



A tragicomedy in three parts.

Part I.

I am mostly of German descent, but my lineage can also be traced to England and Scotland, among other places in that neck of the woods. Studying my family history, I found that most of those central and northern European Webers and Torreysons that ventured to the U.S. ended up marrying and having children with other central and northern European immigrants. How that affects my DNA, I'm not sure—except for my skin tone, which can best be described as pasty. A friend of mine once said when we were sitting poolside catching rays (although I was deflecting them), “You’re not white; you’re blue.”

So I learned at an early age to appreciate sunscreen. I resisted it at first, because, of course, as a kid I thought it was stupid, and, most importantly, I didn't want to be seen at the beach with my mom rubbing it on my back. But after a few nasty sunburns (though peeling long pieces of dead skin off my arm was pretty cool), I eventually learned my lesson.

Like every kid that grows up and has children of their own, I became my mom and dad. On the sunscreen front, I was the ‘bad parent’ that was always trying to get the kids to apply it when we spent extended time under UV rays. I didn't have that much success then, but now, as adults, my kids seem to use it occasionally. Except Quinn, who still has a gag reflex if I'm applying it anywhere close to him.

From countless hours under the sun playing golf, my dad developed skin cancer. It wasn't serious, but he eventually had to have a few spots removed. When I got back into the game several

years ago, I vowed not to let this happen to me. I religiously apply sunscreen before playing and also during a round—at least twice. (Keeping clear of Quinn, of course.)

Part II.

Several decades ago, my dad gave me his old golf clubs when he got a new set. I was using those when I first started playing again in my 40s. Kyle looked at them and said, “How do you play with these?” I didn't know what he meant, but he said that my dad's clubs were ‘blades,’ and that I would be better off using ‘cavity backs’ because they are

for a couple more years, but I couldn't pull the trigger. Then, before last golf season, I finally bought some irons. They were lightly used, in good condition, and as soon as I held them in my hands, I knew they were meant for me. And the price was right—even by my standards.

I can't say how much my scores went down with the new clubs, but they did make the game more enjoyable—and that's really what it's all about. When I cleaned them up this spring and got them ready for the season, they felt like old friends.

Part III.

During the cold and windy days this spring, I thought that the sun was never going to stay out for more than 20 minutes at a time and that it was never going to get hot again. But both things finally happened, and one afternoon on the course by myself, I realized I had neglected to put on any sunscreen before I started. As I pulled up to the 2nd hole at 5x80, I got out of the cart and sprayed my arms, my neck, and my head. (Yes, I get sun-

burned through my hat if I'm not careful.) I sprayed some on my hands and dabbed it on my face, then grabbed my 7 iron. There was a crucial step missing in that process. I did not wipe my hands with a towel.

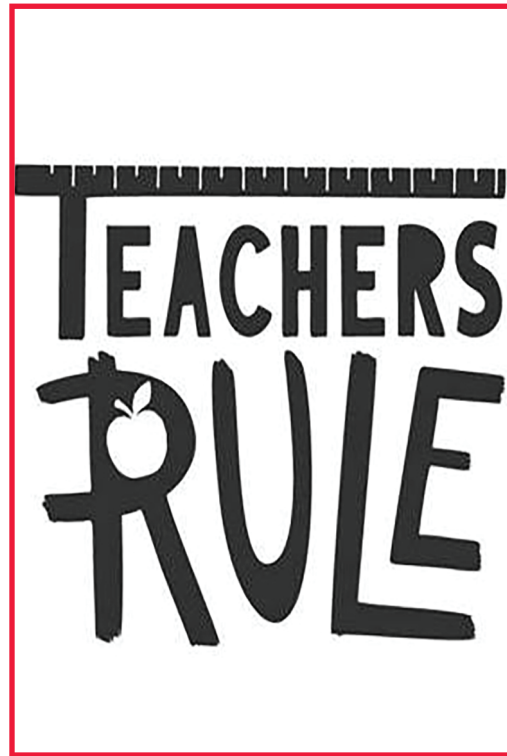
As I strolled up to the tee box and looked ahead to the green 170 yards away, mentally preparing to hit my ball safely over the pond, I took an easy swing to loosen my back and shoulders a little. Then, like a beautiful bird taking wing, the 7 iron flew out of my hands, went high and long over the pond—spinning elegantly—and seemed to hover for a bit. I was equal parts amused and aghast. Amused—well, how could I not laugh a little? Aghast—because I love my 7 iron. It's my safe haven. Any time I'm in trouble on the course and have to hit a good shot, I call on trusty #7.

And there it was—soaring to an untimely death. I hoped beyond hope that a wind gust would take it all the way over the pond and land it safely on the women's tees, but it hit the water with a sickening plop. In Arthurian legend, the Lady of the Lake returned Excalibur from the water to Arthur, but I am no king, and my 7 iron had no magic powers, so I was not so fortunate.

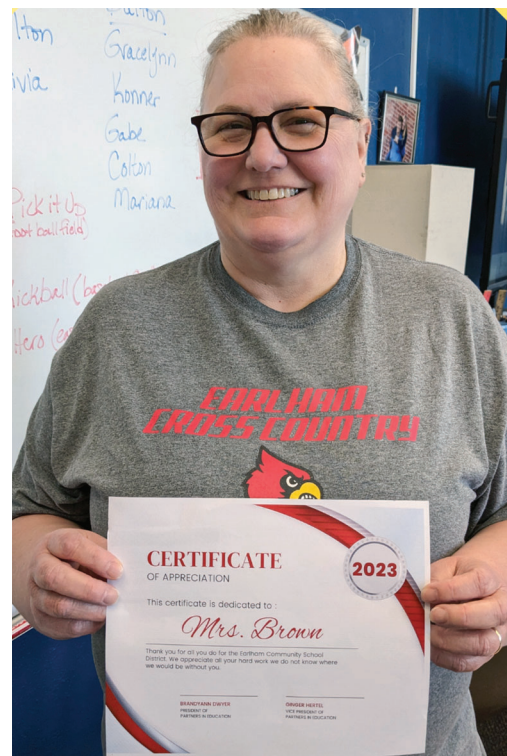
Epilogue
I have played a few rounds since the incident, but without a 7 iron. I still have my old 7, but will not use it this season out of respect for the beloved club that is lost, but not forgotten.



Earlham PIE Staff of the Month Awards for April and May



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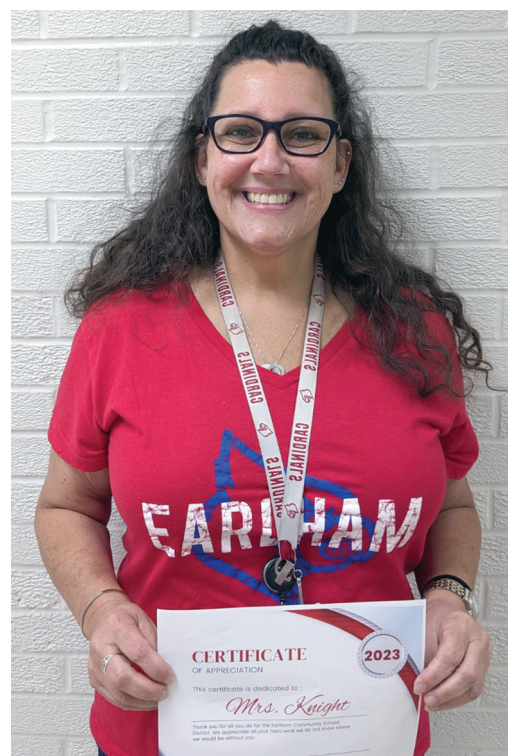
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