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Beach party blues

More at risk than just a good time

Terrace Bay has two public beaches that provide recreation for many people. I have seen families taking a pleasurable stroll along the beach, flying kites or just sitting and enjoying the air, water and scenery.

Having two beaches, both within easy reach, is an asset for any town. It is an even better asset when the beaches are generally free of litter, broken bottles and garbage. That is how I have seen the beaches in Terrace Bay - for the most part they are clean. That is a testimony to the attitudes of the people who make use of them.

However, anybody who happened by the Pumphouse Beach on Wednesday, June 26, would have seen something different - a large fire pit in the sand full of broken beer bottles, crushed beer cans, empty plastic wine cooler bottles, etc. The junk radiated out from the fire pit with trails of bottles going both west and east along the waterline. The same sort of debris could be found in the bushes at the shoreline and along the roadside.

This mess was left by young adults attending a beach party. There is nothing wrong with socializing on a public beach if those attending are prepared to follow a few simple rules.

One, play safe. Stay away from the water at night. Drowning accidents have occurred during gatherings at the water's edge - someone fails to return to the fireside. Keep the fire small. It's safer and easier to clean up later.

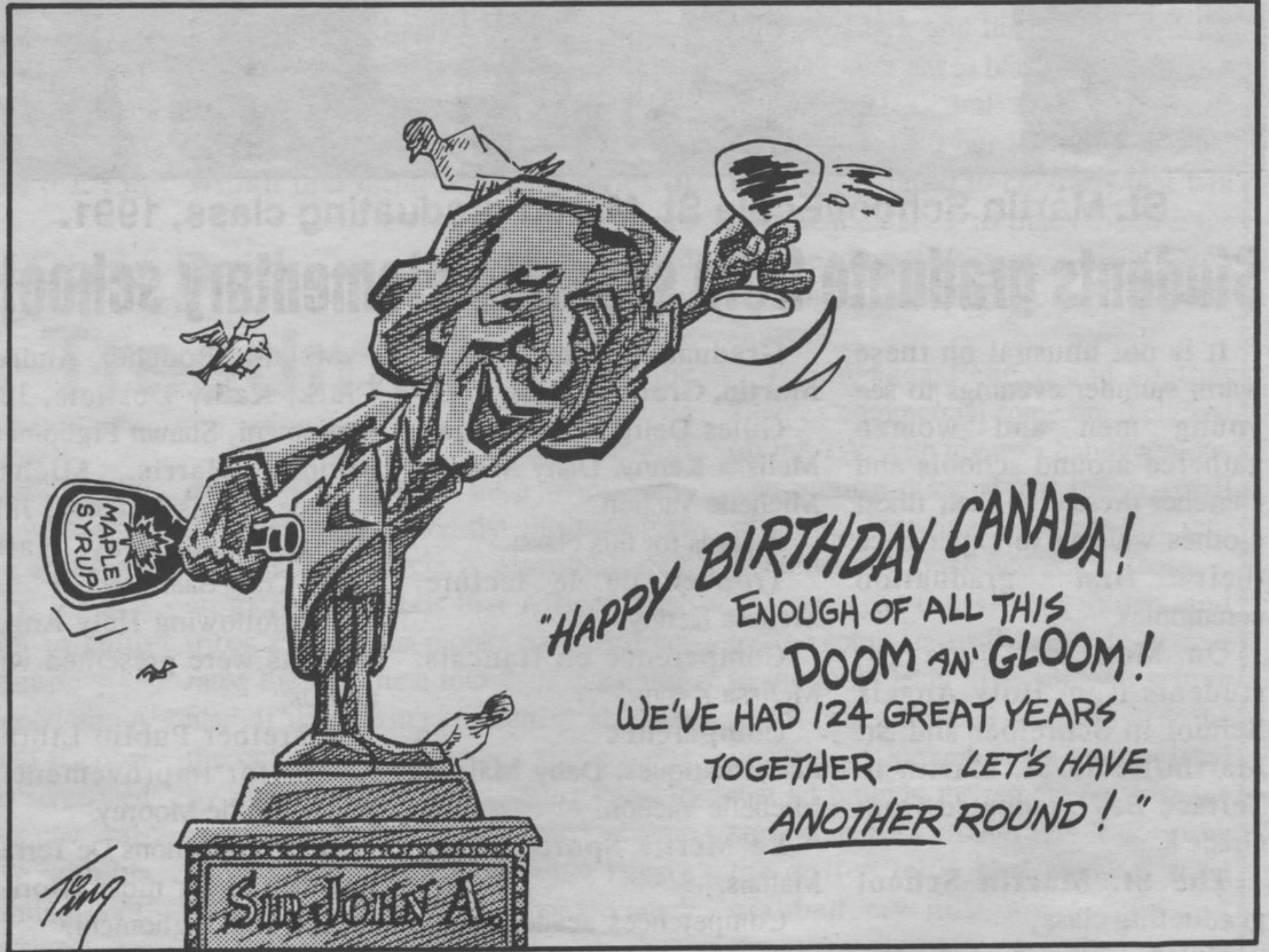
Two, clean up after yourself. Other people don't want to look at your mess or cut themselves or have their children cut themselves, on your broken bottles. They sure don't want to clean up your mess, although they will have to, either directly or indirectly, by paying the cost, through their taxes, of having the town clean it up.

