

SELL 200 NEW MEMBERS

Coast Club's "Equitable Dues" Plan Fills Roster in Hurry

Alderwood Country Club, of Portland, Ore., one of the better known golf clubs of the Pacific Northwest, recently inaugurated and successfully put into practice a unique plan with respect to membership dues. The plan will possibly not interest such clubs as are experiencing no difficulty in maintaining full memberships on the usual basis of charging flat monthly dues, but to the great majority of clubs, so hit by the depression that there are still vacancies in their rosters, the Alderwood plan merits consideration. This statement gains weight when you are told that this novel dues plan brought more than 200 new members into Alderwood in a period of less than a month. Eighty of these were former members who had been forced to resign when times got hard. The club now has a substantial waiting list.

Paul P. Farrens, a director of Alderwood and chairman of the club's Legal and By-laws Committee, gives below the complete story of the Alderwood plan and points out the many benefits that can be expected through its adoption by other clubs.

DURING THE past few years, the majority of the nation's country clubs experienced serious membership losses due to causes arising directly from the well known Depression. Alderwood was no exception. We had members who during the pre-Slump days were in easy financial circumstances and could find the leisure to play golf whenever they pleased; today, many of these men have experienced serious straitening of their financial circumstances, and they no longer have the leisure that once was theirs. Wholesale resignations resulted, which in turn caused the capital value of memberships to be almost wiped out.

The resigning member may regard the situation that he can play golf only occasionally as a temporary situation, but he is unwilling in the interim to pay the flat monthly dues which are required of him if he is to continue to maintain his membership.

The Alderwood plan was born in the mind of A. H. Craig, who for many years has been the very efficient manager of our club. Mr. Craig presented the plan to the

Board of Directors early last fall and it was adopted by the Board and put into immediate effect, with the result that in less than a month our club membership was increased by over two hundred members, eighty of whom were former members, and the club now has a substantial waiting list.

Here's the Plan

The plan is very simple. The annual real and personal property taxes, the annual interest charge upon its indebtedness, (which in the case of Alderwood is exceptionally small) insurance, depreciation, amortization and other charges which might be denominated capital charges as distinguished from operating expenses, were computed and a base rate of dues was established which was calculated to be sufficient to meet these fixed or capital charges. In the case of the Alderwood, this base rate was \$2.50 per month (plus federal tax). In the case of many clubs, this would be an inadequate figure. If the plan were adopted by another club, the base rate of dues would have to be adjusted to the club's necessities in the matter of meeting fixed or capital charges.

In addition to the base rate of monthly dues, each member (and the members of his family if the membership is of the "family membership" type) is charged (or pays cash) a stipulated green-fee for each eighteen holes or part thereof played during the current month, such aggregate green-fee charges, however, being subject to a maximum. In the instance of the Alderwood Country Club, these green-fees are fixed at 25c for eighteen holes on weekdays and 50c on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. The financial returns which the club anticipates have been very carefully calculated and consideration has been given to the increased revenue from sale of balls, beverages, cigars, cigarettes, locker rentals and other items of revenue which would naturally result from the increase in membership of the club.

It may be that experience will demonstrate the necessity of increasing the base

B Y P A U L P . F A R R E N S



A. H. Craig, manager of Alderwood, who first proposed the new dues plan.

rate or the rate of green-fees, or both, but if so such adjustments will be merely the result of more accurate application of the principle involved in the plan which is that all members shall bear equally the fixed charges of the club and that operating expenses shall be distributed among the members on the basis of their use of the club, subject only to the maximum limitation on charges arising out of use.

At the present time the maximum limitation applied by the Alderwood Country club is \$5.50 per month, which means that a member whose green-fees in any one month exceed \$5.50 is not billed for any green fee charges in excess of \$5.50. Thus the maximum any member of Alderwood pays per month is this \$5.50, plus the monthly \$2.75 dues and tax, or a total possible charge of \$8.25.

No Sales Campaign Needed

What happened after this plan was adopted could scarcely be called a "membership campaign" in the usual sense. On the first day of October last fall the club

sent a letter to all members and former members and naturally the plan received a considerable amount of publicity in the local newspapers. Members were told that if they had any friends whom they wished to have acquire membership before the by-law limitation of 400 members was reached, they had better get the plan to the attention of such friends and secure immediate action by them. This warning was timely as the by-law limitation of 400 was reached by the 15th of October. The impetus continued even though the membership limitation was reached with the result that the club now has a substantial waiting list.

