



Vahsholtz Cousins

March, 2011

<http://www.vahsholtz-cousins.org/>

Disc Golf

By Dennis Vahsholtz

Disc Golf has often been billed as the “Sport of the Future.” I cannot disagree with that statement. Thirty years ago I was playing various forms of the game by aiming at objects around the yard and in parks with a regular throw and catch Frisbee. In 1985 I discovered that there were actual chain targets to aim at along with special discs that could be used. I was immediately hooked.

Golf and Disc Golf are very similar. The main difference is the equipment. Instead of clubs and balls, disc golfers throw specially designed discs to handle any kind of throw a course may require. The targets are metal “Pole Hole’s” and consist of a chain apparatus at the top that catches the disc and a basket below the chains that holds the disc. The great thing is it only takes one disc to start playing and they cost less than \$10. The average length of a hole is about 300 feet and a full course can be installed in under utilized public parks such as hilly and wooded areas for around \$10,000.

Not a bad investment that can provide recreation for up to 90 players at a time. That is probably why there are more than 2,500 courses in the USA alone and hundreds more in over 29 other countries. To find a course near you and learn more about the game go to www.PDGA.com and click on Course Directory. You can look up courses by state or zip code.

After discovering the special equipment available I had a hard time finding a good variety of discs at a price I thought was fair. I figured if I was having that problem, other people were too. There were about five courses in Kansas back then with a course pro at each that sold discs and a few stores that also

carried the discs. I visited with all these contacts and offered to sell them smaller quantities with a greater variety at the same price that they were currently paying. So that’s when I contacted the three major manufacturers and purchased discs at their maximum quantity rates to be delivered to me as needed. Now there are over 80 courses in the state of Kansas and over 10 manufacturers of discs.

I started out with maybe 200 discs for inventory and now we stock over 15,000 items. The business started to become more than a hobby back in 1999 when we went online to be able to sell more discs at retail and reach a worldwide market. We have three part time employees besides Annetta and myself. Our business has grown 10-15% a year since we have started, which roughly parallels the growth of the sport. We sell not only discs but baskets, bags, and all other accessories used in the sport. Our website is www.discsunlimited.net. We are one of roughly eight wholesalers besides the manufacturers in the country. It is a competitive business and we are fortunate new players are constantly discovering the game.

I have been able to continue playing the game that I love but on a more limited basis than I would prefer. I have been a professional player in the age protected divisions since I started in 1987. I have attended three World Championships in 1991, 2003 and 2004. I placed 6th place out of 55 players at the 2003 World Championships in



Flagstaff, Arizona in the Pro Grand Masters division (50-59).

According to the PDGA hand book, “More people are taking up recreational activities in an effort to improve their health and quality of life. With its combination of upper and lower body conditioning, mental concentration, and manual dexterity, disc golf is a great choice for a “lifetime sport” for all ages.” I just feel very lucky to have a business involved with a sport that I love. Whenever you are near Herington please stop by and we can give you a tour. That is if we are home and not out playing disc golf.

Our number is on the website. ■





Antique Cars 50 years of Marriage and Fond Memories

By Les Vahsholtz

For years, Fred Fahsholtz was known in Clovis, New Mexico as a good mechanic who fixed cars in his home garage just outside of town. Fred's career was working for the Railroad, from which he is now retired, but his love was working on cars. Fred has the ability to teach himself by reading the owner's manual, so working on cars and engines became a fulfilling hobby and sideline business.

But along with car repairs for local people, Fred had a passion for restoring antique cars. During his lifetime Fred restored a 1929 Franklin (which he later sold), a 1925 Model T pickup, a 1929 Model A Roadster Coupe with a rumble seat and a 1959 Ford with a retractable hardtop. Wife Della takes credit for finding the 1959 Ford but Fred's personal dealings found the Model T & Model A. Fred and Della's family room wall proudly displays the trophies won over the past decades as they drove their antique cars in parades

and participated in competitions. The Model T, Model A and the '59 Ford are still parked in Fred and Della's garage.

