



From the clubhouse at Park Ridge, members look through the trees far out over the course.

Get Staff Working "With" Rather Than "For" You, Keller's Tip

By JACK FULTON, JR.

OUT at the Park Ridge C. C., just a few miles from Chicago's city limits, William (Bill) Keller is just beginning his sixth year as manager. In that time, Bill has acquired considerable repute as a successful operator and has managed, lean years and fat, to end the season with an operating statement that is the envy of many neighboring clubs of similar size.

Obviously, when one club's statement is consistently better than those of the clubs nearby, there must be factors beside the operating practices of the manager contributing to the general success. Keller must have a membership plenty loyal, he must have a fairly full roster to serve, he must have an intelligent and sympathetic board to work with, and he must have a clubhouse properly laid out to permit efficient work.

All of these Keller has. Park Ridge's members live mainly in the immediate territory of the club; it is just a hop step and jump from home for most of them. Likewise, since the club is located so conveniently, it has very few membership vacancies and each spring any available are quickly snapped up. As for the Boards during Keller's job at Park Ridge, he says

they have been all he could ask in the way of understanding a manager's problems.

The clubhouse, of brick and stone construction, is modern and adequate for the needs of the club's 275 members. In the English basement are both the men's and women's locker rooms, while above are located the lounge, dining room, grill-room, card-room and all other common rooms, and the kitchen and pantries. The layout is intelligently arranged to permit efficient work by Keller's staff and at the same time give that air of home-like comfort and cheer that is so important in a country club.

Yet despite all these factors which make Keller's work much easier and pleasant than they might be under a different set-up, full credit must go to Bill for his fine annual showing. Another man in his place might quite easily jimmy the works, antagonize the Board, lose the cooperation of the employees. Keller doesn't permit his guard to be lowered an instant.

When I visited Keller recently one of the first things we got talking about was this question of managerial technique. I asked him why the manager of a certain club had been given the gate this season.

"Well," Bill replied, "of course I don't know the actual facts, but I think it was a case of too much golf."

"Too much golf?"

"Yes, no manager can play often and expect the clubhouse to run itself during his absence. Why, I like to play golf as well as anyone else, but outside of a dull morning now and then, I don't touch a golf stick from spring to fall. My job won't let me; sure as fate, something will come up and need my attention just when I'm at the far end of the course. Purchasing, alone, is a man-size job at any club."

Buys on Weekly Basis

"Do you have any system of control so you can tell when certain supplies are getting low and need re-ordering?" I asked.

"Well, yes—and no," Keller replied, "it isn't exactly a system. I keep a clip-board in the supply room and whenever the chef notices that we're getting low on anything he scribbles the item down on the pad. Then, every Monday the two of us go over all our supplies and add to the list he has made up any other items requiring replenishment, including what extra supplies are going to be needed to take care of the week's menus.

"Armed with this list, I am ready to do my ordering. In the case of vegetables and fruit, I do my marketing on Thursdays, picking out the stuff in person and never ordering it over the phone unless some duty at the club absolutely prevents my getting away, which isn't often. First I visit a truck-farm near the club and pick out whatever the farmer has that I want. He is a smart operator and anything I get from him is freshly picked and of first quality, but of course he only has certain items on any given week and I have to complete my want list in the produce markets.

"So from the truck-farm I drive into Chicago and call at two commission houses. I may buy tomatoes at one of them, string beans from another, and so on, depending on quality and price. But I try to give each house a good-sized order to bulk up the delivery. These purveyors can quote rock bottom prices when they have only one big order to deliver.

"Don't think from what I've just said that I go looking for odd lots or off-color shipments. Everything I buy must be highest grade; these commission houses know that I never buy anything else and they don't waste my time and theirs by offering crates of second grade goods."

Like everything else, Keller orders only enough vegetables for the coming week and delivery is made at the clubhouse the same day, Thursday. The green goods are immediately placed in the vegetable cold-room below stairs, there to remain until the kitchen crew gets busy in any available time it has and peels and prepares such quantities of the vegetables for cooking as Keller and his chef believe from experience will be needed for the week-end's business. If they make any mistakes in the quantity, it is always in preparing more than enough; such extra supplies can easily be worked into Monday and Tuesday meals, and during the Saturday and Sunday rush, Keller points out, it is not always possible to take any of the kitchen crew off their regular duties and set them, for example, to peeling potatoes.

