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***"Freedom of the Press belongs to those who own one."***

*A. J. Liebling of the New Yorker*

April 2, 2002



## Golfers

I

don't know a lot about golf, but I do know something about golfers:

They are crazy.

While this is not a new revelation, it was recently reinforced for me.

I was in the Men's room of the Lihue airport on Kauai, and there were two young guys talking ... about golf. One was complaining that he three-putted the front nine at the Prince Course, while the other lamented his drive on six ... whatever all of that means.

I realized that here were these two guys, undoubtedly accompanied by their beautiful wives, and their thoughts were all on golf! They never saw the beauty of this island and probably did not see much of their beautiful wives either. I realized that if I had spun and asked, "What do you think of 9/11?" one would have said: "You shot a nine on eleven? Gosh, you need to drive that hole to the left, then use a six-iron to punch up to the green ..."

I have one of those golf nuts living next to me in Hidden Meadows. He takes his wife to Palm Springs ... and she does not see him. He plays 36 holes a day!

I live on the sixth green of a golf course and I see these people playing in the dark, in the rain, in sleet, in weather

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**they would not brave to get their dog out of the middle of the street ... but they will play golf.**

**And they will talk about it, and talk about it, and ... incessantly and in boring, boring detail, to the exclusion of any other subject. Two golfers together at a party will replay the last ten courses they have played, stroke by stroke, hole by hole. The entry to the party of a well-turned ankle will not interrupt the demonstration of the proper grip for a putter.**

**Now don't get me wrong ... I appreciate golfers. They pay good money to keep my back yard green and cut, and their fees assure me that no one can build directly behind me for half a mile. These benefits permit me some latitude in assessing their basic smarts ... but that only goes so far. I am not going to abandon all reason in assessing their worth to society.**

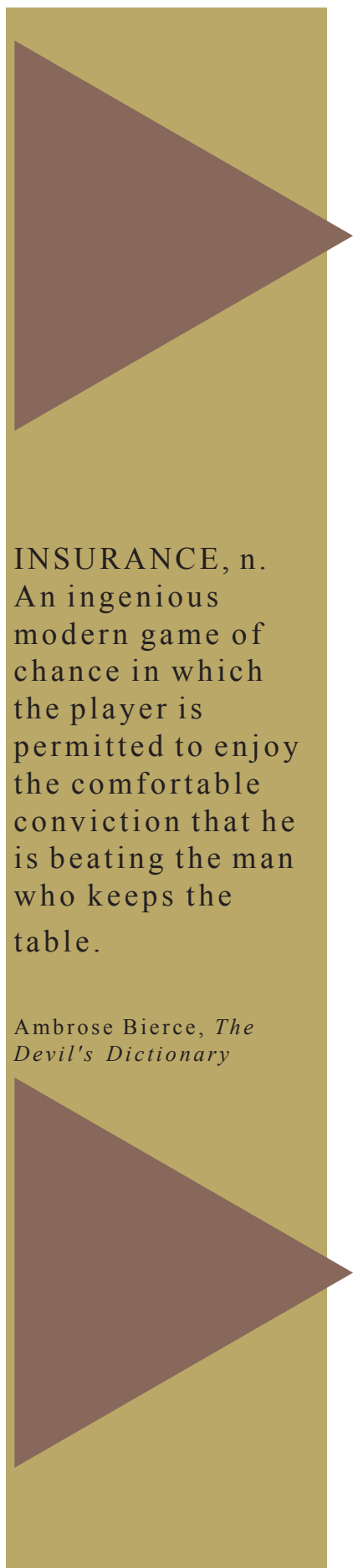
**Their vocabulary and their manners are minimal. If you want to see a sailor blush, expose him to the language used on the green behind my home. It is hard to believe this is any longer a "gentleman's" game, and it is equally hard to believe that these people paid money to get so frustrated.**

**I am convinced that golfers are possessed of a gene that causes obsession, probably a gene closely related to a similar gene that causes Spandex-clad bicyclists to occupy local roads.**

**My golfer friends will want me to say something good about them, and that is easy: They, unlike baseball fans, do not always ask for the taxpayers to pay for the facilities they enjoy.**

**That alone permits golfers to occupy the rung just above the bottom of the ladder.**

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**INSURANCE, n.**  
An ingenious modern game of chance in which the player is permitted to enjoy the comfortable conviction that he is beating the man who keeps the table.

*Ambrose Bierce, [The Devil's Dictionary](#)*