

From Ken Brown: A newsletter about Calligraphy

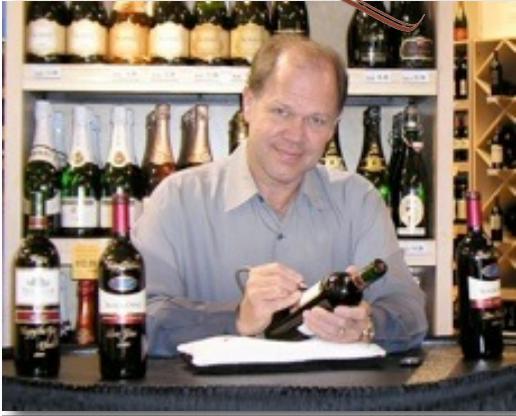
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For those who have a serious love affair with letters.



The owner of this titanium driver wanted everyone from every view, to know his club's pet name. Probably won a C Note one day on a long putt.

**COUNTRY
CLUBS.
Almost the
whole in
one.**



While it's a proverb to not put all your eggs in one basket, it's also a sensible approach to good business. But, if I had the mindset to focus on only ONE area that would offer about the best all round, no pun intended, assortment of business opportunities, it would be country clubs. Ever think about what goes on there besides golf games?

Let's think about just the golfers for a moment. They come in ample supplies of both genders. A golfer gets passionate about golf clubs. Some find a putter that they feel sinks the most putts and wins the most money and you couldn't pry them away from that club with all of Tiger Woods prize money last year! Putterers are sacred. They have names. They have protected spaces in the golf bag. They get shined, and pampered. They get talked to. They get kissed. They usually don't get left in the locker with the other clubs at the round's end. They go home

with the golfer. Now that's not true of all putters, but many are hallowed tools of the sport.

Chipping wedges are in somewhat the same category but not with quite the same glorious reputation of the putter. Chipping wedges are kept by many golfers who feel no other club of their ilk would get them out of that bloody sand trap so they keep them. On the other hand, drivers and the everyday irons get the royal boot if the golfer thinks his/her game is off a bit. There's always some new slambang, knock-it-farther, hit-it-straighter club being promoted by the guys who win those coveted green jackets at Augusta. Often the bag of clubs they paid a grand or two for a few months ago will go on the auction block at Craig's List or the bulletin board at the pro shop so they can upgrade to the newest and best. Ahh, but the putters almost always have a secure home regardless of what else may share the bag with them.

Bottom line here is that you may have a chance to engrave their putters and chipping wedges but seldom their drivers and regular irons. Now that's not a hard, fast rule but often that is the reality when you ask golfers to



engrave their clubs. Sure, there are those who play with the same set of weary old beat-up and scarred clubs for decades. You know the type. They're like the

guy who'll drive the same old '69 Ford pickup until their grandkids have kids. Those guys will often let you inscribe their name on the clubs. They'll eventually get stored in the attic and be handed down as a family heirloom.

Why would some want clubs engraved? With some it's a cool, vanity thing. With others it becomes a pretty sure-



This part of the club is the hosel. It engraves beautifully and many golfers prefer their inscription to be there. Use a sharp, if not brand new bur every 2-3 clubs to keep the letters crisp. Some may have softer metals that will be kinder to your bur.

fire way of getting their club back when they've lost it. They'll park the cart 50 feet from the green. They'll take their chipping wedge across the fairway to get the ball on the green. They've carried their putter with them. Once on the



green, they'll pitch the wedge off to the side, make the putt, and head back to the cart and on to the next hole, forgetting about the wedge.

Sometimes it's the old 'finder's keepers, losers weepers' thing and they never see the club again. If their name is on it, there's a good chance it'll end up at the pro shop and they'll get it back.

If you convince them you know your stuff, and they see some of your work, you might get a shot at a putter or the wedges.

I've done many full sets of clubs at country clubs for \$125. for the full regulation set of the 14 sticks in the bag. But, mostly I do putters and chipping wedges.

Recently at a prestigious country club in the Dallas area, I was hired to engrave clubs for the players during a member guest tournament. I had been sitting in the same place, on the veranda, engraving clubs, wine bottles and a couple of items the manager brought over.

A golfer had been standing nearby watching the activity at my table. He came a bit closer and got a good luck at the finished work and in a while, approached me to personalize his putter.

I was eager to do it. He was eager to tell me a bit of history before he handed it over to a total stranger.

He recounted how he got the putter from an old gentleman in the late fifties. Now that was 60 years ago so the guy was a very young man when he took ownership. It had some kind of history to it when HE got it. The putter was made long before that he said. It had seen enough miles of fairway to get to the moon and back. Probably had won and lost fortunes in the money games men play as they knock the little white ball around the countryside.

After sharing the history, and before he handed it to me, he looked me right in both eyes, face-to-face about a foot apart, and with a gentle smile that was as serious as an 8.1 on the California coast, he said, "I wouldn't take

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50 grand for this putter so do your best work and DON'T screw it up!"

I swallowed slowly and silently said to myself, "Be still, my heart."

The club was engraved to his delight and the last I saw of him he was parading up and down the practice putting green just beyond the veranda at the back of the pro shop, showing off 'Bessie,' his priceless putter.

Soon, another golfer who saw it came with his 'wouldn't-take-anything-for-it' putter for the inscription he wanted. I've wondered a hundred times if their putting got any better. Probably not, but they have an heirloom now for someone in the family and there's an inscription with a Ken Brown signature that will end up on a wall in a shadow box some day.

So, that's the golf side of country clubs. Why would a country club be the 'almost whole in one?'

