

Gary Thorne

Golf ball project a success

By [Dave Barber](#)

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Owing to the generosity of Bangor area golfers and golf clubs, Patti Pelletier of Bangor has more than met her goal of collecting golf balls to send to her son, Bryan James, in Iraq.

Now she needs help in sending them. The response was so great that Pelletier, who has been working on the project by herself, is swamped.

"I'm in the process of getting donations for shipping costs," she said.

While the flat-rate boxes only cost \$8.95 each to ship no matter how much they weigh, she will still need to send more than 25 boxes just for the golf balls.

She is getting some help already.

Galen Cole of the Cole Land Transportation Museum and the World War II Memorial in Bangor "donated \$100 in postage, which covered 11 boxes," said Pelletier.

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Patti Pelletier of Bangor has collected thousands of used golf balls and several golf clubs to send to her son, Bryan James, 23, of the U.S. Army's Third Infantry Division and his fellow soldiers in Iraq. (Bangor Daily News/Bridget Brown)

And the Greater Bangor Open, through head pro Brian Enman at Bangor Municipal Golf Course, is providing some of the money it donates to golf causes to help ship both balls and clubs.

"We figured it was a good cause to get behind," said Enman.

Other individuals are giving as well. When Pelletier sought a donation from her fitness club, "the manager ... gave \$27 of her own money."

Donating clubs became a surprising need when James returned to Iraq after a two-week visit home and found the unit they participated with in golf activities had been transferred. The clubs as well as the balls had belonged to members of that unit.

That meant asking for spare clubs as well. The golf courses donated some unclaimed clubs from their lost and found bins and also made other donations.

"One soldier asked for lefthanded clubs and Hermon donated them," said Pelletier.

The equipment is not going exclusively to Iraq, according to Pelletier. Others in service are also benefiting.

"A set of righthanded clubs went to a female soldier serving in Kosovo," she said.

If others have clubs to donate, Enman has old club boxes he can reuse to ship them. But it will have to be limited strictly to clubs, not bags or carts, for instance, he said.

The project began when James had explained to his mother how he and some of his fellow soldiers would hit balls out into the desert, then collect them. They wouldn't find them all, so he asked if she could help him get more.

Pelletier received permission to put up collection boxes at Penobscot Valley Country Club in Orono, Hermon Meadow Golf Club, Bar Harbor Golf Course in Trenton, Bangor Municipal Golf Course, Lucerne Golf Club in Dedham, and the Golf Country driving range in Bangor so golfers could donate extra golf balls they had kicking around. That way her expenses could all be in shipping.

"I got 1,000-plus balls from Trenton," said Pelletier.

"The total number of golf balls was 2,750, give or take a few," she added.

And she had been collecting them for less than two weeks. Originally, Pelletier was going to leave the boxes up until the end of August, then maybe to the end of the golf season, but she has already picked up all of the boxes.

Anybody who wishes to donate for shipping can do so by dropping off stamps, preferably in \$1 and \$2

denominations, at Pelletier's home at 600 Grandview Avenue in Bangor. Or they can mail them to her.

"I want them to send stamps, not money, so they don't have to worry about how I'm spending it," she said.

She also pointed out that other soldiers have needs as well.

"They're listed on anysoldier.com and anyone could meet those needs as well," said Pelletier. "It's a great resource for all the military and they're all over the world."

As for James, "my son was very happy to get the balls and clubs," said Pelletier. "He was surprised how the project grew."

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