

# Golf

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“The ironic thing is, I’ve never been athletic myself at all,” Payne said. “I played no sports as a kid, I had no exposure to sports when I was growing up. It was just not part of my family structure at all.” She had to start from scratch, not only learning the rules and techniques of golf, but also the culture and language of sports competition.

“My biggest challenge was getting my body to move in an athletic way,” she said. It took about five years for the lessons and practice to kick in.

“At some point, it turned into an addiction,” she said. While she and other “snowbirds” at Traditions continue golfing in Florida and other warm places during the winter, others make do with a computerized indoor golf simulator at the clubhouse that keeps their skills up and maintains important social connections until spring comes again.

Colin Gillies said golf is a



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Rachel LaPointe (from left), Mary Smith, Mary Lee McIntosh and Hilda Wardwell make their way at Traditions Golf Club in Holden recently during a scramble.

great activity for retirees to pick up, including couples and singles. Though it has long been considered a sport of privileged white men, Gillies said the industry has made great strides in reaching out to women, minorities and younger players in recent years.

“When women come out here, we don’t want them to feel intimidated, lost or unwelcome,” he said. “At first, they may not be good enough

to play on their own, but they can play in the league with other supportive women who understand our philosophy.”

Golf’s country-club reputation as “exclusive, exclusionary and elitist” is falling by the way, Gillies said. At family-friendly Traditions, which boasts a pizza joint, a miniature golf course and a go-cart track in addition to the nine-hole regular course, he said, “we’ve learned to check our ego at the door.”

# Curves

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Mine came from the little salad garden I planted this year in the raised bed near the front stairs to my house. I had cleaned out the chives, garlic, weeds and other stray plant life gone wild, as well as the tired dirt. Then I refilled the bed with new growing mix soil and composted cow manure and planted seeds my mom had given me that were leftover from when she planted her own garden.

I have enjoyed tasty radishes, lettuce, spinach, tomatoes and beet greens — and now green beans — out of my little patch. I am watching some baby cucumbers grow, and soon I will have baby carrots and swiss chard.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my little garden. It’s not so big that it requires a lot of maintenance, nor is it big enough that I will have to spend the time canning and pickling that a larger garden requires. But it’s just the right size for me to enjoy summer fresh vegetables and have the satisfaction of having grown them myself.

I see my little garden as a huge victory, regardless of its small size. It is one of the pieces of the “old me” — the one before my husband Jim died from pancreatic cancer in December 2010 — that I decided to keep.

It is a small piece of success from an overwhelming list of waiting chores. It is something that is distinctively familiar to my soul.

So many things that were once familiar became strangers to me after Jim’s death. I saw them and knew

they had been part of my life, but I no longer knew them. Gardening, mowing the lawn, going to camp were all among those things.

Now those things at least are common in my life again, and I can mostly deal with them myself.

Occasionally I need help with yard chores, but I have excellent support from my family.

I need help with the awning on my camper, which stays in a campground all summer, but I’m no longer afraid to ask for it. It’s not a “widow” condition to need help pulling out the awning or rolling it back up again. The awning is awkward and heavy. The men in the campground help each other with that task for their own campers.

And my little garden has not withered and died when I have been away from home a few days at a time because a good friend has helped me with watering. I am available to help her out, too.

I have accepted that people need community and that some tasks are part of community function, and I no longer worry that asking for help will label me as “that widow” who can’t do anything for herself.

Give and take. Comfortable symbiosis. Sort of like it is in marriage, only very different.

It is the natural order of my new reality, and the process is becoming more comfortable.

I recently was sitting in a chair on the deck in front of my camper reading a book and enjoying a cold drink, feeling a steady wind cool my warm body and appreciating the rhythmic sound of

the waves in the lake not far from where I sat.

I suddenly realized I was content. I sorely miss what Jim and I had there — and don’t think for one minute there are never tears — but the reason I continue to go to camp has changed. It’s no longer tradition or just a visit to memory lane; it’s where I rejuvenate and restore.

I made a few changes, including getting a different camper after Jim died, but they have let me redefine the space and my experience there.

I have managed to blend my old memories and my new experiences into something that is uniquely mine. I look forward to going there and feel sad when it’s time to leave.

It’s become MY place. And that fact has given me confidence to expand into other areas without fearing failure or pain — like my little garden.

Even though this camping season is not yet done, I am already thinking about next year. And I am thinking it could be time to reintroduce the boat to my camping experience. I really do miss fishing.

As a longtime employee of the Bangor Daily News, Julie Harris has served many roles over the years, but she now has her dream job as community editor. She lives in Hermon with her four Brittany dogs: Sassy, Bullet, Thistle and Quincy, who keep her busy in various dog sports. She was widowed at age 51 when her husband, Jim, died of pancreatic cancer. Follow her blog at [curves.bangordailynews.com](http://curves.bangordailynews.com).

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