



You've done this in your head, we're sure, and perhaps on paper as well. Maybe not concerning golf, but about life.

We write of the bucket list. That which must be accomplished before said bucket is kicked and lilies replace roses on the gift list of those who favor you.

Our Neal Kotlarek, the staff leader in whimsy, suggested that his fellow GOLFChicago denizens come up with their individual bucket lists concerning golf.

So it was suggested. So it now is done, the individual lists herewith combined into a big bucket, like the one that costs \$9 at your local range. No long drives are required – which means the Pine Valley-Pebble



2. Then stop by Forest Park in Lake Forest, between Deerpath Rd. and Spring Lane. There and the adjacent Fairlawn Estate held the first true Macdonald creation, all seven holes of it, where golf caught on from April of 1892 forward. Plop down a ball and flip a wedge. You'll feel the spirit of the game – or hear a policeman's whistle.

Beach-Augusta National long weekend all dream of is not on the list.

As it was his idea, we start with Neal's first selection, the point on our local compass where golf has been played almost continuously since the game took root here.

1. Play Downers Grove Golf Course. Much of this oft-remodeled property is the site of the original Chicago Golf Club, laid out in 1893 by Charles Blair Macdonald. Much has also been realigned, but the last renovation found century-old golf balls buried about.



3. Finally, go farther back in the GOLFChicago time machine by visiting Douglas Memorial Park in Chicago on 35th St., east of Cottage Grove Ave. That's more or less where Macdonald and Scottish pal Robert Burgess hit golf balls when it was the deactivated Camp Douglas – in August of 1875. The statue honors Stephen Douglas – he went 1-1 with Lincoln in political match play – and Douglas' tomb is below, but for some, it symbolizes the first place a golf ball was struck in our town.

4. Now, come back to the present day and your favorite course, and thank the course superintendent for all the effort that he and his crew put into making it your paradise, from mowing the greens to trimming the rough to repairing ball marks a group the day before failed to fix.

5. While you're there, line up a lesson with your pro. Virtually every golf course with a driving range offers group and individual lessons. Many have high-tech equipment, such as Trackman, that can gauge your swing speed and even tell you which golf ball brand fits your game.

6. Then take it a step further. More strokes are taken – and wasted – within 100 yards of the hole than anywhere else. So clean up your game. Enroll in a Dave Pelz short-game school at Cog Hill in Palos Park. A proven game-changer, the clinics run from one to three days.

7. Then practice. Cog's practice facility is excellent, and nearby Mistwood Golf Club's facility, a few miles

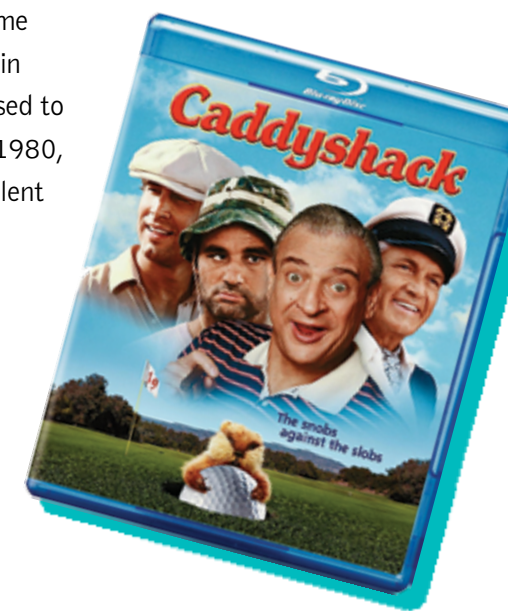
southwest in Romeoville, is even better. For one thing, it includes a restaurant scant feet from the practice tees. You can nosh and hit simultaneously.

8. Oh, and by the way, if it's suggested you need new clubs, as in your pals suggesting your irons were made during the Industrial Revolution, get fitted for them. Your swing speed and path can now be accounted for in what you wield. True Spec Golf / Movement3 Golf in Highland Park, GolfTec, Cool Clubs and Mistwood's Golf Performance Center (and McQ's in the winter) are among the experts in the area.

9. Go high-tech. Go with some pals to Topgolf – there are locations in Wood Dale and Naperville – and walk into golf's version of a video game. Grab some suds and bet on who'll score best.

10. Combine high-tech and something more conventional by renting time on a golf simulator. In the dead of winter – and we're not far from that – you can tee it up at Pebble Beach without the \$550 green fee and night at The Lodge. Sorry, no fog or Bill Murray playing through. The Golfzon simulators in the White Pines Golf Dome are especially effective.

11. Did someone mention Bill Murray? His name reminds us of a certain motion picture, released to moderate success in 1980, but now golf's equivalent of "Casablanca." It's "Caddyshack," of course, with Murray, Chevy Chase, Ted Knight and Rodney Dangerfield cavorting through 99 minutes of links



hijinks. Don't wait for the next cable airing. Splurge and buy the Blu-ray – bowl of soup not included – and, like Carl Spackler on his deathbed, you will have total consciousness going for you. Which is nice.

