



Perry Leslie  
practicing in Phoenix;  
Paganica GC Jan., 1977



Jack Garvin  
Jan., 1977. Showing off in a friend  
of my mom's Phoenix kitchen



#6 Pebble Beach par 5 Crosby  
practice round , Jan. 1977



#7 Pebble Beach par 3  
Crosby practice round , Jan. 1977  
Perry Leslie, Bill Rogers, Bill Calfee  
(Taken moments before the author made 2!)

## 1977 PGA Tour Story by Jack Garvin

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. Charles Dickens must have seen into the future and saw my great adventure of 1977. I was 33 years old and had taught world history to 9th graders for six years. I needed a break.

I had played college golf at Mizzou 1962-1966. Two years in the army was followed by the start of my history teaching career in Kansas City secondary schools. I moved to Santa Fe, NM in 1976, which was a sharp contrast to Kansas City. My 8 to 3 world was soon to be totally left behind.

One weekend in October of 1976, I drove to Las Vegas to see my old boyhood friend from Jefferson City, Perry Leslie who was playing on the PGA tour. When Perry asked me to come caddy for him on the tour in '77, I jumped at the chance.

In 1977 the tour started the first week of January in Phoenix. My drive from Santa Fe on New Years Eve involved 10 degree temperatures and a snow packed Interstate 40 until I reached Flagstaff. Then one of the best experiences of my life truly began. As I made the 145 mile drive south the snow packed conditions on I-17 gave way to clear and warmer conditions. Phoenix hit a high of 'only' 63 degrees that day. For the next three months I would 'follow the sun' instead of braving snow and ice.

Perry was a Monday Qualifier, which meant usually teeing it up with 60 or 70 other pros for 4 or 5 spots on Thursday morning in the tournament proper. 72s or 73s were bogus. You either shot under par or you waited a week until the next Monday qualifier. Such was the case those first two weeks. "We" shot 73 and 72 on the Monday's before Phoenix and Tucson. The 72 was memorable for me. I had never seen anyone make seven birdies and

seven bogies in the same round.

While Perry and his wife Linda flew to Monterrey, California for the Crosby, I drove my 1973 Vega station wagon across the winter desert and up the coast with their cat, Tippy.

While this is like turning to the last page of a book, I will go ahead and tell you this was the only time in the three months that Perry made it past a Monday qualifier. I could not have asked for a better one. His 69 at Old Del Monte on Monday got 'us' a spot in the field to play Pebble Beach, Cypress Point and Monterey Country Club. To this day, all I have to do is close my eyes and I can hear the surf pounding the rocks at Cypress Point. Not a more beautiful place on the earth have I seen.

We were already in place in Carmel on Sunday after a practice round at Cypress, watching the Tucson Open final round on TV. To our joy and amazement, a friend of Perry's from the mini-tours, Bruce Lietzke made an

80 foot putt on #18 to win. His winner's share was \$40,000. Bruce would win again three weeks later in Hawaii, raking in \$48,000. (My last teaching salary in 1976 had been \$12,492.)

Speaking of money, my arrangement as a caddy was \$125 per week plus 5% of any prize money. With Motel 6 actually at "Motel 9" by 1977, 5% of 40K would have gone a long way.

When a player misses the cut in a tour event he gets zero, nada, zilch. Therefore, I was pretty much stuck on \$125 a week.

We played practice rounds on Pebble Beach and Cypress. I even got to play one hole, #7 at Pebble during a practice round. No wind, 128 yard downhill pitching wedge to 20 feet. Made the putt. I was and am, one-under-par at Pebble Beach in this lifetime.

The next week in San Diego was another miss on Monday qualifying. Perry skipped the next three events and we agreed to meet on Saturday, Feb 19 at Inverrary CC, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. A good thing came out of San Diego, though. Perry introduced me to Bill Rogers\*, another mini-tour buddy of his. Bill had a friend from Texas who was coming out on tour to caddy for him. Mike King and I would be roommates for the next two months, starting in San Diego. Splitting the cost of a motel room meant moving up to Days Inns instead of Motel 6's.

When Perry missed Monday qualifying at San Diego he introduced me to Jim Albus. I ended up caddying for Jim for six rounds. Two practice rounds at Torrey Pines and Albus made the cut. Big payday? Uhh, no. Jim paid me \$100. He only won \$119, so I guess he thought the math was right.

