

Meet a Member

Thanks to Angelina Spencer for initiating and editing this information. To nominate someone for our 'Meet A Member', please email Angelina Spencer at aspencer@empowermentpr.com

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DIANA JOHNSON, NAPLES EWGA PRESIDENT
OCCUPATION: DIRECTOR OF MERCHANDISE, SPRING RUN GC
EWGA MEMBER SINCE 2006

Diana is still surprised that she can hate golf sometimes, yet she always “can’t wait to play again!” Described by many of her EWGA sisters as dynamic, bouncy, fashionable and fun, she joined the Naples chapter not knowing a soul, yet considered it a great way to make new friends. And that, she says, is what she loves best about EWGA, “the awesome group of ladies.”

It’s hard for her to believe that she’s played golf for 20 years, after taking an interest in the game from her two sons, now 30 and 28. “They started playing on their own when my oldest was 8 yrs old,” explains Johnson. “I couldn’t spend time with them unless I played golf!” Her best day on the course was when she played her very first round in a Mother/Son Tournament. Her oldest son (10 at the time) gave her clubs told her how to hit it. “I would take practice swings until he said, ‘just like that Mom!’”

Her worst day on a course was also with her sons at another tournament: “I played the “Mom” for both of my sons at the same time. They were 13 and 15 and very competitive. It was alternate shot format...if I had a good shot for one and a bad shot for the other, they would be all over me and each other. I will never do that again!”

Johnson says the funniest thing that’s ever happened to her on a course was when playing a round with Jennie Taylor. “We were looking for her drive everywhere...we found it on the top of a tree stump... She refused to take a drop and played it off the stump!”

As for women joining Naples EWGA she advises you to think about what you’d like to get from your membership, and then go for it. “Don’t join and wait for others to make it what you want it to be...Any woman should be proud to be a part of a national organization that betters the lives of women internationally through the game of golf, as well as be a part of an organization that furthers the cause of helping those less fortunate. I am proud to say I make a difference in the lives of the girls at PACE and US Girls Golf.

Her mentors also come from EWGA: “I have been fortunate to become very good friends with many of the women in our chapter. I have such high regard for everyone that I have been blessed to be spending time with but three stand as unflinching in their character. I admire the genuine caring, listening and commitment Lori Drumn gives to everyone and everything she does. I appreciate the sense of humor Nancy Stone exhibits about life. Then there is Jennie Taylor: I would love to have the work ethic, family values and energy she has in life, and of course her accent with those flowery words. “



MICHELE KLINOWSKI, VICE PRESIDENT NAPLES EWGA
OCCUPATION: VICE PRESIDENT, NEWSBANK, INC.
EWGA MEMBER: 4 YEARS

“Most of us weren’t born with a golf club in our hands,” jokes EWGA board member Jennie Taylor, “except maybe Michele.” Although Michele wasn’t gripping a club from the cradle, her father introduced her to the game when she was eight.

Great golfers have a couple of things in common: natural athletic ability and a passion to succeed. But Michele also loves to have fun. She received a full golf scholarship from Northwestern University, and eventually found herself living in Naples and working in a job most of us would consider a dream. She joined EWGA four years ago because she didn’t belong to a golf club and was looking for a place to play. When asked what she liked best about the EWGA she said, “the women” but jokingly added that the events and great summer rates might trump that answer!

After all these years on a course, golf still surprises her, “No matter how bad a round I may have, inevitably on the 17th or 18th hole, I hit that one great shot that makes me say, ‘I can play this game... when are we coming back out here to play?’” For example, while vacationing in Mexico last year she swung her first hole-in-one. “It only took me 30 years to get that hole-in-one! It certainly isn’t from a lack of trying either. I have a 5 handicap and I’ve played thousands of golf rounds. Better late than never!”

Worst day on the golf course?: “I tried out for the men’s golf team in high school (we didn’t have a women’s team). The coach walked the first hole with me to see how I would play as it was the first time a female tried out for the men’s team. I birdied the first hole. However, on the second hole, I accidentally teed my ball up an inch in front of the tee markers. After I hit a perfectly straight ball down the middle of the fairway, the coach called me on it and I had to re-tee and take a two-stroke penalty. I proceeded to put my next drive into the trees as I was pretty flustered. I finished with an 8 on the hole! I put the hole behind me and made the men’s golf team. However, I can tell you to this day, I have NEVER teed off in front of the tee markers again!”