12. Fast-forward to where you've watched it several times.

Now, rattle off Spackler's full Dalai Lama speech – "Big hitter, the Lama; long" – to your group. Done properly, or even improperly, they should be convulsed. And you'll win the next hole, while Lou keeps losing at the track.

13. For the full Murray, network until you can find someone who can get you on Indian Hill Club in Winnetka.

That's the peach of a Donald Ross course where the Murray brothers caddied. And yes, all those movie characters were based on Indian Hillers, and there really was a real-life Havercamp couple at the club. They invented slow play.

14. If you can't get on Indian Hill – and you probably can't

– mosey down the lakefront until you get to Lake Shore Drive and Addison St. You have found Waveland – only the stuffy call it Marovitz – Chicago's nine-hole answer to Pebble Beach. This 1930s Joe Roseman-designed gem offers beautiful views for a few bucks. But reserve a tee time ahead because this place fills up almost every day, even when a lake chill cuts you to the bone. It must be the views of downtown.

15. Speaking of cold, you've not been cold until you've played in an Eskimo Open at Cog Hill on a frigid January day.

This annual exercise in frostbite was invented by Joe Jemsek in 1963. The idea was to play Glenwoodie, which he then leased, in the morning, and then watch the Bears and Giants in the NFL title game at sold-out Wrigley Field on NBC's South Bend outlet, as Channel 5 was blacked out (ask your grandparents). It was so cold the signal didn't come through, but the golf was played anyway. The beer was cold too.

16. Want to keep warm while you practice? Step into a golf dome. White Pines' dome is the granddaddy of them in town, and still the biggest, but McQ's in Bolingbrook is nearly as deep and



takes amenities to the nth degree. There's excellent food in the sports bar, and it's connected to an OTB center, where you might just run into Lou, trying to make his money back by betting on the seventh at Del Mar.

17. Is the weather just too stinkaroo to go out? Curl up with a good golf book after your nightly viewing of "Caddyshack." Here are five we like, all of which are easy to find on Amazon or eBay:

a. Dead Solid Perfect by Dan Jenkins. The irreverent master weaves the atmosphere of the 1970s tour with the tales of Kenny Puckett, only slightly removed from reality.

b. How To Play Your Best Golf All The Time by Tommy Armour. Perhaps the most timeless instructional book, written by the multi-major champion in 1953 and still spot-on, as in this bit of advice: "Play the shot you've got the greatest chance of playing well, and play the shot that makes the next shot easy."

c. Golf Has Never Failed Me by Donald Ross. A collection of short essays and great thoughts by the esteemed architect, the manuscript rescued from near-oblivion in 1996. With a nice selection of diagrams and photos.

d. On The Tour with Harry Sprague by Herbert Warren Wind. The legendary scribe turns humorist, collecting letters from the barely-literate fictional pro to his sponsor regarding his success and lack thereof on the circuit circa 1960.

e. King of Clubs: The Great Golf Marathon of 1938 by Jim Ducibella, who brought to life the story of Olympia Fields' J. Smith Ferebee, a member who would bet anyone on anything, including playing golf across the country. It has to be read to be disbelieved.

18. Plunk two bottles of sun screen in different areas of your golf bag before the season starts. That

way, you'll stay protected all season. And wear a hat!
19. That advice is doubly important if you decide, as you should, to play all 36 holes at Harborside International in a single day. One of the country's best urban golf complexes, both the Port and the Starboard were concocted by area designer Dick Nugent on a near-treeless slag heap dumped into Lake Calumet that was once thought to have zero value as a recreational property. Cool fact: The Starboard Course, which opened in 1996, is partially built on the rubble of Chicago Stadium, the grand ice palace knocked down the year before.

20. Speaking of the Stadium, think like Bobby Hull: commit to not leaving a single approach shot short of the flagstick over an entire 18 holes. You might face a few tricky downhill putts over the 18 holes, but you'll be amazed at how many times you under-club during a round.

21. Play The Preserve at Oak Meadows in Addison, which reopened late last year. Then walk the trails around the property that connect you with the wildlife and the environment that will benefit both flora and fauna and everyone's basement south along Salt Creek.

22. Indulge yourself with a trip to Lawsonia, the Wisconsin getaway that features the William Langford-designed Links. He and associate Theodore Moreau created a wonderful course that was recently restored and is more compelling than ever. In the burgeoning world of amazing Wisconsin





golf (SentryWorld, Blackwolf Run, Whistling Straits, Erin Hills, Sand Valley), this is the original, and the least expensive.

23. Closer to home, and on the other side of Chicago, there's a hidden Langford and Moreau gem: Kankakee Elks in Aroma Park. Virtually untouched since its 1926 opening, you'll find cop bunkers, a volcano par 3, and other delights. Play it.

