

Running Things Right at a Golf Outpost

By *HERMAN HAL POPPE*
Manager, Club Rio Del Mar

WE have practically no resident members, and have no large cities to draw from. In my work this has been my biggest obstacle to overcome, but our members come as far as 170 miles to spend the week-ends here, and especially during the beautiful weather which we enjoy around Christmas. Our overhead expenses have always been exceptionally high, due largely to the great uncertainty as to the number of guests coming. Very often we have the most beautiful weather, while it rains in San Francisco, and people are afraid to come.

My superior officers are very busy men, and their instructions have been simplified in the command to "make'r go."

In order to increase our house accounts, I had to open the dining-room to the public, which proved a great success during the summer.

Back-Door Grief

It has been my good fortune to work myself up from a plain pastry-cook, and through many years of experience in the kitchen of a dozen different countries I am very much familiar with the various leaks, which I call "back-door grief." I remember several clubs where lack of help, or careless help, served more food through the back-door to the pigs than to members. The biggest leak I have experienced in my career goes through the pantry, which partly escapes the attention of the chef.

For every article delivered from grocer or baker or milkman, an individual voucher must be left, which is checked against his monthly statement. Everything is ordered by purchase-order in triplicate, signed by the person responsible for it. The original goes to the merchant, the first copy to my office, and the second to the person that signed it.

A Pinch-Hitter

Trouble with the help? I get my share of it. Having gone through the grindmill of hotel-life ever since I was a small child, I naturally wanted to treat my help better than other people. It did not work. Club-

Poppe has been in the hotel and club business all his life so he's a capable fellow for handling the difficult job of running a country club located off the beaten path.

Club Rio Del Mar has about 2,000 acres with more than two miles of Monterey Beach front, and depends on its scenic charm and course and clubhouse facilities to attract members from rather remote territory.

This line-up means that the manager has to operate pretty much "on his own." "Tricks of the trade" of this conscientious and successful manager are described in this article.

houses are lonesome places for young people, and since cheap help has no cars, they will not stick. My help enjoys the best I can give, but if they do quit, know what I do? I put on an apron and do it myself till the next fellow is on the job. It works better than anything I have ever tried, and I haven't lost any prestige or respect yet.

Fussy members are plentiful everywhere, especially women and sickly men. Most of them have their pet arguments, and their pet idiosyncrasies. My wife, who is hostess of the Golf Lodge, has had success in converting such kickers by simply pampering them like sick children, without losing her temper.

Pro Coöperation

The pro, who is too often regarded by members of the house staff as a necessary evil, is very important for the success of the manager. Handicaps, putting-contests, and a hundred other schemes can be worked out with the co-operation of the pro, to make members stay for their meals.

My greatest help has been this: At the close of a golf event, non-players were asked to take their seats in the dining-room overlooking the last hole (to avoid crowding or a bad rush in the kitchen).

This has a magnetic effect. As soon as the tense excitement of the game relapses, everybody feels hungry when he sees the gay parties in the dining-room.

The best women-members to my knowledge are teachers, doctors and other professional women, if they have a chance to be amongst themselves. Many of them like to smoke, but not in the presence of men. They like their own feminine conversations and games. Afternoon teas for them are easy to prepare and very profitable.

Our lodge, now being used in place of our clubhouse which was destroyed by fire, is built of redwood panel inside, with a large fire-place in the lobby, which, in itself, does much to create "atmosphere." All our dishes have our club-emblem; we serve all the conventional "country club" dishes, and the conversation concerns naturally horses and golf, which helps the "atmosphere" considerably.

At such rare moments as my officers find time to discuss affairs with me, we exchange ideas freely, but as a rule I am my own boss and have to be, and am running this exactly as if it were my own business. Last year we served an average of 2000 meals per month, and my monthly reports are something like this:

Number of meals served.....	0000
Value of meals served.....\$
Value of meals to staff.....
Value of commissaries purchased during month of.....
Value of inventory for the month of.....
Total value of unpaid bills.....
Current overhead expenses.....
Total expense
Total cash taken in.....
Balance
	\$

Caddies Help Keep Handicaps Right

ON the caddie cards at the Davenport (Iowa) Country club there is a space for the score of the player for whom the boy is caddying. This score is kept by the caddie in addition to the player's own score and turned in with the caddie card. These caddie cards go to the handicap committee and prove invaluable in providing complete data for correct handicapping.

Do Your House Accounts Match These Percentages?

BELOW is an analysis of the house accounts at a well-run Illinois club, for a three-month period—May, June and July—classified according to size. Dues and subscriptions are not included, but all other charge items—season locker, club-cleaning, and valet fees; caddy-fees, golf-shop purchases, beverages, card-fees, restaurant charges and all miscellaneous items—are figured in.

The club, on the authority of the official who compiled these figures, is "just about breaking even," so the percentages in the table below are about normal for well-run clubs.

If your club is faced each year with an assessment, large or small, a compilation similar to this will probably show a higher percentage of members with small house accounts and fewer members with large ones.

Attention is particularly called to the last line in the tabulation, which shows that 50 per cent of the members (50.4 per cent, to be exact) contribute only 25 per cent of the club's gross income.

Gross Accounts	No. of members	Pct. of membership	Total accounts	Percent of total	3 mo. av. per membr.
\$ 0.00 to \$ 25.00	20	6.8	\$ 237	0.5	\$ 11.60
26.00 to 50.00	16	5.5	649	1.3	40.50
51.00 to 100.00	46	15.8	3,450	6.9	75.00
101.00 to 150.00	65	22.3	8,262	16.3	127.00
151.00 to 200.00	46	15.8	8,182	16.2	177.50
201.00 to 250.00	34	11.7	7,589	14.9	222.75
251.00 to 400.00	52	17.7	16,129	31.8	310.00
401.00 and up	13	4.4	6,070	12.1	466.00
Totals.....	292	100.0	\$50,568	100.0	\$173.50
		* * *			
\$ 0.00 to \$200.00	193	66.2	20,780	41.2	\$108.00
201.00 and up	99	33.8	29,788	58.8	301.00
		* * *			
\$ 0.00 to \$150.00	147	50.4	\$12,598	25.0	88.00