Fred paid \$200 cash and a 1946 Ford for the Model A in the late 60s and spent several years rebuilding the engine and restoring the body. The Model T was found rusted and abandoned in a North Dakota field by a friend who later sold it to Fred for \$150. Fred rebuilt the engine, radiator and all the wooden wheel spokes which he found at an antique car swap meet. Della found the '59 Ford without Fred's knowledge, purchased it for \$250 and gave it to him as a birthday present. "I knew he would want it," says Della.

Fred's antique auto restoration days may be over but the photos and trophies on their wall will always bring back many fond memories they enjoyed together over the past 50 years.

Happy 50th anniversary, Fred and Della Fahsholtz. ■



This 1959 Ford has such a special place in the hearts of Della and Fred that when they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 12, 2010, they shined up the retractable hardtop beauty for this photo.



Fred proudly displays a Bible that belonged to his Grandfather, Karl August J. "Charles" Fahsholtz, who changed the spelling of Vahsholtz to Fahsholtz in an effort to make Americans pronounce the name as it sounds in German.

Karl was not the only one struggling to get "Vahsholtz" pronounced right! We don't all agree on the pronunciation to this day! Even computers disagree. Go to this link, type in "Vahsholtz" and listen to a bunch of computer animations do the typical butchering of our name (or Fahsholtz or anything else). We think "Kate" does Vahsholtz best. What do you think?
http://www.oddcast.com/home/demos/ts/ts_example.php?sitepal

You've Chosen

The Location of the next Reunion



Many thanks to all who responded to our survey (more than a fourth of you—an excellent return). Most of the results seem to have come from the younger crowd, and there was a strong favorable response to branching out from our Kansas roots. A typical response, “Venturing out, though returning to Kansas from time to time also makes sense.”

Many respondents had not attended a reunion but look forward to doing so, “Having never been, I'd love to attend a reunion in Kansas, but I'm happy to ‘go with the flow!’”

We put forth three potential locations for the next Vahsholtz Cousins Reunion, Wisconsin, Colorado and Oregon. The overwhelming choice, 57 percent, was Colorado, with 27 percent preferring Oregon and 16 percent opting for Wisconsin. “Colorado seems to offer a more-or-less central location, plus fantastic road trip and vacation

opportunities before and after. Same with Portland, though it's a little farther flung for Midwestern cousins. Some might find the Dells a bit crowded and commercialized, but it probably offers the most variety for families with kids (and grown-ups who like casinos).” “They're all good, but maybe Colorado would be close enough to keep the Kansas nucleus involved, at least for now.”

So, it was an easy decision, with willing volunteers at all three locations, Colorado Springs will be the location of the 2012 Reunion. The excellent Academy Hotel above has already been chosen. Further details will be coming in this newsletter and on the website.

Stay tuned!

The Newsletter & Website

We also asked your opinion on this newsletter and the website. It was gratifying to receive so many compliments, but more importantly to get some useful tips on improvements we might make. On the newsletter, “Possibly, individual

family stories relating to history. Those that know these stories will unfortunately be gone some day.” Hear hear! That is the prime purpose of our reunions and all these family communications. It's a difficult challenge though, because so many people think *their* story is of no interest to others. Read *The Road from Zwillipp* again. Most of the stories in that book recount ordinary days in the lives of ordinary people who were (and are) our relatives. The best thing you can do for your family is to see that your stories are recorded for posterity, and we're here to help.

Similarly, the Vahsholtz website reaches out to relatives far and near, and especially to younger generations who have not yet been caught up in family history (they're too busy making it!). About the only criticism of the website was its complexity—and that probably came from us older cousins who have a tough time wrapping ourselves around this newfangled technology.

The Treasury

It came to our attention that in thanking the outgoing newsletter team, we forgot to mention Allan and Martha Brockmeier, who handled the challenging task of printing and mailing. Their contribution became much more apparent after we went through that task ourselves. Thanks Allan and Martha, for your endless donated efforts!