Three, drinking alcohol in unlicensed public areas is illegal. Drinking a beer on the beach is just as illegal as drinking one while walking along the road. Anyone who does drink at the beach is gambling with their future. The chances of getting caught are high and now, the chances of getting off with a warning are pretty low.

Four, if you are drinking in a public place and the local police show up to do their job, don't throw bottle caps at them and don't slash the tires of their vehicles. There is nothing to be gained by such actions and a lot more to lose. Face it up to it - you gambled, you lost, you're busted!

Whoever carried out these immature and criminal actions at the beach party last week created a situation that endangered every individual in town. If there had been an emergency of any sort, both the police and the fire department would have been hard pressed to respond effectively - they were too busy looking after babies in adult bodies.

Robert A. Cotton



Introduction to golf

Golf is a good walk ruined.

Mark Twain

Ah, golf. That strange game in which men and women clad in eerily hued synthetic fibres criss cross large swatches of closely cropped meadows swatting tiny white balls towards tiny black holes.

I've never had much good to say about golf. Viewed on the boob tube or from a passing car it has always seemed a patently silly way to waste one's time. But last Wednesday I did something totally foreign to my nature: I actually investigated what I was writing about.

I played my first game of golf.

And I did it in style. I persuaded Lorne Rubenstein to squire me around the Glen Abbey Golf Course near Toronto. Lorne Rubenstein is the author of two books on golf and an ace player in his own right. Glen Abbey is a professionally-designed golfers dream course, complete with flawless greens trimmed to a centimetre high brushcut, trout-filled creeks and browsing deer that materialize at the edge of the fairway to scrutinize your chip shots.

I teed off on the Versailles of Canadian golf links with the dean of Canadian golf writers telling me which club to use -- not a bad introduction.

I only wish I'd managed to rise to the auspiciousness of the occasion. I was horrible. Good golfers squint into the distance, select the correct club then loft long true shots that arc through the heavens with the majesty and precision of a well-lobbed artillery shell. Mediocre golfers go through the same motions, but hack half-hearted squibs that wobble and slice off in all directions.

I was worse than that. My shots dribbled and crawled or went looping up in the air like wozy roman candles. Sometimes I swung mightily and missed the ball entirely. Twice, I left the ball entombed prematurely under a welter of sod. By my fifth pathetic shot I had learned the primary rule of the sport: Golf Is Hard.

I suggest that the second rule of golf is that Twain Was Wrong. Golf is not a good walk ruined, it's a good walk, with the added pleasure of verdant environs, amiable company of your choosing and the chance to vent your spleen by whaling the bejeepers out of a golf ball.

Golf is much more than a mere walk. It's a magical escape from the hideous web of concrete, steel and electrons we live in. It is exercise without sweat; hunting with bloodletting; adventure without risk.

There is, alas, a downside. Bad as I was, I managed to glimpse the force that drives so many people to play the game. That force is masochism. Golfers play to suffer. As Arnold Daly said: "Golf is like a love affair. If you take it seriously, it's no fun; if you do take it seriously, it breaks your heart."

