

Over forty members of the Donald Ross Society and their guests spent four splendid days in North Carolina in October. The occasion was the Society's Annual Meeting. But it wasn't entirely about the meeting. Thanks to the efforts of Captain Michael Fay, members managed rounds of golf at four of the finest Ross venues in the western part of the state.

The first round was considered the best by many attendees. Former Society President Dunlop White arranged to have the Roaring Gap Club stay open past its usual closing date so we could enjoy the course. While the weather was a bit brisk, it made for a spectacular view from Roaring Gap's iconic 17th green. Roaring Gap sits atop a steep hill at about 3200 feet above sea level, and about 1800 feet above the bottom of the steep hill. Indeed, just before the entrance to the club, one passes a sign indicating that you've crossed the Eastern Continental Divide. So in addition to a spectacular view south and east from 17, there's a view of the western mountains from the 5th tee. In both cases, the greens are backed by Ross's mounds, said to mirror the hilly terrain in the distance. For more information on this lovely course, and the recent restoration by Dunlop and architect Kris Spence, click on Roaring Gap Club.



Dunlop White

6th hole Roaring Gap Club - par 3 - 145 yards downhill - lovely hole aptly named "Do Drop"



The biggest news here was Jack McGeorge's hole in one on the 13th hole—the second of his career.

It was also the occasion for Palmer Maples Jr. to visit the club where his father Palmer Maples was the first golf professional, working for Ross and the Tufts at Roaring Gap in the summer and Pinehurst in the winter. Palmer met with current professional Billy Glenn whose father Bailey was the club professional from 1956 to 1993.

The next day we drove further west to Mimosa Hills Country Club in Morganton. Here members were treated to a fine Ross routing. The first 12 holes are routed in 3 hole loops, with each loop returning near the clubhouse. The six finishing holes are routed in a similar fashion, with #18, of course, bringing the player back to the clubhouse.



Mimosa Hills CC

Mimosa Hills clubhouse (above) with the front 9 routing back and forth to clubhouse 18th green immediately on the right

The biggest news here occurred—as it did at Roaring Gap—on the par 3 13th. The perpetrator here was Mike Scerra, whose uncharacteristically wild tee shot that caromed off a car in the parking lot. Unfortunately for Mike, the damaged vehicle was his.

Mimosa Hills was also the home course of amateur great Billy Joe Patton, and the clubhouse includes testimony to his fine career.



After two rounds in the mountains, the Society decamped to Charlotte for a weekend of golf in the Queen City.

First on the agenda was the Carolina Golf Club. Once again, Ross's devilish greens were in evidence, including a "top hat" green at #10 that was similar to the one we saw at Barton Hills in June. The club provided each attendee with its strategic plan, along with photos of its 2009 restoration. Society Treasurer John Stiles provided the highlight here with a round of even par 71. John hit so few shots that his neck didn't even hurt after the round.



Brad Becken

The 3rd – a long par 3 slightly uphill to a well-guarded green

All the par 3s at Carolina Golf Club are wonderful, and arguably the best collection of 3s in the city.



Our final round was at Charlotte Country Club, a course our group held in high regard as Roaring Gap. Dinner at the Annual Meeting the evening before included two presentations on the history of the club. The first was by former superintendent, and aspiring standup comic, Palmer Maples. For the second talk, Doug Buchanan took us through the history of the course, including the recent restoration by Ron Prichard. Doug explained that they had enough historic material to restore the routing and the original 105 bunkers. But Prichard had to use his imagination and deep knowledge of Ross's work in building the greens and their splendid contours. The membership agreed that he'd done a fine job.



Brad Becken

 $6 th\ hole\ -\ one\ of\ many\ fine\ short\ 4 s\ at\ Charlotte\ CC$ a creek slashes across the fairway with an uphill approach to a well guarded green

The Annual Meeting concluded with remarks by Audrey Moriarty, the head of the Tufts Archives in Pinehurst.

There was also a presentation honoring outgoing President Mike Miller for his years of service to the Society. Mike has been succeeded by John Butler.