



The new part of the Crystal Lake clubhouse, opened by Mr. Smeltakopf, was added to the club's original home which is the remodeled old house shown at the left

Opening Is Tough Task

By O. M. SMELTAKOPF
Manager, Crystal Lake Country Club

I DON'T recall a manager ever having said, "I have the most delightful job before me this year—that of opening a new golf club." The manager who opens a new club house has a burden of woe that he must bear and keep smiling, for the members, impatient, are quick to magnify any of the unavoidable disturbances during the period of opening and the manager finds himself at the receiving end of a list of minor complaints.

Opening a new club is complicated by the fact that the officials of the organization invariably decide to open the club the first big day that the golf bacillus gets in its bite, Decoration Day. This combination of a general holiday crowd and the throng attracted by the club opening solely, overwhelms the new organization before it has a chance to get functioning smoothly. Then also there is the matter of help at the opening. With the proper kind of help the element of well-trained personal service and the resourcefulness of the employee will go far to offset any of the missing details. In club openings the manager far too frequently finds himself handicapped by an astonishing lack of facilities for the help. Especially in the case of country clubs rather distant from the centers of metropolitan districts does the club manager have to do some tall planning in getting for the employees the living fa-

cilities necessary to attract and keep them. When this condition is discovered it is usually too late to rectify it in time for a perfectly conducted opening. But such conditions as this are what determines the ability of a manager to care for his job. If everything had been planned and provided prior to the manager being put on the job, life would be too much of a sweet dream to be true.

It has been my observation that the managers are given to understand that many of the details attendant upon club openings are to be handled by committees. This would be wonderful, had the committees lots of time to spend on the work. They do start out with good intentions, especially the house furnishing committee. After the supplier of the bulk of the furnishings has been decided upon, there comes the place where things don't dovetail. Some committeeman's wife has urged the use of something that doesn't fit into the scheme of things. Another has taken a fancy to some extra furnishings. Countless other little elements creep in and the result is a costly operation, with a flood of criticism in its wake. The experienced manager knows that these happenings are on the books and prays that he will be allowed to get on the job early enough to tactfully steer the eager and

active members of the committee safely past this perilous period.

Order Supplies in Time

When special dishes, glassware, linen, silverware and other furnishing items of special design and character are ordered, the orders usually are placed four to six weeks short of the time it takes the manufacturer to deliver them. This causes a lot of anxiety and trouble and disappointment when a big splash is looked forward to on the opening day.

I have noticed cases where the architect and manager are at loggerheads to the extent that the club is caused considerable expense and the work is greatly delayed. One very valuable piece of advice to the manager on his relations with the architect is to be diplomatic. Of all persons, get in well with your architect. In most instances you will find him liberal in thought and harmonious in temperament. He is just as anxious to make the job reflect creditably to him as you are.

At least five days prior to the opening of the new clubhouse, which usually is going to be the biggest event of the season, get in your whole personnel and have everything in as near perfect working order as possible for there are many details that will be overlooked, postponed or forgotten by your staff, as well as by the men who have been at work on the building. After these five days have passed in training for the opening there will be very little that will have passed your notice. Then if some detail springs up to demand your attention, you will not have to be in ten parts of the building at the same time.

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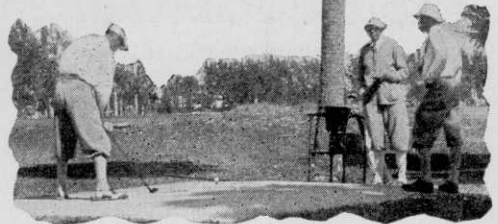
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