

FORE

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magazine

The official publication of the Southern California Golf Association

Let's play ball!

Voices of the Dodgers, Angels and Padres give their major league takes on golf



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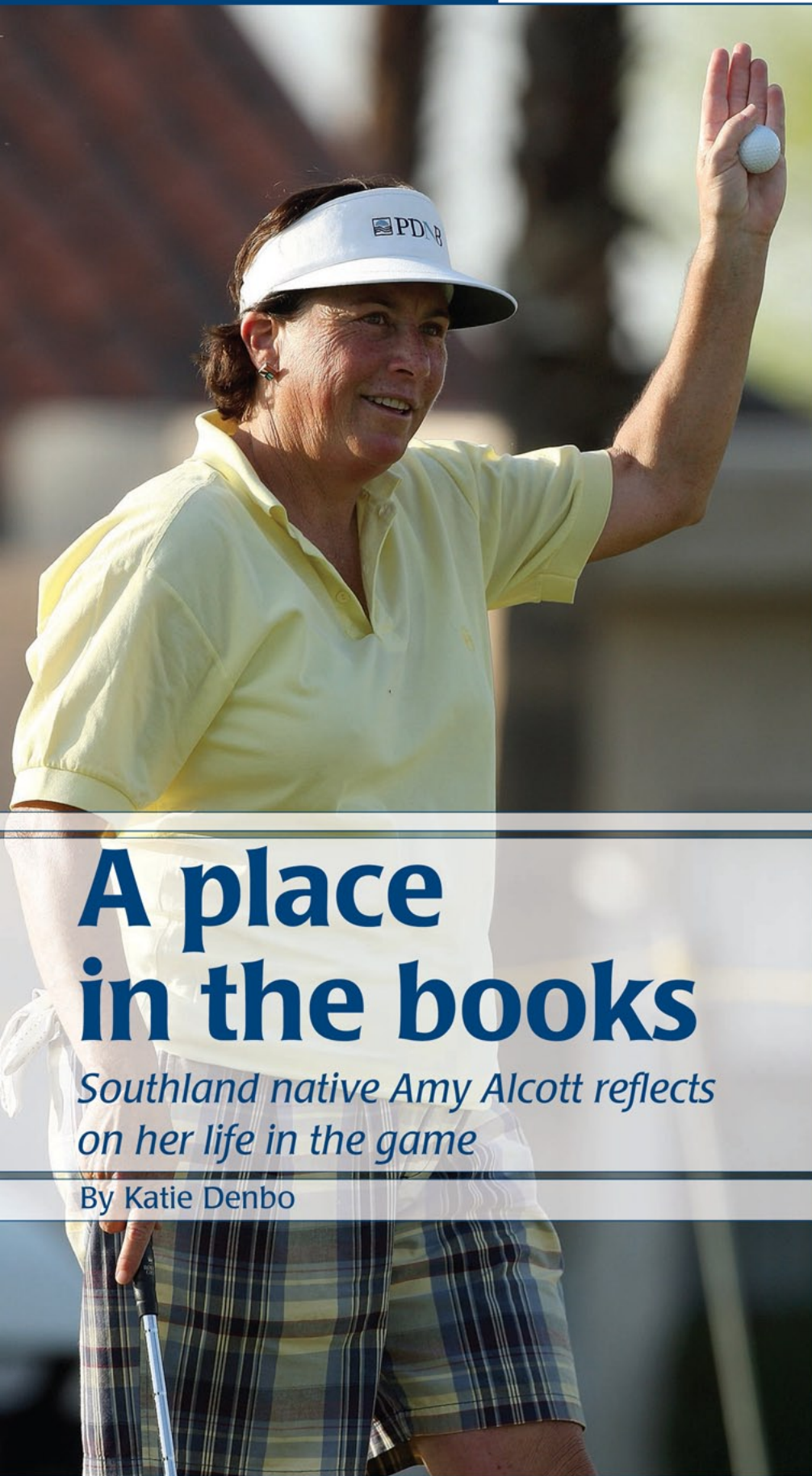
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San Clemente's own Happy Golfer, Nick Karnazes, journeys across the U.S. in his Winnebago in his quest to play 96 rounds of golf in 96 days.