24. Here's another double-play combination: Jackson Park and South Shore, a pair of Chicago Park District layouts on and near the lakefront designed by Tom Bendelow in 1905 and 1906, respectively. Both are threatened by the potential construction of an 18-hole layout that could cost tens of millions under the guise of revitalizing the park. That plan has hit roadblocks, but Chicago being Chicago, might yet happen. So play the Bendelow twins while you can.

25. Grab and read a copy of the *Rules of Golf*, that longtime best-seller, and you may be the only one in your foursome who has. Stuff it in your bag for luck. Extra credit: Order a copy of the Decisions on the Rules of Golf, a nifty spiral-bound tome with more arcane situations than you could imagine, and read that. You then might be the only one at your course, aside from your pro, knowing you have multiple options for dropping your ball in some cases. And that could save you a stroke.

26. Eschew a cart where you normally ride. Walk the course, carrying your bag or using a trolley. You'll see the course in a different way, and might even

score better.

27. Don't want to lug your bag? If you can, use a caddie. A handful of public courses – including the fun Cantigny complex in Wheaton – have caddie programs, and the better ones will help your game. Plus, the \$50 or so you pay the lad or lass will be well worth it. And at Cantigny, you might find yourself playing out of the famed Dick Tracy bunker, designed to pay homage to Cantigny founder and famed *Chicago Tribune* publisher Col. Robert McCormick.

28. While you're feeling charitable, give a thought to donating to the Evans Scholars Foundation. As Chick Evans and his mom hoped, you'll be helping a caddie with smarts and the desire to go to college but from a family unable to fund it. Over 900 such caddies are in colleges in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest as you read this. For more, see the Western Golf Association's website: www.wgaesf.org.

29. Regarding Western Golf, with the BMW Championship in Philadelphia this year, the WGA's big area show is the hidden gem of championship golf: the Western Amateur. It's at Sunset Ridge Country Club in Northfield from July 31 to August 4. This is the PGA Tour five years in advance. Pick a favorite during stroke play qualifying and follow him during match play.

30. Many a former amateur star not yet on the big circuit plays the Web.com Tour, and that's back in town from June 7-10 with the Rust-Oleum Championship at Ivanhoe Club in the north suburbs. Last year, the winner and runner-up played and made the cut in the following week's U.S. Open.

31. It's a big tournament year here, with the weekend of July 12-15 the biggest of all. The fixture is the John Deere Classic, which brings the PGA Tour to the Quad Cities for the 48th year, and to TPC Deere Run for the 21st time. But there's more!

32. The same week, in its first Chicago-area visit, the Senior Players Championship shows up at Exmoor Country Club in Highland Park, a rare visit by the professionals to that classic, and the first 50-plus major in our town since the 1997 U.S. Senior Open. But there's more!

33. Like the first two, July 12-15 offers the unique chance to see something that's never happened anywhere at a course that's stood the test of time:

The inaugural U.S. Senior Women's Open, at no less than Chicago Golf Club in Wheaton. The USGA, after years of prodding, has added a senior professional championship for ladies 50 and up, and to make sure the world takes note, convinced the ultra-private membership at Chicago Golf to host it. The Charles Blair Macdonald and Seth Raynor course – with a new tee on the first hole – will be a splendid test for the field, and someone's going to be the first to lift a brand new trophy. This one is a can't miss, at least for one round, if only to stroll the famous grounds.

34. The younger set on the distaff side, last seen in these parts at Olympia Fields, will reassemble at Kemper Lakes Golf Club in Kildeer, where the KPMG Women's PGA Championship is played from June 28-July 1, with Danielle Kang the defending champion.

35. Watching all that golf will make you eager to play more. The sternest public test in the Chicago area remains Dubsdread, the jewel of Cog Hill and the Jemsek Golf crown. But pick the right tees, or they'll be hanging



a lantern outside the 2-4 Building to guide you home.

36. Did you make everything on Dubs? Didn't think so. Just as fitted clubs can improve your game, so can a fitted putter. Bettinardi Golf in Tinley Park, the maker of custom putters, has a fitting center, "Studio B," in its factory where within 45 minutes to an hour, a putter can be fitted to your stroke.

37. The opposite of Dubsdread are the area's several short courses. Double up one day in the north suburbs. Start at Canal Shores in Evanston-Wilmette, where uber-volunteer Jason Way has led a revitalization of the property, and play 18 holes in a true community setting. (Sorry, a honking horn is a rub of the green.) Then drive to the Golf Center Des Plaines and play nine more – under the lights, no less. Bring bug spray!

38. On that trip, go retro. Dig through the garage and find your old set of clubs, and use those. Remember how hard they were to hit, and how fulfilling it was when you smacked a good one? Bonus points if you have persimmon woods. The 3-wood will do at Canal Shores, and won't be needed at Des Plaines.

39. Volunteer to be part of Way's course improvement corps at Canal Shores. You might find yourself digging a bunker or clearing decades-old brush along the North Shore Channel. Ask at the clubhouse.

40. One more thing. Next time you play, thank the starter at your course. Usually, all he gets is grief.