

Fresh Divots from the Pros' Pastures

By HERB GRAFFIS

FROM two directions the spotlight is being turned on the P. G. A. with prospects of some interesting news coming out of this sector ere winter comes.

The P. G. A. has begun to seriously consider its part in the winter tournament campaigning. That's one of the problems. The other stunt that has come before the P. G. A. for consideration is the matter of the association taking part in the promotion of a club in Florida.

Bob Harlow, manager of the Hagen, Horton Smith and Diegel trio, is being very earnestly appraised as a prospective head of the P. G. A. tournament bureau. Harlow, golf's live Rickard, in conducting circuses at no small profit to the performers, looks likely as a candidate for the job inaugurated by Hal Sharkey. Harlow has figured prominently as the impresario and stagehand for the best paying shows in pro golf. He knows the tournament business better than any other living soul and in this observer's opinion should be signally successful not only in handling details of the usual schedule but in encouraging new events and arranging for their safe conduct.

It looks to this writer like the only debatable feature of whatever official negotiations might be entered into by Administrator Gates, acting in behalf of the P. G. A. and Harlow, would twist around the matter of Harlow retaining his connection as manager of the Hagen-Smith-Diegel troupe. As it appears to us the bounding and billowy Harlow would be subject for a working over by a sanity commission if he cut loose from his present arrangement. It would be just too sad, in all probability, if the three boys were compelled to find another to take Harlow's place as his command of the business details of golf exhibiting in this country and abroad is shared by no other man.

But, will the rest of the dozen exhibition notables take kindly to Harlow being in a spot where there might be a suspicion that he would be playing his team

as the attraction in the main tent? Not that anyone is breaking down giving damns about how this looks to us, but it seems as though such an objection were not valid for the simple sufficient reason that Harlow, the players and the P. G. A. would make more money by Harlow playing the field straight, and no favorites. On this matter of exhibitions Harlow could furnish all clubs with a list of the available talent, and the guarantee money wanted. Then the clubs would engage the talent they wanted. If the clubs wanted Gene, Johnnie, Al, Harry, Mac, or any other of the rest of the big shots, they would take the choice and pay the dough without any influence other than that of established gate magnetism. If Harlow can put some more life into this exhibition business, the pros certainly could use him. His latest successful operation is to cut The Hague into the miniature golf course business on a basis that ought to be exceedingly lucrative to all concerned. The Harlow hombre overlooks no chances to horn his boys in on legal tender and if this happy faculty is extended to others of that selected group of journeymen clouters, there should be jubilation on all sides. The bureau job, in its most tranquil moments, would sorely try the patience of the Old Lady Who Lived in a Shoe so the manager of the tournament bureau is not to be the target of green-eyed glances from any sane citizen.

Into the pro picture again comes the widely famed "Tub" Palmer, Miami man who long has been in close contact with pro exhibition golf as an amateur pilot and promoter of Florida events. Palmer, spokesman for a syndicate headed by Lee Jarrell, Miami attorney, has proposed to the P. G. A. that the association sponsor the participation of its members in putting across the Tri-club, a layout that hopes to have three or four 18-hole golf courses in the Miami sector, a town clubhouse and an island fishing lodge.

As many who may be invited to draw

from the Florida deck bat their eyes and shudder at the mention of a new promotion in Florida, the concluding paragraph of the rough outline of the plan presented to the P. G. A. is intriguing. The sentence ends: "authorizes me to give the City National Bank of Miami for reference."

Briefly the Tri-club plan is to sell 2,000 memberships at \$500 a member, and have the pros function as part of the sales force although the actual selling of memberships will be done in most instances by the Tri-club's own membership salesmen. The P. G. A. and the individual member of the association will split 10 per cent commission on the sale to each pro's member, according to the proposal. The split probably will be made 35 per cent to the P. G. A. and 15 per cent to the individual pro. In addition to this cut, the P. G. A. will be given one of the Tri-club courses as its own, fully paid when all of the 2,000 memberships are sold.

Details of the proposal are to be submitted to President Pirie, the directors of the P. G. A., and to Albert R. Gates, the pros' business administrator. Whether the deal will look too much like an injudicious use of the P. G. A. or be approved as a legitimate effort of the pros to get themselves a winter home course, probably will not be decided until the annual meeting of the P. G. A. at Lake Forest in November.

Palmer and Jarrell, stating that the property was picked up at a great bargain during the post mortem on the Florida boom, naturally are all feverish about the deal appealing to the pros and if it gets an O. K. from the tough jury that will sit on it for the P. G. A., then the boys can count on it as being worth a hand. It's one of the delicate problems of conduct that are bound to come up frequently now that the P. G. A. is stepping out as a vigorous business unit. Just where exploitation and aggressive advance along uncharted paths are to be separated for the good of the P. G. A. is going to keep its officials thinking deeply and steadily.

One of the younger professionals at the Western Open sat down at dinner to tell this inquiring reporter how business was.

"Everything would be O. K.," said this smart and hustling kid, "if I could get my assistant to snap into it and use his skull. I give him a commission on any

clubs that he sells and have tried my best to show him selling that is real service to the members, but the guy either doesn't care or he's lazy. Now, what to do about an assistant like that? He's a nice looking boy, well educated, and pleasant mannered, but he simply won't get on the job.

"I was assistant here for several years and when the big shot moved up to a bigger job in the major league, the club made me his successor. There were 30 fellows older than I was, and some good hands in the pro business, doing everything to get this job, too.

"That taught me the good sense of an assistant never overlooking a bet in working for the members. I sold a good part of the clubs that were sold in the shop and I never went after a man or a woman to sell them without knowing exactly what they needed, and that it would be well worth the money to them. You hear a lot about the danger of high pressure in pro shop selling, but although I'm a long way from being an experienced pro, I'll say that most of this danger you hear about is the alibi of some bird who is either downright lazy or doesn't know how to sell. There are mighty few members who don't appreciate the pro and his assistant taking enough interest in them to recommend something that will do their game some good.

"When my members come into the shop and look around, I want my assistant to ease over in a nice way after noticing what seems to interest the member and say, 'What do you think of that club, or set? They are going so fast all over the country it's hard for us to get them, because . . . and then give the member the whole dope on the club. If the guy even mentions to the member buying the club I'll beat out his brains, if he has any. Give the members any kind of a chance and they'll sell themselves what they need. You don't want to sell them any more than what they need, for if you sell your members half of what they need you'll be busting a record.

"One thing being a pro has taught me already is that the assistant is the most important seller in the average shop and that the pro who doesn't pay a lot of attention to picking the right assistant and training him right, has no right to holler about business. With the pro on the lesson tee a good part of the time, letting a punk be the shop man is just throwing good dough out the window."