



Member Profile **Bill Geisler** Winter Springs, Fla., USA

Though he was born in Pittsburgh, Pa., in 1957, Bill Geisler's family moved to Central Florida in 1960. "Mother thought Dad was crazy to live in the land of heat and endless bugs, but fate and Walt Disney brought prosperity to the sleepy town of Orlando," he says.

Bill began golfing at 10 years old and developed into a college level player. He graduated from Florida Southern College in 1979, "long before fellow alumni Lee Janzen and Rocco Mediate," he says.

He worked for 30 years in the wireless communications services industry and is currently semi-retired, enjoying occasional acts of entrepreneurial spirit. He serves as a part-time golf coach for Trinity Preparatory School in Winter Park, Fla., and as a church volunteer with his wife, Elizabeth.

"After reading *The Greatest Game Ever Played*, by Mark Frost, I bought my first set of hickories from Mike Just at Louisville Golf. When I told him how much I enjoy competitive golf, he suggested that I come to the Mid Pines Hickory Open in November. After that, I was hooked and now, after three years with hickories, that's all I play," he says.

Bill says that the new friends he's met through the SoHG and in the Florida hickory group have all been encouraging and most helpful in his hickory pursuits.

Bill and Elizabeth met in college and have been married for 34 years. They have two daughters: Alison (30), single, educator; and Katherine (26), married, with two daughters, living in Maryland.

"We love to travel," he says, "visiting friends and family and occasionally making trips to faraway hickory tournaments in the north to escape the Florida heat."

What's in your play set?

Jeanie Deans Driver, 12 degrees loft Louisville Golf
Wooden Cleek, 21 degrees loft Louisville Golf
Baffly Fairway Wood, 25 degrees loft Louisville Golf
Precision Hickory Iron Set, 2 through 8 iron Louisville Golf
Jigger, 30 degrees of loft Louisville Golf
Niblick, 50 degrees of loft Louisville Golf
SM Niblick, 56 degrees of loft Louisville Golf
Putter – Chicopee by Tad Moore

Favorite club?

I'm working on building an original set of woods and irons through swap meets, antique stores and flea markets. I'm also learning to do my own club work, re-shafting, re-finishing, and making new leather grips. It's a wonderful new hobby and very worthwhile when playing clubs that can't be repaired locally.

Favorite course for hickories?

In Florida, the Sara Bay Golf Club, Sarasota (Donald Ross); and the Donald Ross Course, French Lick, Ind. (without the heat). More yet to be discovered.

What ball do you play?

McIntyre RTJ (Thanks, Dave Brown!)



Bill Geisler posing where all the greats have posed before: on the Swilcan Bridge at St. Andrews.

Favorite hickory tournament?

Mid Pines Hickory Open in November. It's my first love.

Any particular player or aspect of golf history you especially enjoy?

Old Tom Morris, Harry Vardon, and Walter Hagen. However, for living golfers, I'd say Roger Andrews, who is the best hickory ball striker I've had the privilege to play with; and Richard Bullock, who is a great player and most interesting guy.

Best thing about hickory golf?

My boys on the high school golf team get a kick out of some of the old golf lore, and I let them play with my extra set of hickory clubs once in a while. They're amazed by the different feel of the clubs; wood and leather, and how the ball reacts off the clubs in flight. Brings them closer to understanding the game back in the early days and how difficult it was. Hickory golf complements my teachings of hard work, responsibility and skill over just buying a game or constant dependence on the swing coach for instant results. (Thanks to Richard Bullock for his inspiration.)

Ideas to promote SoHG, hickory golf?

Play with hickory whenever possible. Let your friends try the clubs. Once in a while, beat the snot out of your regular playing friend on Saturday morning. Makes people wake up to the era of golf's great past and tweak their interest even more. I even play in my club's championship every year with the woodies. I may be mad, but there is a method.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

*Since I coach and talk about golf most of the time, after family, of course, I like to read books about golf history prior to 1930. Tommy's Honor, by Kevin Cook
Down the Fairway, by Jones and Keeler
The Caddie Who Played Hickory, by John Coyne
The Greatest Game Ever Played, by Mark Frost
The Grand Slam, by Mark Frost*