And that work continues because Allan remains Treasurer of this loose organization that strives to keep us all in touch. The coffers are low, which inspired us to ask in our survey what might be done. Start charging dues or continue to limp along with donations?

The response overwhelmingly favored continuing with donations, and excellent reasons were given, "If you want to expand the Vahsholtz cousin participation, I feel dues will discourage younger generations that have not developed that hunger for family history yet." "Maybe a fee at the reunion." "Continue to ask for the donations in newsletters and at reunions and on the website. Tell users it can only continue with their continued support." "Maybe a recognition of persons contributing financial support ... would be nice. I don't think you should get into naming amounts however." "If you start charging, a lot of family will lose interest."

Those are all fine points. We hoped more donations might accompany the strong response. Not so. A few donations came in, supplementing those received at past reunions, but the fact remains, the cupboard is bare. The support we get comes from an embarrassingly small number of us.

We'll keep trying. One thing you can do that will really help. About a third of you get this newsletter in your mailbox. Printing and mailing costs about a dollar or so for each copy—our biggest expense. Sending it to those for whom we have a current email address costs nothing, and their copy is in full color. Send your current email address to Marge, mvahsholtz@gmail.com.

And a check to: Allan Brockmeier
11764 Kingston Dr.
Festus, MO 63028 ■



Richter's in Israel Part One

Ruth Vahsholtz Richter and husband Ron traveled to Israel to visit daughter Ginger, who works in the U.S. Consulate there. They sent back a travelogue for family and friends, and heck, we're all family, so we edited their journal into three installments for this newsletter. Here's the first.

We have been here almost a week now and I guess it's safe to say that we are "settled in." We arrived on a sunny cool windy day in Tel Aviv and were met by Ginger. The car ride due east to Jerusalem gave us a lay of the land. Very rocky and barren away from irrigation sources, and hilly. Being Saturday and the Shabat Day, traffic was light and many stores were closed. It looked like the Sundays of our youth.

Everything is the same color – limestone beige. The first oddity we noticed is that every building is constructed of the same limestone blocks, a law in Israel, so there is a monotonous appeal to everything. What breaks that monotony is the modern architectural style of the buildings.

Sunday Ginger had arranged a quick walk through of Old Jerusalem's Christian Quarter. One of her friends from the Consulate gave us a very informative tour of the various churches and highlights, followed by nice jetlagged naps. Pulled from the depths of REM, we went to a popular old hotel for a lovely dinner.

Monday was our Masada trip day. The weather had been windy and cold and the dust was blowing like crazy. But once out of Jerusalem it cleared up and turned into a delightful sunny and warm day. The ride to Masada down the west coast of the Dead Sea only reinforced that this is one very barren and difficult land. If you can visualize taking away every trace of living matter, and leave only gravel and rocks, then you can imagine what the countryside looks like. In our Bible study group we had discussed that Jerusalem of old was at the center of the known world's trade routes. It is difficult to imagine anyone being able to travel over this land in anything but a tank, but I guess camels have very tough feet.

Masada was, as expected, a pile of limestone on the top of a 4,240 ft mountain. We took the tram up but Ginger hoofed it up the zigzag walking path. Ginger and Ruth walked around and took in the various views while Ron found a shady bench and took a brief nap, finding it hard to identify with a pile of stones.

When it came time to go home, we piled into the rental car with the intention of being back home within an hour and a half. Unfortunately, the car wouldn't start. Rentals here have a push button code system you must use before the car will start. Our car wouldn't accept the code. So we phoned Budget Rental and they sent someone out while we cooled our heels for two hours waiting. The mechanic came, couldn't get it started and swapped us his car for ours so we could get home. No big problem, just an inconvenience. One must hang loose.

The next day was a workday for Ginger and we waited for it to warm up a little before tripping off into the Old City again. A disappointment. To best think of the Old City, think of an acre square (although it is larger than this), divided into quarter sections, one Christian, one Muslim, one Jewish, one Armenian, each with its own characteristics. So we walked through the Christian quarter meandering through narrow, stone, "streets" and alleys. (See the photo, next page)

I could almost feel that these crowded “streets” were no different from the time of Christ and that it was easy to imagine Him walking through them. Crowds of people walk by, many led by a tour guide waving his little flag overhead.