"Suppose you discover on Saturday that a consignment of string beans is not what you expected and therefore you can't serve them to your members. That does happen, doesn't it?"

"Oh, yes," he said. "Once in a while something goes wrong; even the best of buyers strike that occasionally when you're dealing in perishables. There's only one thing to do when that happens and that is to fall back on your canned goods. I keep on hand at all times a case or two of the vegetables likely to be needed. As soon as we are down to less than half a case of any one item I order in a fresh case.

"It is my policy to serve fresh vegetables if they are obtainable, not so much because they are necessarily better in flavor or anything like that, but because my members expect fresh stuff to be served and I must cater to their wishes. It would be a lot easier to open a can of peas than to shell that amount from the pods, but there's no choice.

Where Canned Goods Fit

"Certain items I serve are always of the canned variety. I have found a brand of stringless beans that are tender and ideal for vegetable salad. Cold-packed cherries are as good as fresh ones for pies and pastries. Then of course there's pineapple and peaches and the like for salads."

As Keller told me the above, we were standing before the door of the empty and freshly painted vegetable cold-room. Alongside was a similar door. "What's that room?" I asked.

"That's my meat room," he said, swinging open the door. "I keep it colder than the vegetable room and nothing ever spoils

here. During the season, I'll have meat hanging on every hook you see here and poultry and small cuts on every shelf. I generally have about ten days' supply on hand."

Packer Knows Cuts Wanted

Keller explained how he orders his meats. Early in the spring he visits the hotel-department man of the particular packer with whom he has dealt for the past few years and explains in detail just what sort of loins and ribs he wants during the season. He arranges with the packer to "hang" about a dozen of each item marked for him and to deliver only from this supply, replenishing with fresh cuts. Thus the meat at Park Ridge is well aged when it is delivered, and it receives a further aging in Keller's cold room until needed for cooking.

"The packer knows exactly what I want, so I can order my meats by phone," Keller explained. "Delivery is made Friday. Next day the chef and his crew prepare what cuts will probably be needed for the week-end and store a part of these (about enough for the next meal period) in the kitchen refrigerators, bringing up the balance as needed.

"But don't think we cook meats in advance of their ordering by the members; we don't. That's one thing I insist upon—fresh cooked orders. A country club is not a quick lunch counter and members expect to have to wait a reasonable time for service, especially dinner. If they are going to be in a rush, they must phone their order to me in advance."

Bottled goods are ordered by Keller as needed. His general house-man is made responsible for the inventory and it is up to him to keep the locker rooms, the grill and the dining room well stocked with beverages at all times. This house-man also cuts ice cubes and sees to it that the ice chests of the clubhouse are filled. On the wall of the supply room in the basement is a simple pad of blanks (see accompanying illustration) on which the house-man once a week indicates the amount of various beverages on hand. Keller does his ordering from this weekly report.

Kitchen Crew Numbers Ten

Keller's kitchen crew consists of a chef, a second cook, a fry-cook, a baker and a pantry girl. There is also a general house-man who can be pressed into service during rush periods, two dish-washers, a pot-

washer and a girl who has charge of the glassware and silver.

The baker bakes every item of bread-stuffs used at Park Ridge except the loaf bread, rye, white, graham, etc., which are delivered each morning to the clubhouse by a local bakery. All rolls, pies and pastries are baked fresh each day in the Park Ridge kitchen. When the baker isn't busy at these tasks, he pitches in wherever he is needed. On week-ends during the

| Beverage Stock in Store-Room | Monday,..... |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Indian Hill Splits..... | |
| Indian Hill Pints..... | |
| Canada Dry Pints..... | |
| Blatz Ginger Ale..... | |
| Club Soda..... | |
| Mission Dry..... | |
| White Rock Water Pints..... | |
| " " " Splits..... | |
| " " " Ginger Ale Pts..... | |
| " " " Splits..... | |
| Sarsaparilla..... | |
| Rootbeer..... | |
| Lemon Soda..... | |
| Budweiser Beer..... | |
| Atlas Beer..... | |
| Heddon & Hall Beer..... | |
| Old Heidelberg Beer..... | |
| Edelweiss Ginger Ale..... | |
| Other Goods..... | |
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| Oil, in Tank Gal..... | |

This simple form serves as a reminder when stocks of bottled goods run low.

rush hours, he helps the pantry girl fill orders for desserts, salads, and cold drinks.

