclays! What are some of the biggest changes that you've noticed over the years as a volunteer?***

Computers are the biggest change in running this Tournament. When I first became a Hole Captain, we kept our own lists, collected the money for uniforms and gave or mailed them to the Marshals on our holes. As we had the only copies of the lists, it was up to us to communicate schedules with everyone either by mail or phone and that was when you were charged for all long distant calls!

Although the amount of Marshals we have today has grown tremendously, can you imagine the task it was to contact everyone when I first became Committee Chair!

***I honestly can't imagine contacting everyone by mail or phone! What's your favorite aspect of volunteering each year?***

The friendships I have made during the years are my favorite part of volunteering. There are just so many. That is the one thing that keeps me coming back! It's like a family reunion.

To list them all would take forever, but I do see them every year. However, the friends I think about when asked that question are the ones I no longer see. Dick Fry, Edgar Saul, Joe Nabs, Paul Neumann (no, unfortunately not THAT Paul) Harry Bright, Stanley Buschel and Andy Zukovich.....and SO many, many more. Too many to list!

***What are some of your favorite memories from past tournaments?***

Payne Stewart, striding down the middle of the fairway in his knickers and local sports team colors, more concerned that he had hit me with his golf ball, which he hadn't, than where it actually landed.

On the 18th hole at Westchester, a gentleman who had a little bit too much "hospitality" in one of our tents followed me under the ropes on to the 18th Green as the last group was coming up. He had decided he wanted to "moon" the TV cameras!!! As I talked to him and tried to make him go back under the ropes I found out he was a music fan so we started talking about Buddy Holly and rock and roll music. Realizing I now had his attention, I asked him if he would like to meet Paul Neumann. I tried to call Paul on the radio, but as all of the old-timers from Westchester know, Paul NEVER had his head set on!!! I was finally able to get an answer from someone and explain I had this "situation" on the 18th. Knowing that the man was hearing everything I was saying, I could not come right out and tell them what was going on. I convinced the man I was not going to have him arrested and he was going to meet Paul. I was then able to bring him back under the ropes right into the hands of all the Area Captains who had been listening, including Paul. The man was convinced by Paul's name tag that he was THE actor Paul Newman, even though they don't look alike at all! Off he went with security just as the last group arrived at the 18th Green.

At Liberty National in 2009 I offered a policewoman in need of a bathroom a ride to one in the middle of a rain storm. Knowing she would get soaked riding in a golf cart while it was pouring rain, I hesitated and asked her if she needed an umbrella. I will always remember her response...."Honey, I'm a Jersey Girl...I ain't made of sugar and I ain't gonna melt!"

She in turn gave a police escort to our 10th Tee Shuttle buses to the gas station to get gassed up for our unscheduled two tee start on Saturday.

Finally, Liberty National...the view looking from the 18th Hole.



*Ann with her fellow 2009 Steering Committee members with winner Heath Slocum on the 18<sup>th</sup> green at Liberty National.*

***Those are some great (and funny) memories! Are you excited to make the trip to Bethpage Black this year?***

Yes, I went out to Bethpage Black for the first time last month. What an incredible golf course! I can see why the people from Long Island are so proud of it. It will certainly be the most challenging course to marshal that we have or will visit on our rotation. I cannot wait!

***As one of the Chair's of the largest committee, with an expected 700 Marshal volunteers, what advice would you give to a new volunteer?***

Have fun! We are all volunteers, so whether you are there to watch the best players in the world or to raise money for your favorite charity, have fun while you are doing it.

***That is great advice, and volunteering at Bethpage Black will certainly be fun. With past champions like Seve Ballesteros, Ernie Els and last year's Dustin Johnson, do you have a favorite?***

Although not champions, I have a special place for Jose Maria Olazabal and Bernhard Langer.

My Brother was the Dunhill Amateur Champion in England two years in a row and as a result I was able to go and walk the course with him while he played with Jose and Bernhard during the Pro Ams.



Bernhard was gracious enough to give my brother a short game lesson in the middle of one of the fairways!

The next year, I found out that Jose LOVES chocolate ice-cream! He spotted an ice cream stand, walked off the course and bought a chocolate MULTI scoop cone, which proceeded to melt all over his caddie when he handed it to him while he hit his next few shots!

***That really is some funny behind the scenes information! Who knows what our nearly two thousand volunteers will learn about their favorite players this August in Long Island! Ann, thank you again for all your help chairing our largest committee. We, and the volunteers, certainly appreciate all the time and effort you put into the Marshal committee.***

***If you would like to recommend a volunteer for a future "Volunteer Spotlight" please contact Bill Hansen at [williamhansen@pgatourhq.com](mailto:williamhansen@pgatourhq.com) or 201-444-5356.***