ON THE COVER

Vin Scully, the voice of Dodgers baseball for six decades, picked up golf after he followed the team to Los Angeles from Brooklyn. He's been hooked on the game and lifestyle ever since.

Photo by Jon SooHoo/L.A. Dodgers



A place in the books

*Southland native Amy Alcott reflects
on her life in the game*

By Katie Denbo

As far as golf legends are concerned, Amy Alcott is in an elite group, carrying a long list of accomplishments and awards along with the reputation of being one of the game's most creative shot-makers.

When looking back on her early years playing in Santa Monica, it's no surprise that Alcott would soon become one of the most well-known and well-respected players in golf — a World Golf and LPGA Hall of Fame inductee at that. Being raised during an era that didn't necessarily promote or encourage women's sports, however, makes her feats even more impressive.

"I read Babe Didrikson Zaharias' biography three times in my teens," says Alcott, now 53, of America's first female golf celebrity in the 1930s. "I thought she was such a unique woman for everything she had accomplished in sports. I really looked up to Katharine Hepburn also; I actually bought her golf cart at an auction. Katharine would be in my ideal golf foursome."

Alcott's multifaceted successes have placed her at a level above the rest. A professional golfing career straight out of high school garnered 32 professional victories worldwide. She's made several on-screen appearances, including a cameo role alongside Kevin Costner in *Tin Cup*. She consults on golf course design, including co-designing a local Southland layout. Her second book, *THE LEADERBOARD: Conversations on Golf and Life*, was published in March; she interviews some of her longstanding friends, including Bill Clinton and Jack Nicholson ("My nickname on tour was 'Hollywood,'" she says, "So for this book, I wanted to interview people I had met or wanted to meet").

That's now, though. Four decades ago, when Alcott first took up the game, nothing but her fierce determination could have predicted that she would make a name for herself in a sport traditionally dominated by men.

David Cannon/Getty Images

THE EARLY YEARS: CATCHING ON QUICK

"My home was turned into Alcott Golf and Country Club when I was 8," says Alcott, of her father who built a practice area in the family's yard. He constructed a bunker in the front and a hitting net in the back. "When I took lessons, I learned indoors, hitting into nets. It wasn't traditional."

Alcott took to the game quickly and was a product of Southern California's junior golf programs, taking lessons from renowned teacher Walter Keller in his golf equipment shop on Westwood Boulevard. Mom Lea chauffeured her to different tournaments and golf courses, and Alcott played everywhere from Montebello Golf Club to Santa Anita Golf Course to Rancho Park Golf Club and in between.

"Right now I belong to Riviera and Bel-Air Country Club, but Holmby Park [Armand Hammer] par-3 in L.A. is still one of my favorites," she says.

Her junior career was an impressive one when at 13 she won the 1970 Junior World 13-14 Division, the same year that San Diego native (and current Champions Tour pro) Craig Stadler won the boys' event. Alcott won by a margin of 16 strokes, and her score, a 9-over-par 225, was a division tournament

record at the time. Late legendary *Los Angeles Times* sportswriters Shav Glick and Jim Murray, the latter whom Alcott helped induct into the 2008 SCGA Hall of Fame, chronicled the young golfer's progress in several of their columns, observing her in Keller's practice facility swinging in front of mirrors and studying her swing for hours on end.

Alcott won the Los Angeles Girls' Championship title three times, the L.A. City Women's

Championship and the California Women's Amateur, where she shot a 70 at Pebble Beach. That broke the long-standing women's course record of 72 held by Zaharias, whom she'd read so much about.

"It's the greatest game of all. It's never anything that you master, and unlike other sports, it has a great social aspect."