As we walked through or past the Via Dolorosa, groups of people would be stopped listening to the guide report on a Station of the Cross. Some groups would actually carry a large wooden cross; others would be singing as they went. The last Station ended at the Church of the Sepulcher. This is the holiest site in the Christian Quarter. Of course it is crowded with people.

Do not think of “church” as you have a church in America. If you remember, Golgotha was a hill and Christ was buried in a cave tomb. When Emperor Constantine, the first Christian emperor, ruled that Christianity was good, his wife, Helena, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and began building churches on the holy sites. The tomb was one of those sites. She had the hill whittled away except for a mound over the tomb reinforced with heavy vertical steel beams and then built a church around it. It is adorned with hanging lamps, candlestick holders, tapestries, and other stuff so that there is hardly a bare spot in the tomb. It seemed a sacrilege to see what was done in the name of reverence.

Walking around the Tomb, there were other small chapel and altar areas including the place where Jesus was supposedly nailed to the cross, some evidence of an earthquake, and the place where his body was prepared for burial. It was very depressing to walk through all of this in gloomy semidarkness. Rather than a feeling of awe for being in a holy place, it was kind of creepy. It seemed better to hang on to imagination’s memory. Perhaps that is the way most good memories are.

Next we headed for Petra, Jordan to



see the Temple Mount in which is the Dome of the Rock and the large Muslim Temple. This ancient city carved out of the mountainside like the Cliff Dweller Indians of the southwest, is all the way down and toward the east side of the Dead Sea. So off we went by taxi to the Israeli-Jordan border crossing gate on the northern tip of the Dead Sea. Getting through the Israeli side was not a problem and after getting our passports stamped, we boarded a fancy humongous tour bus which drove us about a quarter of a mile to the Jordanian gate. In between we crossed the Jordan River that flows from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. Right there at the border it is a pathetic little muddy stream and one cannot imagine anyone wanting to be baptized in it. Before dams and reservoirs were put on the river, it was no doubt a free flowing waterway and a much prettier body of water.

After expending a fair amount of cash to the Jordanian government for the privilege of entering their country we entered Jordan with a minimum of difficulty. After a short walk to the Avis rent-a-car place (Avis should be embarrassed to see their name displayed on such a place) we rented a beat up Chevy with good tires and off we went with our trusty map marked with the route.

Well, to make a long and bumpy story short, the map was well marked but the roads and highways were not. We did finally get there and it probably took us only twice as long as it should have. We checked into our very pleas-

ant all stone hotel room; headed straight to the bar for gin and tonics, and then a super buffet dinner.

Ron opted out of the evening festivities, but Ginger and Ruth went to Petra for the candlelit walk to the Treasury Building – one mile through the Sikh, which is the tunnel with the towering rock on either side. It was a gradual downhill all the way lit by candles set in sand in paper bags and, amazingly, most of those candles continued to burn

the whole time we were there. Had we been able to see better, we would have known the walk coming back was going to be difficult.

The Treasury Building had hundreds of candles set out across the courtyard area. There were several performances of a man on a stringed instrument singing along and then a flute like instrument, both of which were excellent but seemed to be one theme played over and over (did I mention *over and over?*) again. Then there was a “story teller” who basically commented on the quote, “East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet.” His thought was that, yes, in actuality we could meet and he asked one representative from every country who was there that night to come up and stand beside him signifying we could all come together and be friends. There were an amazing number of countries represented. They even served us hot tea while we watched the performance. The walk back took considerably longer than getting there.

The next morning we were up early, mostly because the idiot crier in the mosque tower was screaming his head off at 4:30. Presumably he was screaming that he hated to get up so early in the morning and climb these dumb stairs. We lingered for an hour or so in bed trying to go back to sleep, but finally gave up on it and got up. After a delightful breakfast we were off to the ancient city.