Michele claims it’s never too late to start the game of golf. If you’ve never played or are at new at the game, don’t despair. “Don’t take it too seriously, meet great people and have a good time. I highly encourage you to take a lesson or participate in an EWGA education seminar. No matter if you’re a beginner or an advanced player, there’s always room for improvement and instruction is the best way...”

The best advice she’s ever received about playing golf is, “The most important part of the game is between your two ears.” It’s a piece of advice that pretty much defines the way Michele lives.



**MO WHITE, SW FL EWGA CHAPTER CHAMPION
OCCUPATION: HEALTH & PHYS ED TEACHER (RET.)
EWGA MEMBER: 8 YEARS (2003)**

The making of a champion takes courage, talent, tenacity and mindset. Mo White possesses all of these attributes and more. And if you think you can “Beat the Mo,” she welcomes meeting you club to club at Arrowhead on February 12. Members have an opportunity to bring their tenacity and talent to the course and try to beat our champion. And don’t despair: “If your handicap is higher than Mo’s, you will also get strokes, so everyone has an equal chance for those all important bragging rights!” says Jennie Taylor.

Mo joined our chapter when she was looking for someone to play golf with after moving here eight years ago. She remembered a friend up north talking about EWGA. She adds that the best thing about EWGA is the friendships she’s made. Since she has played golf for 20 years, the last 10 regularly, friendships are plenty.

How did she start? “A friend asked me to go play with a group of teachers. It didn’t take long and I was hooked,” Mo explains. Mo put as much passion into her career as a Health and Phys Ed teacher as she does on the course. She continues learning and that includes lessons she took from her students: “Most students need and want discipline and respond to teachers they feel they can trust ...I had a student once who was going to fail Health and if he did he would not graduate along with his twin brother. I kept after him but to no avail, he did not do the work necessary to pass. He failed and therefore was not going to graduate. Pressure was put on me to pass him but I refused. A week after graduation he came back to school and thanked me for not buckling under to the pressure from his parents and the administration. He told me he knew he deserved to fail and was going to go to summer school so he could go to college in the fall with his brother and that he appreciated me caring enough about him to fail him.”

“Always do your best and you will never have regrets,” she adds. “You will not always be the best at everything you do, however you can be the best you are capable of being at everything you do. Always take responsibility for your actions.”

Golf still surprises her... the unpredictability of the game, the unique beauty of each course she plays. But her biggest surprise is how much you can learn about the people you play with and how enjoyable it is even when you are playing badly.

She’s had many “best days “on the course. “A few are—making my first and only eagle when I hardly knew what I was doing on the golf course--My best round of 76 at Highland Woods—seeing my friends make special shots and how happy it makes them...- the day I saw an eagle up close eating a fish he had just caught...”

Her worst day on the course happened when the sky opened up with rain on the second hole, “I have never seen it rain so hard...we were trying to play as we did not want to give up since we only got to play once in awhile. I went to hit a ball and the club flew out of my hands and about 20 yards down the fairway-- we gave up.”

The best golf advice she's heard came from a pro who told her, "I've never looked up and seen a good shot".

The advice she shares with women considering EWGA or who may feel intimidated by the game is, "Don't be afraid you will fail and don't take yourself too seriously and don't quit. Learning the game will be one of the best things you could do for yourself."

Mo proves that you can take golf seriously, yet still have fun on the course: "...when I was playing with Lana Chadwick and we had just finished the first par 5 at Arrowhead, I got in the cart and reached in the cubby for my scorecard, which I kept in a leather scorecard holder. As I opened the holder I saw a black and red squiggly form- Sure looked like a snake to me! I yelled, "snake"!... and flung the holder out of the cart, at which point Lana broke into laughter. Sure enough, it was a rubber snake. I swore I would get even... Any ideas for me?'

She considers her dad, also her 9th grade PE teacher, Johnny LeKites, her favorite role model. But she appreciates the work ethic of both Nancy Lopez and Annika.

What is her favorite course to play? "I haven't played a course that I didn't like something about—In Maryland, Rocky Point for its views of the Chesapeake Bay and wildlife. In Florida, probably Crandon Park Golf Course on Key Biscayne for its views, (even though I only played it once, because it was beautiful). Locally --Bay Colony, The Colony, Bonita Bay East, and Hammock Bay. I guess that is a lot of favorites"

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