-Hall of Fame golfer Amy Alcott

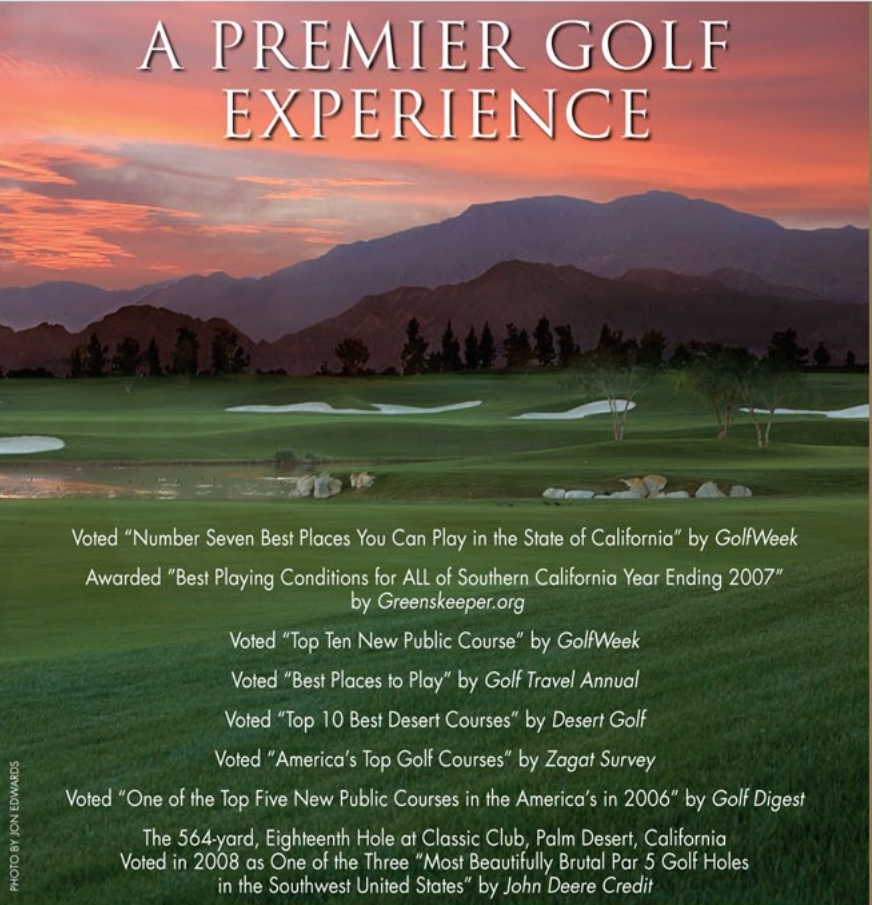
ON THE FAST TRACK TO SUCCESS

On the cusp of high school, Alcott encountered a hurdle that had the potential to stall her blossoming career.

"There was no high school golf team for me to play on," she says of her years at Pacific Palisades High School. "So I played for one year on the boys golf team, the year before I turned pro, which was a big deal back then."

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A PREMIER GOLF EXPERIENCE



- Voted "Number Seven Best Places You Can Play in the State of California" by *GolfWeek*
- Awarded "Best Playing Conditions for All of Southern California Year Ending 2007" by *Greenskeeper.org*
- Voted "Top Ten New Public Course" by *GolfWeek*
- Voted "Best Places to Play" by *Golf Travel Annual*
- Voted "Top 10 Best Desert Courses" by *Desert Golf*
- Voted "America's Top Golf Courses" by *Zagat Survey*
- Voted "One of the Top Five New Public Courses in the America's in 2006" by *Golf Digest*

The 564-yard, Eighteenth Hole at Classic Club, Palm Desert, California Voted in 2008 as One of the Three "Most Beautifully Brutal Par 5 Golf Holes in the Southwest United States" by *John Deere Credit*



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It was in those formative high school years that she tried her hand against some of the best girls in the country at the U.S. Girls Junior Amateur. She made it to the finals in 1971 but lost on the 19th hole. One year later she earned medalist honors but fell in match play. In 1973 — finally — she won the championship, topping a field that included medalist and defending champion Nancy Lopez. Lopez would go on to become a well-known LPGA Tour professional and the 2009 ambassador of June's *Women's Golf Month*.