Keller uses waitresses exclusively, finding them more satisfactory for his type of club than waiters. He opens the season with four girls, increasing the staff as the season advances and the demands of the dining room increase. At the height of the season his staff numbers around eight to ten.

I asked Keller if there was any type of girl he favored as waitresses. "No," he replied, "except it is best not to hire them too young or too pretty, or they'll up and marry on you just when they've learned your routine of dining room service. I try to get waitresses over 25 years old and they must be neat and industrious, or they don't stay long.

"I furnish each waitress with uniforms and they must change into a fresh outfit before each meal. In that way they

always look clean and fresh when the members come into the dining room."

Sunday Breakfast Goes Big

Keller's restaurant business is confined almost entirely to table-d'hote meals; his a-la-carte volume is very small and consists mainly of a little between-meal business he cannot avoid entirely; if a member is hungry he has to be fed if he wants food.

No breakfast business is done during the week, but about four years ago Keller inaugurated a Sunday morning club breakfast that is extremely popular with the Park Ridge members. Park Ridge is in a resident community, drawing most of its members from the immediate neighborhood and the more ardent golfers of the club find it mighty convenient to drive out to the club on Sunday mornings (sometimes, Keller says, without bothering to dress completely), change into their golf clothes and find a big wholesome breakfast waiting to start their day right. During the season Keller never has less than thirty of these Sunday breakfast customers and the number often exceeds fifty. The cost is 75c, which leaves a comfortable profit to the club.

All Chefs Not Opera Stars

I was interested getting Keller's idea as to what extent a manager should turn over responsibilities to his employes, and asked him how he got along with his chef. Keller smiled at that question and said:

"People have a funny idea about chefs; they think all of them are French, temperamental as grand opera stars and hard to get along with. That is not the case at all. Of course some chefs have pretty inflated ideas of their own importance, but I have had good luck with the men I've employed and they have always been good fellows who knew their jobs and their place, and while they may lose their tempers once in a while when the rush is heaviest, most of the time they are mighty easy to get along with.

"I try to turn over all kitchen details to him and I simply keep an eye open to make sure the food is prepared as I know my members want it prepared. I spend a lot of time in the dining room and kitchen during meal hours and keep a close watch on the food to see that it is up to standard, no matter what the rush. As I said before, everything must be freshly cooked to order, and it must be served in appetizing fashion. The chef and I have worked out

the amount of a given food to serve for an order and only that amount, no more and no less, must be put on a plate. Sometimes I spot a waitress with a full tray, the plates containing uneven portions, no garnishes, or sauces dripping over the edge of the plate. Whenever that happens, back goes that waitress to the kitchen, with me right after her, to see that she fixes up those portions to the standard service.

"But in most things my crew have their jobs to do and get them done without being overseen. In the kitchen, what the chef says, goes, and in the dining room my head waitress keeps things moving. I don't have to bother about major duties in these departments once the season is under way; it's only in minor and out-of-the-ordinary details that I am appealed to."

In other words, as I saw the matter, Keller trains his staff to work *with* him, rather than *for* him.

Small Amounts Avoid Waste

"Why is it," I asked Keller, "you buy only enough supplies for a week? Is your storage space limited?"

"No, that isn't it," he explained. "There's plenty of room in the basement to store a month's supply. The real reason is this: even a whole season's supply of a given item would not bulk up large enough to make much difference in the price I pay—which is the only reason for buying in large quantities. Besides, and this is the main reason I buy from week to week, the smaller your supply the less waste there is.

"Buy more sugar than you need and some of it will be piled on the floor. It will get wet and you've got a bag of sugar to throw out. Not much saving there."

"Don't the salesmen ever try to high-pressure you into a big order on the theory that prices are going up?"

"Yes, but I don't let them get away with it. I tell them if the price goes up we'll pay more without kicking. Besides, I've known managers to buy up a big order of goods and have the price go down below what they paid, before they can use the big order up. No, I'd rather take a chance and buy from week to week. It's more work for me, but it's economy in the long run."

See that GOLFDOM has the names and addresses of your president, green-chairman, greenkeeper, pro and manager.