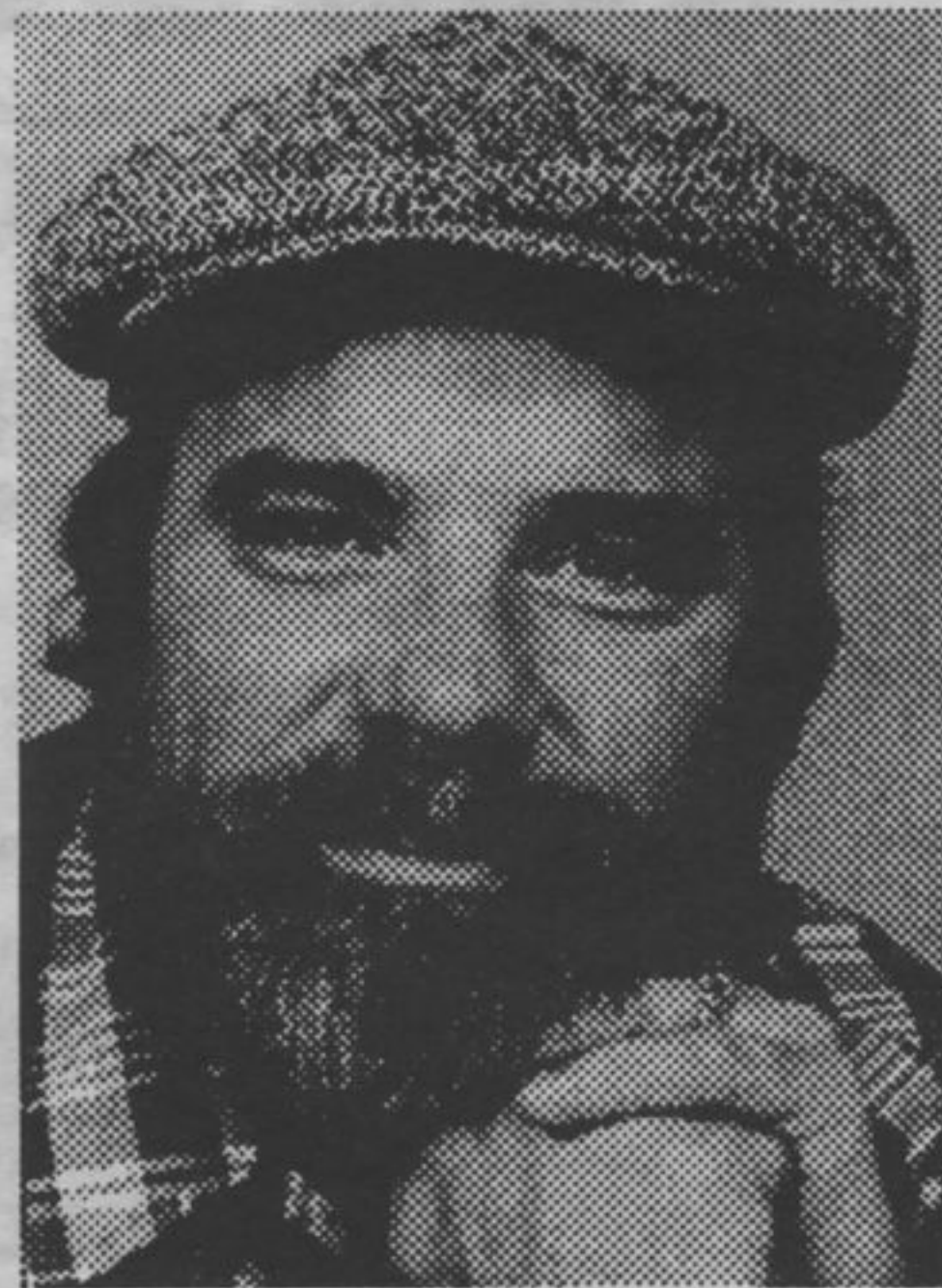
Perhaps I'm in the only happy stage a golfer ever reaches -- so inept that I can still laugh off my bad shots.

So green that I can't imagine living long enough to break 100, much less 80.