I drove back through Kansas City and checked on getting my old job teaching again. Then on to the Florida tour on Feb. 18.

At Inverrary in Fort Lauderdale, Perry missed Monday qualifying again. Shot a 74 that put him in a playoff with 21 guys for 3 spots. Bogeyed the second hole, so 'we' had a week to practice and get ready for the next one at Orlando.

This was a low point in the experience. I slept in my car for four nights in Fort Lauderdale. Ever the optimist, I figured things had to get better. Not necessarily, as I would find out.

In Orlando's Monday qualifier Perry made 7 birdies. He also made five bogeys and a double bogey to make a playoff for 1st alternate. A week later back down at Doral in Miami he shot a 76 for another disappointing Monday.

I did get a loop on that Monday at Doral with Tony Cerda, another of Perry's friends who made Monday qualifying. Tony shot 76-72 on Thursday and Friday to miss the cut. He paid me with a hundred dollar bill, which was nice.

Since our tee time had been at 7 a.m. I went back to the motel for some relaxing by the Holiday Inn pool. Returning to the room I found I had been robbed of that Franklin. I called the police. They came and filled out a report, but it was my word against the maid's.

This was a turning point in my adventure. It looked like I would have to break into a \$10,000 CD that I had back in Santa Fe. It was kind of relaxing, knowing I would not be living a true 'hand to mouth' existence for the next few months.

There was no Monday qualifying for the 2nd TPC Championship near Jacksonville. The top 144 players got into the tournament off the money list. Another of Perry's friends, Carlton "Slugger" White needed a caddy for the event and I was that guy.

It was played at Sawgrass Country Club, the course that is just east and across the road from the TPC we now all see on television in March. That week there was about a 40 mph wind each day. Bruce Lietzke put together a 'worst ball' score of players in the tournament. It was a 95! Slugger shot 76-75 and made the cut. 'We' played with Gene Littler and Miller Barber on the third day, which was a thrill for me to see these legends up close. Slugger made \$652, of which I received \$140, my biggest payday of my tour caddy experience!

Carlton "Slugger" White played the tour for 4 years, 1976-79 before becoming a PGA Tour Rules Official for 40 years. He finally retired in 2021.

\* Bill Rogers, 1973 Walker Cup, 1983 Ryder Cup, had made \$24,000 on tour in 1976, \$80,000 in 1977.

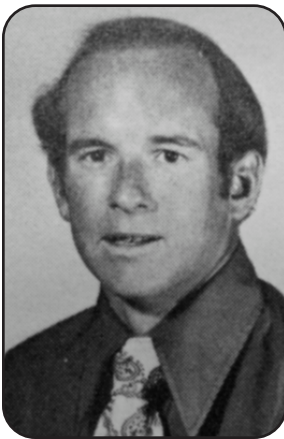
In his PGA career he won 6 times, was PGA Player of Year in 1981 and won the 1981 British Open at Royal St. George's.

### Highlights of January 1 - April 10, 1977:

1. caddying at Cypress Point; making a birdie 2 on #7 at Pebble Beach
2. listening to players discuss swing, chipping and putting techniques
3. going from 10 degrees to 65 degrees; Flagstaff to Phoenix
4. never seeing snow during the winter of 1977
5. seeing the USA from the Pacific to the Atlantic

### Lowlights of January 1 - April 10, 1977:

1. Being robbed of \$100 from my Miami hotel room.
2. Missing 9 of 10 Monday qualifiers.
3. Sleeping in the car four nights in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.



Jack Garvin  
Sept., 1977.  
Back in Kansas City



Garvin and Leslie  
A 1980 re-enactment pose  
at Hickory Hills CC in  
Springfield, Mo.

After two and a half months of living in motels and my car, it was time for a break. I drove to Washington D.C. to visit my mother for a few days. For March 25th the weather was still cold at that latitude. After a few days I was ready to try 'following the sun' again.

Greensboro NC was the next Monday qualifier and it may have been the worst. Perry shot an 80! He suggested we split up for awhile. I too was getting discouraged. He hooked me up with Mike Long, who missed qualifying too, but was going to play Hattiesburg the next week. This was a little tournament for those players who were not in the Masters.

Hattiesburg, Mississippi became memorable for several reasons. A chipping lesson from Bill Rogers paid off several times over the next forty years.

