

With Grass on the Ceiling and Ice on the Floor

When you look out the windows from Howland and Matas wards, you look down upon a grassy plot which has for its lawn furniture a somewhat unlikely-looking old iron bed.

Underneath this out-of-doors setting lies an important part of Duke Medical Center's past—the old Hospital Ice Plant.

"It was the showplace of the University when it was first built," reminisces a former Ice Plant operator.

In days past, this was a bustling area. Ice was in demand, and ice there had to be.

That was in the past.

Today, as mechanization has slipped in via the front door, so has the demand for an Ice Plant gone slowly out the back.

With the post-war boom of the 40's came the glorious invention of a modern cult—the self-contained refrigerator. It was followed about ten years later by the ice-making machine.

Decline set in. It was hard to accept.



Mr. Rufus B. Carr, Hospital Ice Plant operator since 1952, uses a pulley to draw up two frozen blocks of ice (300 pounds each) from their "briney bed." The brine circulates around the ice blocks (which are contained in cans) and keeps the blocks frozen until they are "pulled."

Since 1930 an Ice Plant had been a "must." Kitchens and dining halls needed ice, ward areas needed ice, and the populous morgue was cooled by the same brine with which the ice was frozen.

Up until as late as 1950 it took three men working around-the-clock to keep the Hospital and University adequately supplied with ice. It was a dear substance, long on the making and short on the lasting.

It takes 48 hours for a 300 pound block of ice to freeze. Often that was about two days too long.

Although the Plant is equipped to make 120 blocks of ice, only 60 blocks could be "pulled" in any one day, because it took so long for the blocks to freeze. To help make up any deficit between supply and demand, 36 blocks were usually kept on hand in the "cold storage" area.

"We used to haul 8-10 blocks several times a day to East and West Campus dining halls," recalls Mr. Stokes Jones, who worked in the Ice Plant from 1942 to 1954.



Mr. Stokes Jones "sitting up" one of the 300 pound blocks of ice... "like in the old days when we used to 'pack' the blocks back in the cold storage." Mr. Jones was with the Ice Plant from 1942 to 1954, when he began working with the University's Freon refrigeration and air conditioning.

I Must Not Think of Golf

There is a story of a young orthodox rabbi whose congregation dwelt in the climatically invigorating northern reaches of Michigan. Between the inclement weather and his innumerable duties, this devoted spiritual leader was increasingly separated from golf, one of the few lighthearted pleasures his stern conscience allowed.

In late October on Yom Kippur, to him the most sacred day of the year, he anticipated the holy services with a tinge of sadness as he saw through the window an unseasonably sunny and cloudless sky with only a gentle breeze stirring the autumn leaves.

"I must not think of golf on this day," he rebuked himself. But after gazing longingly at a new set of clubs, given to him by grateful friends several months previously and not yet used, he phoned his assistant with mingled guilt and exhilaration.

"Could you possibly conduct the services by yourself today?" he asked. "I have a strange feeling which quite incapacitates me." The assistant readily and sympathetically consented, and the rabbi took to the golf course, knowing he would see no members of his congregation, or *vice versa*.

As the rabbi was at the first tee, posed to swing, Moses looked down from heaven, turned to God in anger and asked, "Do you see what that wicked man is doing?"

"Yes, I see," God replied serenely, "and he shall be punished."

Reassured, Moses looked down again to see the rabbi belt the golf ball 200 yards across the fairway onto the green and into the cup for a hole-in-one.

Astonished and indignant, Moses exclaimed to God, "Did you see that? I thought this man was to be punished!"

"He has been punished," said God.

"How so," stormed Moses, "when he has achieved what many superb golfers long for in vain all their lives?"

"So he has," God agreed. "But whom can he tell?"

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"A Telling Word from the Dean" by
Sherman M. Mellinkoff, M.D.

Today?

Well, today the ice is still taking 48 hours to freeze, but some days it "just isn't hardly worth the effort"...or so it seems. The noble ice blocks have had their day. They deserve a rest.

However, sometimes people are glad there are ice blocks. The people on the yard crews and on the University golf course are glad—they use the blocks in their water coolers. Sometimes the operating room will call down for some...and sometimes housekeeping...but the days of popularity are gone.

captained by Foye Hurst, A. R. O. D.; the "Hot-Shots," captained by Margaret Wilkins, secretary in the University Student Activities Office; the "Alley Kats," captained by Lessie Welborne, Hospital Housekeeping Department; the "Hi-Ballers," captained by Yvonne Ausley, Hospital Business Office; and the "Striketees," captained by Fran Morgan, Secretary to Dr. Arthur Christakos.

How to Join

Anyone in the University who is interested in participating in the League should contact the League secretary, Polly Jordan, by April 1. Any vacancies that might exist for next September will be considered on a first-come, first-serve basis. The only vacancies at the present time are for two substitutes.

Bowling

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"Bowlerettes," captained by Suzanne Schrack, Medical P. D. C.; the "Hot-A-Rods,"