Everybody Is Satisfied

It has been a surprise to me to note the exceptionally high class men who have been attracted to the club as new members by this plan. It has created a lot of discussion locally, both inside and outside the club membership. With respect to members who make regular use of the club course, the plan effects no saving (except a reduction in federal tax, green-fees not being subject to federal tax) but these members seem to be unanimous in the feeling that they are getting their money's worth and that lesser charges assessed against members who make less use of the club are equitable in every sense. In fact the club membership has coined a phrase for the plan and call it the "Equitable Dues Plan."

The fact that a splendid golf course and an adequate clubhouse can be maintained on what possibly would be average dues of \$6.00 per month per member may be surprising to golf club officials and members in other sections of the country. I believe this fact is due principally to the



Alderwood's clubhouse, shown here, is adequate to accommodate the full roster of 400 members, of which the club now boasts.

climate in the coast section of the Pacific Northwest which permits year round golf and does not present the maintenance problems caused by extremes of heat and cold. In a section of the country where year round golf playing is not possible, that condition would be a factor which would have to be taken into consideration in applying the principle of the Alderwood plan, as it would mean almost an entire cessation of income from green-fees during the months when winter weather stops play.

When Mr. Craig first mentioned the plan to me before it was adopted by the Board, I felt that the plan might give the club the color of a pay-as-you-play course, but I am compelled to confess that the actual operation of the plan has apparently brought with it all of the desirable effects which were claimed for it by Mr. Craig, and also has aroused enthusiasm among members, both old and new, has increased club spirit and loyalty and has brought about an unanimous feeling in the membership that the financial burden of the membership is on a fair and equitable basis. Proponents of the plan point out that all exclusive downtown men's clubs are operated on the same principle as is involved in the Alderwood plan and it must be admitted that in that respect they are correct.

Any one who might be sufficiently interested to desire more details concerning the plan, may address A. H. Craig, Manager, Alderwood CC, Portland, Oregon, and I am very certain that in his usual obliging and courteous manner he will be glad to answer fully any questions that may be asked.

John Shanahan Dies

JOHAN SHANAHAN, greenkeeper at Brae Burn CC (West Newton, Mass.) for the past 31 years and honorary president of the Greenkeepers Club of New England, died on October 31 in his seventieth year. The Greenkeepers Club, in its November *Newsletter* says:

"Known and loved by the many thousands who have enjoyed Brae Burn for his devotion to his job and his fidelity to his club, John was particularly gifted with powers of observation and a vision to comprehend the various phases of his work.

"In his passing each and every greenkeeper has lost a friend and help in time of stress, and the Greenkeepers Club of New England has lost not only its Honorary President, but also its ablest advisor."

The club proposes to establish a John

Shanahan memorial, details of which have not yet been decided, although it will probably be in the nature of a scholarship fund for greenkeeper education, plus a trophy to be competed for annually by New England greenkeepers and pros.

Women's Western Restores 6-Par Holes at Annual Meeting

SEVERAL changes were made at the annual meeting of the Women's Western GA, held November 26th in Chicago, in the association's by-laws. Foreign players in this country may now compete in WWGA events at the invitation of the executive committee. Holes more than 550 yards in length are now rated as par-6 holes; formerly all holes over 375 yards were par-5, regardless of length.

An important change, which is expected to encourage more competitive play by the younger golfers, is to open the Junior Open tourney of the association to any golfer under 18 years of age. Heretofore, the junior event has been limited to girls who have not competed in any other event of the association.

Mrs. Howard T. Raymond of the Evans-ton (Ill.) GC, was reelected president of the WWGA.

No Greens Short Course Planned This Year at Rhode Island

RHODE ISLAND State college is about to start a remodeling and buildings program, which will necessitate shifting the institution's regular scholars from room to room as the program proceeds. With classrooms in constant use, there will be no room for short courses, and accordingly, T. E. Odland advises, there will be no greenkeepers' short course at Rhode Island this season.

"The college plans to offer this course again," he says, "as soon as conditions permit. When the new buildings are completed, there should be ample facilities."

IN THE BOOKKEEPING system of many clubs there are no depreciation charges. Property is carried on the books at its original purchase price, and replacements and repairs are charged as operating costs. Officials claim that this is the proper policy, as the club operates "not for profit" and does not consider liquidation at any time.