And what a city it is! The Nabataens carved out the mountainsides for these enormous buildings and caves for their homes approximately 2,000 years ago. To get to the city you have to go through a narrow passageway and you come out at the Treasury, the most majestic site in the city.

Then down the cobblestone way to other buildings and ruins all built out of the mountainous sandstone.

Ginger went by camel and we took a horse-drawn carriage but it was still a strenuous day. Our behinds verified that. But it was a most marvelous day, and when we got back to the room we went straight to the Turkish steam bath to soak out the soreness.

We headed for home in the rental car, this time on the correct highway. Driving back to the border crossing took a fraction of the time. However, the border-crossing process made up for the time. It seems we had our passports scrutinized at least 25 times and that was after getting some preferential treatment because we were Westerners and not locals. What a process!

Going in cost us a small fortune to get out of Israel and both ways the cost to ride the Jordanian bus for the mile or so of no-man's land was about \$20 per person. Never mind we had to wait to

ride that bus for about 45 minutes. And once we were on it, coming and going, it stopped three times, once to have us scrutinized with our passport pictures, once to have the metal detector run under the bus, and once just because ... as nearly as we could see.

Coming back we were told we needed to hurry, it was the last bus of the day (Saturday, their holy day) and then the process went on and on with them taking up endless amounts of time and once on the bus, still we sitting there waiting for who knows what. When we got to the Israeli side, it seemed we were moving along reasonably quickly and hustled ahead of folks because we were "tourists," but then Ron set off the metal detector with all of his artificial parts and they hauled him off to a little curtained room where he proceeded to strip down to his underwear. Meanwhile Israeli "secret police" everywhere scurried hither and yon, and one of them decided we were his special case, harassed Ginger about something or other and never let us out of his sight until we were completely through the process. Even then several times plainclothes people came up and asked us what our problem was since we appeared to be "loitering" and not getting in a taxi or a bus and getting off their turf. It's all kind of amusing if it's a

once-in-a-lifetime experience, but truly a royal pain in the rear. When we did get back home, we were beat.

Observation – The interior of Jordan is flat and bone dry desert. Occasionally, there is an area of rolling hills. It is very much like the Great Plains in western Kansas or Nebraska, and always windy and very dusty. Even in the Dust Bowl years, Kansas probably never looked this gosh awful forsaken, spoken not just to be loyal to Kansas. The countryside along both sides of the Dead Sea is very hilly with small mountains. It is bleak desert except the part along the very edge of the Sea that is irrigated. One wonders that when Jesus was baptized and was taken to the top of the mountain where the devil asked him, "If you worship me, you can have all of this land," why in the world would Jesus have wanted it? It was not much of a temptation.

We went to church Sunday morning for a very nice service and communion. Then we leisurely walked through a section of Jerusalem called the German Colony. We saw nothing that was German and ate at an Italian restaurant. At one time in Jerusalem's history it's where the German people lived, just as there is the American Colony Hotel that was begun by Americans and still controlled by that same family. ■



Hulda's Journal

Many of you have heard of the Journal that Franz Leonard's daughter Hulda Vahsholtz Friedrich wrote in 1937, about when this photo was taken. It's beautifully hand written, and now has been typed. Rosemarie Yarborough, a friend and neighbor of Joanne Vahsholtz, translated the German words for us. We've found a hundred or so illustrations and we're looking for more.

Here's a quote from her opening page: "I feel there really is nothing much to write about, since my life has been only the ordinary middle class, mid-western drab life of thousands of others and has been so commonplace, that I feel there will be very little of interest to anyone in these memories.

"I shall write about things and conditions just as I remember them, and the impression they made on me."

And that's exactly what she did. Nearly the entire book is set in Nemaha County, Kansas and describes her life in the years from 1880 to 1890. Hulda did not pull her punches. To protect the reputations of innocent descendants, we've changed the names of more than 50 unrelated people she describes. Her story will be of interest to you, and it will make a strong impression on anyone interested in family history. We hope to have it available for the 2012 Reunion. ■