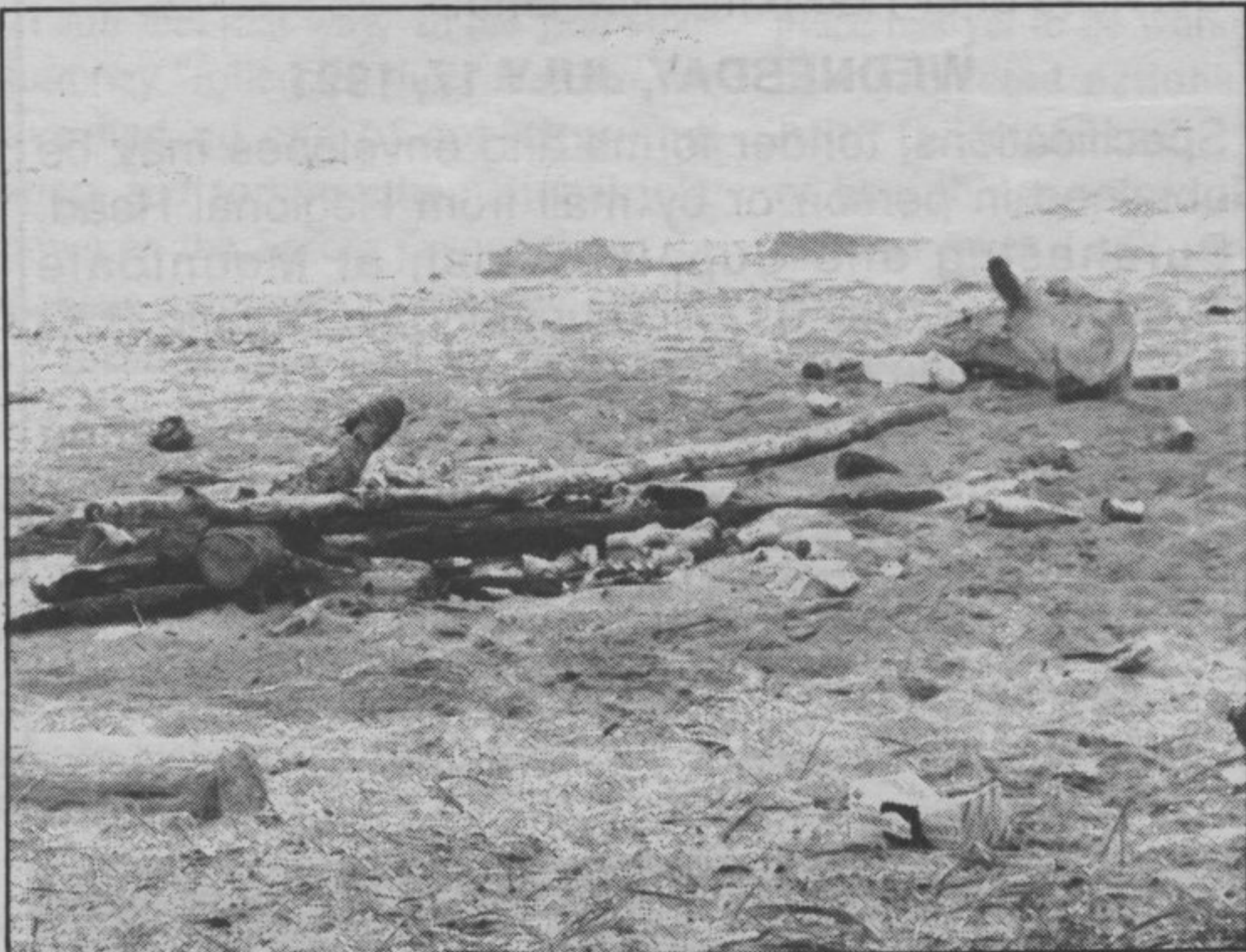
Mind you, I have already selected my golf mentor.

Lorne Rubenstein? Nah, he's 'way too good. I worship before the sacred tee of Mister Brent Paladino of Kensington, Connecticut. Mister Paladino, is also a bit of a novice. Like me, he's...somewhat weak on the long drives but ten feet from the pin he putts like an Exocet missile. And he's working on that drive. he hits 300 balls, day in, day out. His golf prowess has already landed him an appearance on the David Letterman show. Last year, he conducted a clinic at the Canon Greater Hartford Open.

Some might consider Mister Paladino overly obsessive about the game. In restaurants he covers his napkins with doodles of fairways and bunkers. He once cried out in his sleep "Hey Dad, I'm stuck in a sandtrap." Brent Paladino is four years old.



Arthur Black



The day after - what a beach