And, with "no women's athletic scholarships available at the time," Alcott says, she turned pro after graduating in 1974, winning her first professional championship in her third try — on her birthday at that. It was the Orange Blossom Classic in Florida, and with a winner's check for \$5,000 in her hand, she was on the fast track.

"There's nothing like my first tournament win, it's one of my favorite memories along with my major wins," Alcott says. "It was three weeks after I turned professional. I believed in myself and my game, but I wasn't sure how it would hold against other players."

Sports Illustrated said in 1975, the year she won the LPGA's *Rookie of the Year*, that Alcott "has the self-confidence of a tour veteran." This leveraged her into winning the 1979 du Maurier Classic, 1980 U.S. Women's Open Championship, and three Kraft Nabisco Championships: "Those were special because they were here in Southern California," she says. In 1991, when she won her third Kraft and 29th LPGA win, she initiated what is now a tradition of the winner jumping into the greenside lake.

In 1999, Alcott was inducted into the LPGA and World Golf Halls of Fame, solidifying her place in golf history.

THE FUTURE OF LIFE AND GOLF

As the golf industry approaches the PGA of America's *Women's Golf Month* in June, Alcott's take on the modern-day game is one of optimism for getting women more involved.

"The game has changed a lot since I started playing in that there are more women playing and more of them getting enthusiastic about playing," she says. "Women need to start feeling more comfortable



Along with playing golf, Alcott found an interest in golf course design — she teamed up with Casey O'Callaghan to design Indian Canyons Golf Resort in Palm Springs.

on the golf course. It's the greatest game of all. It's never anything that you master, and unlike other sports, it has a great social aspect."

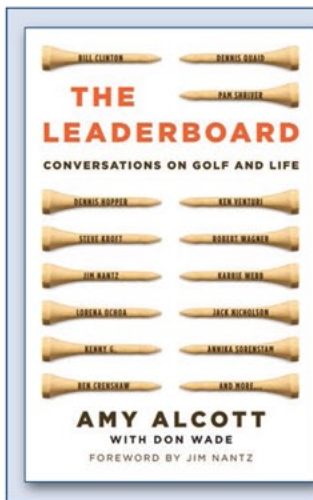
Of Alcott's many business ventures, one of her favorites is consulting work and her budding golf course design career. She put her fingerprint on Indian Canyons Golf Resort (formerly Canyon Country Club) in Palm Springs, a complete remodel in which she collaborated with Newport Beach architect Casey O'Callaghan. She's one of the few women involved in the design aspect of the industry, what would appear to be a logical step in increasing accessibility to women.

"Indian Canyons was fun and is probably the type of thing I enjoy doing most," she says. "It gave me a wonderful opportunity to put my notebook of sketches of golf holes and my lifelong desire to simply build a golf course to work. I'm pushing

for more male and female design teams. There needs to be more of that, it makes perfect sense being that women play the game also."

The business of golf has changed as well, Alcott says, from a sport that now involves more athleticism than ever before.

"The Tour is more of a big business now," she says. "They're branding themselves, there's more sponsorships, it really is a game within a game in a way now. What hasn't changed is that the harder you work, the more you get out of the game — that'll always be the same." ■



THE LEADERBOARD: *Conversations on Golf and Life* is Alcott's second book, in which Alcott engages prominent entertainers, athletes, political leaders, and other influential figures in candid conversation. "Normally I'm the one being interviewed," Alcott says, "so it was a lot of fun to turn the tables." For more information on Alcott and her book, visit www.amyalcott.com.