Weddings. Parties. Receptions. Fund-raisers. Awards banquets. Poker tournaments. Women's League

gatherings. Bar Mitzvahs. Reunions. Political gatherings. Galas. Las Vegas Casino nights. And the list goes on. And each one of those is an engraving bonanza if you're there with the right combination of panache, talent, and something to engrave for the crowd.

Make it a point to hustle a club a week until you've covered them all in your area. Talk to the golf pro about the golf side. Talk to the general manager or the membership director about the other goings-on. If you play it just right and schmooze the heads of the departments, you're likely to find yourself at their address quite often.

Each time you're there, you'll pass out cards. The recipients of your cards and engraving will find you later for their own activities. There, you'll find others and it gets somewhat viral. Not YouTube viral, but it spreads. You have to be present a few times and explore every possibility. Give away stuff.

One of my favorite promotional ideas was mailing, unwrapped, naked golf clubs to golf pros at country

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clubs. I found a batch of clubs for \$5.00 each. Brand new. An overstocking of five-irons by a place that sells replacement clubs to those schmoes who leave their clubs green-side and never see them again.

I wrote a good letter, poked it into a large U.S. Postal envelope. You know those big ones made of Tyvek that Hercules couldn't tear apart. They're free at the almost-failing post office and they're glad for you to have a few that you'll buy stamps for and help their retirement fund be saved from oblivion as digital mail and Stamps.com.

Anyway, I put the letter in the envelope, attached the envelope to the club, addressed the big envelope, put on the correct amount of postage.....\$4.80 at the time for the PRIORITY ENVELOPE.... and let them swing.

What did the postal clerk say? "Clever!" They thought it was refreshing and different. It added a bit of spice to their day.



On my way to the post office with the five-irons that got me lots of events at the golf courses and beyond that later with those who got my cards and clubs.

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As long as it's not perishable, liquid, or dangerous....and has enough postage....they'll take it wherever you want it to go.

The pro golfers got them. I got events. I got gigs that paid my full day rates of \$1.5K per 8 hours. I got repeat events. I didn't score with every club. Yet.

Bottom line. Make friends with the country clubs. Send the right people something to get their attention. Maybe it's a bottle of wine (NOT SHIPPED THROUGH THE POST OFFICE!) discreetly and well-padded and boxed for UPS to deliver. If you do it all the right way, you're certain to find work. If you get the attention of those at 10 country clubs, and follow up, you're almost bound to get one or more. It will have been worth it. And maybe when all the dust has settled and you've forgotten about the other 9, one of them will call you and your success rate takes a shot up the scale.

Good luck. This is real. This is a gold mine if you get your pick and shovel and dig for the sparkly stuff that's somewhere in the stream.

Let me know how you do.

-Ken



I did the putter for the owner of the store where I found brand new five-irons for five bucks each. Look for golf stores in your area that specialize in replacement clubs for when you sink that 40 footer and in your whooping and hollering and high-fiving, you forget all about the chipping wedge you left on the frog hair by the green!

Engraving graphite shafts is a definite no-no! Engraving compromises the integrity of the shaft and besides that, it kicks up a cloud of nasty black dust. Keep the engraving on those to the hosel or club head. I've done the top, face, and bottom of the clubs as golfers have directed. This is on a metal shaft.





The wife and mistress. Can you guess which one is Bessie, worth fifty grand?



The other guy with the 'priceless putter.' Probably has its own caddy and a special locker.



The best place to personalize a steel shaft. Some guys don't want their phone number. Subject to change...but their name isn't.



The SNAKE EYES club on the engraving pillow with a brand new #4 round carbide bur.



A more modern putter with the name on the top. On this sample, you can see just a bit of where I engraved it on the back of the curved hosel.



Note the extended pinky as I engrave the name on the shaft. If you aren't accustomed to that hand posture yet, you should get that way. I could NEVER do the quality work I do with the little finger hidden in the palm of my hand as I see so many students do after about 97 reminders in 3 days. Maybe 100!

It's vital. When you can move your fingers, independent of your pinky and palm of your hand as stabilizers, you have almost ultimate control of the drill.



I put this on my own putter, the year of my high school graduation when I played golf often. I'd take something less than 50 grand for it. Maybe three dollars. The engraving would be free. Just kidding. It came from Goodwill and made a nice sample.



This club was engraved for a special friend of mine, the guy who directed my second Public Television series, Jim Rowley. I believe this was a gift from him to a friend.



I'm hidden under the covered area between the columns with the lamp on the left one. Cool drinks and a cool experience.



This was a less grandiose accommodation but it was a prosperous day. I was told the membership to this club, overlooking much of the Dallas area below, was \$175K with monthly dues something like a house payment!



Though there's a Dr. Pepper in the shot (yuk), I prefer to get my sugar in German chocolate cake. This country club kept me in cold beer all that hot July day. I seem to spell better and have more decorative flourishes after a couple of cold ones. If I have more, I have to start spelling out loud. I'm at the #1 tee box and not a golfer got past me. Some left tips I shoved under the pillow. Those were nice additions to my check from the country club.

Back at the club, for the winners of a tournament during the member-guest soiree', these swords were personalized. The club brought the swords several days before the tournament for me to engrave the various categories that merited a sword for the winner.

As the names were known that late afternoon of the tournament, the pre-engraved swords were brought to the banquet room where I was set up to personalize them. Great evening. Excellent event to use my skills on something different for the golfers.





If you'd like to learn this game of engraving, let me know. We talk about this kinda stuff...and much more... over the one evening and three days of the Workshop. You CAN learn. We'll help you get here if you're ready to step out of your comfort zone.

Be authentic.
Leap and the net will appear.

