

"Meet the Wife"

How "Silent Partners" Are Helping Their Pro Husbands

By HERB GRAFFIS

ONE who prowls around the country in search of editorial material concerning the business management of golf cannot help but be impressed with the important parts in shop operations that are played behind the scenes by the wives of the professionals.

Without any wise-cracking about it, the "silent partners" of some of the most successful pros are their wives. I saw in *The American Golfer* some months ago, a tribute paid to Mrs. Al Espinosa as the business manager of Al's active tramping campaign during the winter season. All Al has to do is play golf. Mrs. Espinosa takes care of the business details and she does a great job of it, too. Quiet, thorough, efficient; that's Mrs. Espinosa, so it's no wonder that Al has the fine barn-storming record he enjoys.

But on the shop end there are a flock of unsung heroines, and of one of them we'll tell in this yarn. The club members frequently never see the pro's wife, but the manufacturers' representatives very often are aware of the business-like participation of The Lady in the conduct of the pro's merchandising operations. It has been my observation that many of these women are first class "managers." It may be a matter of feminine temperament, time available, or the lack of distractions. I don't know which; but it is certain that when a pro's wife realizes what he is up against in conducting his business, and helps him out with ability and discretion, things go better for the pro.

Some of the fellows who are making the territory for the manufacturers have called my attention to the feminine influence in making the pro shop an inviting business establishment. Others have commented on various other phases of professional business operations wherein the pros' wives have conducted themselves as exceedingly able merchandisers. From these tips I got a lead that Elmer Biggs, pro at the Country Club of Peoria (Ill.) was one of the pros whose wife was a sure



Elmer Biggs and the Partner for "Better or Worse."

enough team-mate. Mrs. Biggs plays an important part in the Biggs family act, even though her part is played behind the scenes.

Now here are some of the ideas on shop business management that Mrs. Biggs has. They will interest a lot of pros and their wives.

"The golf shop is a place of business and I can see no reason why there shouldn't be system in it as there is in any other business," begins Mrs. Biggs.

She calls attention to the fact that "retail stores of all kinds require the assistance of bookkeepers and stenographers and that sort of clerical help the pro's wife can supply in his operations."

When you talk to Mrs. Biggs or Mrs. Dave Clarkson or any other of the wives

of pros who are accounted, by the knowing, decided factors in the excellent merchandising done by their husbands, you will learn that all of them put plenty of emphasis on doing their work in the background. The prominence and whatever glory there is in the pro's position, they know is for the pro, but the profits are for the good of the pro's whole family. Mrs. Biggs says that the time she finds best for handling this clerical work is in the evenings and during the dull mornings of the week when the family can go into a conference. Friday, which is a dull day at Peoria, is the morning that the Biggs family picks for its business conference.

Mrs. Biggs points out that the average pro, due to his many outside duties, and the selling work he does, can not spend much time with bookkeeping and inventory, and that here is where a wife who is on the job can help out. On Friday morning of each week she helps keep a check on all the stock and incoming and outgoing bills.

Keeping the Records

When merchandise is received Mrs. Biggs enters it in a stock book, filing the bills (and cancelled checks) separately in each supplying company's file. Letters, circulars, etc., are filed in the same methodical manner. All orders are written on duplicate copy order slips so the Biggs shop knows when and where merchandise was ordered. These are checked when the merchandise is received.

Watches the Looks

One of the fine points of women's participation in pro shop operations is apparent in those shops where the decorative elements and the factor of simple, business-like neatness is in evidence.

Mrs. Biggs is strong for a thorough spring house-cleaning and for keeping things clean and orderly. In the spring the shop is painted from top to bottom. She says one of her "fallings" is white paint, as it always gives a clean and neat appearance, and allows display of the merchandise to best advantage. She is a student of display and stresses showcase and rack arrangement that puts clubs, bags, balls and other merchandise so there is an invitation to look and buy.

The manufacturers who are spending much money to provide attractive dis-

plays of advertising material that will help pros sell, will get a thrill of a peek at the millenium when they see what care Mrs. Biggs pays to the display of advertising material at the Peoria shop. The material is kept fresh, clean and conspicuously displayed. All merchandise in the shop is ticketed and marked plainly. The customers are helped in their shopping. There's a smart feminine touch. The markings on the clubs and other stock include selling price and, in code, the cost price. Mrs. Biggs maintains that the average woman has a better knowledge than the average man of how to neatly and attractively display merchandise. She enjoys this part of the work and the shop shows it.

Educate Assistants

The assistants in the Biggs shop work under the main order that the customer always is right. As the pro's customers are limited, Mrs. Briggs points out the fact that losing one member's business is a much more dangerous and costly happening than losing a customer at a store having a large trading area.

You have to hand it to these bright business women who are the pros' teammates. As Mrs. Biggs puts it, "I have always realized that there might be a prejudice at the country club against the pro's wife if she is too much in evidence. She can best do what her husband needs to have her do to help him when she keeps inconspicuous. I play golf; not very much, but enough to have some knowledge of my work and a command of pro business propaganda that works deftly into the right places. I do not play at our club, and I think that is judicious. The work at the Country Club of Peoria is my husband's business, and I govern myself accordingly, trying to help him without coming into the picture at all so far as our members are concerned. I have lots of time that I can make available for his assistance, leaving him to devote his time to the lessons, the grounds and the shop."

So we devote the foregoing to "giving the little girls a hand." There undoubtedly are scores of them putting a hand to the wheel just as Mrs. Biggs does. And to anyone who studies these situations it is plain to see that this feminine influence in pro shop merchandising is one of the active elements in the vast improvement in the business development of golf professionals.