

# Elmbrook turns 40

## Area course caters to local golfers

BY MIKE TERRELL

Special to the Record-Eagle

The modern era of golf in the Traverse City area could easily be linked — no pun intended — to the start of Elmbrook Golf Course in 1964 when it incorporated.

Celebrating its 40th year in business, Elmbrook still likes to consider itself "Traverse City's golf course," according to one of the second generation owners Carolyn Olson, whose dad Vern Nelson started the business and laid out the original course.

"We've always catered to the local golfers," Olson proudly pointed out. "We still operate 17 local leagues, which is a lot. The Elmbrook men's and women's leagues, which have been in existence for over 30 years, are the oldest continually operating leagues in the area."

Over the years Elmbrook has also hosted numerous charitable events, and been very supportive of junior golf and school programs. This season the course will premier new junior forward tees on all 18 holes. It's the first area golf course to specifically offer such tees.

"My father always believed in supporting the junior golf programs," added Olson. "He knew they were the future of the sport, and it's a tradition that we proudly continue to support."

An avid golfer, Nelson recog-

nized that the natural contours of the old Sledder family farm would make a wonderful golf course. He laid out the course and construction began in 1964. The spring of 1966 the first nine holes opened with a little fanfare as then Lt. Gov. William G. Milliken teed off the first ball.

It became the area's first 18-hole layout five years later when the second nine was opened in 1969, according to Olson.

Over the years the course has been tweaked here and there, but the original layout has remained pretty much intact.

"I think he was proudest of the Great Lakes sand trap that was added in the 1980s on the par five third hole," she added. "When you stand on that tee and look out on the Great Lakes-shaped sand trap, it's pretty impressive."

Olson, who feels that the sixth hole is Elmbrook's signature hole, said that well known golf course architect Jerry Mathews helped her dad design that hole.

The sixth hole tees off from the highest point on the property. The long par-four — over 400 yards from the back tees — plays into a naturally contoured valley to an elevated green. From the tee box you get distant views of both bays and Old Mission Peninsula.

Her favorite hole is the tree-lined, dog-leg, par-five 13th hole.

"It's just a beautiful, graceful hole with trees lining both sides of

the fairway," she said. "The hole is well defined and somewhat isolated."

Elmbrook is a golf course only, which has some advantages. They don't have to worry about a mint on the pillow for their hotel guests. All of their efforts are directed at providing the best product they can to the golfing public; a feat they have been accomplishing for the last 40 years.

In celebration of that 40 years in business, Elmbrook is offering free golf to players on their birthdays this season. If your birthday is in the middle of winter you still get half-price golf on the corresponding six-month date. For more details, call (231) 946-9180.

Elmbrook is also hosting the second installment of the Haig Hickory Tournament on June 18. A benefit for the Grand Traverse Heritage Center last year in its inaugural year, they hope it becomes an annual event. Limited team openings remain for the event, but the field was filling rapidly at press time. Only the old fashioned hickory clubs, which Elmbrook furnishes, are permitted for play. Dress is optional, but many last year chose to dress in typical early 1900 golfing attire.

Through June 19 rates are \$39 for 18 holes with a cart. Regular summer rates jump to \$49 for 18 holes with a cart.

## "The Place to Play when Traveling North or South"

### Emerald Vale Golf Club

2 Miles West of Manton on M-42 3½ Miles West of the US-131 Freeway

P.O. Box 250, Manton, MI 49663

800-890-3407 • 231-824-3631 Fax: 231-824-9390

[www.emeraldvale.com](http://www.emeraldvale.com)

Click thru a hole-by-hole tour of Emerald Vale

### Features of Emerald Vale

- Beautiful Vistas With Over 120' of Elevation Change
- Bentgrass Greens, Tees and Fairways
- Practice Range With Bentgrass Tees and Target Greens
- 2 Large Practice Greens
- Pro Shop, Restaurant and Bar
- Golf Outings and Leagues Welcome
- Golf Packages
- Senior Rates 7 Days a Week
- Junior Rates 7 Days a Week
- Hotel and Casino Packages Available in Traverse City and Cadillac
- Twilight after 4 p.m. Everyday

  
Emerald Vale