Second, a terrifying few moments occurred when all the caddies were sent out on

the range to shag their player's shots. I felt like I was back at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma with 'incoming rounds.' I still can't believe no caddy was seriously hurt.

The third was during the tournament when my player, Mike Long and Jim Dent hit each other's balls out of the middle of the 11th fairway. The caddies were blamed and two shot penalties for each player. Also the silent treatment the rest of the round from Mike. Actually terse would describe his comments to me the rest of the tournament. He did pay me \$115 for the week in Hattiesburg.

That Sunday evening, April 10th, I settled in to watch the last round of the Masters on my color TV in the Days Inn. Seeing Tom Watson sink a curving 18 footer on the 17th green to win his first Masters made me smile.

It also made me think of home. I knew then that I had seen enough of America and

was ready to come home after 8,199 miles. What I soaked up in those three and a half months of watching the best players in the world up close was priceless.

I returned to Kansas City, resumed my teaching career and fully retired in 2012 after forty years in the classroom. I never forgot that 1977 three and a half month long classroom, though.

Jack Garvin

p.s. Six months after I left the tour Perry and Fuzzy Zoeller teamed up for a 5th place finish in the Disney World 4-Ball in Orlando.

In 1978 I made it to the quarterfinals of the Missouri Amateur and in 1982 was a US Open local qualifier. Both of these were a result of my experience as a PGA Tour caddy.

### Tournaments actually caddied:

(my player's winnings)

1. Bing Crosby Pro-Am (Perry Leslie MC)
2. San Diego Open (Jim Albus \$119)
3. Doral Eastern Open (Tony Cerda MC )
4. TPC (Slugger White \$652 )
5. Magnolia Classic (Mike Long \$122 )

Leslie & Garvin  
At the 1982 US Open Sectional at St. Louis CC. We were players who had qualified at the US Open Local Qualifying in Kansas City.



### The PGA Tour in 1977

Date	Event	Total Purse	Course	Winner	1st place \$
Jan 6 - 9	Phoenix Open	Purse: \$200,000	Phoenix CC, Ariz	Jerry Pate	\$ 40,000
Jan 13 - 16	Tucson Open	Purse: \$200,000	Tucson National, Ariz	Bruce Lietzke	\$ 40,000
Jan 20 - 23	Bing Crosby Pro-Am	Purse: \$200,000	Pebble Beach, Calif Cypress Point, Calif Monterrey CC, Calif	Tom Watson	\$ 40,000
Jan 27 - 30	San Diego Open	Purse: \$180,000	Torrey Pines, San Diego, Calif	Tom Watson	\$ 36,000
Feb 3 - 6	Hawaiian Open	Purse: \$240,000	Waialae CC, Hawaii	Bruce Lietzke	\$ 48,000
Feb 9 - 13	Bob Hope Desert Classic	Purse: \$200,000	Indian Wells, Palm Springs, Calif	Rik Massengale	\$ 40,000
Feb 17 - 20	Los Angeles Open	Purse: \$200,000	Riviera CC, Calif	Tom Purtzer	\$ 40,000
Feb 24 - 27	Inverrary Classic	Purse: \$250,000	Inverrary CC, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla	Jack Nicklaus	\$ 50,000
Mar 3 - 7	Florida Citrus Open	Purse: \$200,000	Rio Pinar CC, Orlando, Fla	Gary Koch	\$ 40,000
Mar 10 - 13	Doral-Eastern Open	Purse: \$200,000	Doral CC, Miami, Fla	Andy Bean	\$ 40,000
Mar 17 - 20	TPC	Purse: \$300,000	TPC Sawgrass, Fla	Mark Hayes	\$ 60,000
Mar 24 - 27	Heritage Classic	Purse: \$225,000	Harbour Town, SC	Graham Marsh	\$ 45,000
Mar 31-Apr 3	Greensboro Open	Purse: \$235,000	Forest Oaks CC, NC	Danny Edwards	\$ 47,000
Apr 6 - 10	Magnolia Classic	Purse: \$35,000	Hattiesburg CC, Miss	Mike McCullough	\$ 7,000

Tom Watson won 5 times in 1977: \$310,000; his 1st Masters and 1st British Open. This was Bill Rogers' breakout year, \$80,000, leading to his 1981 Player Of the Year and \$365,000.