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WE REHABILITATED

By H. D. PAULSON
Fargo (N.D.) Country Club

LET ME say a word or two about this subject of golf club operation as viewed from the vantage point of a club presidency, occupied four years, and just relinquished—and let me say them modestly and with the hope that the experience of our club may be of value to somebody else.

Our club at Fargo (N. D.) had a none too favorable experience in the first years of the "late" depression. Our bonded debt of $12,500 had been increased by $2,500 through miscellaneous accounts it seemed impossible to meet, and the membership was down to an all-time low—less than 140—and 140 members at $60 a year doesn't give you all the money in the world, nor does it give you any chance to to go places.

So, one of those periodic shakeups, of the sort that occur in so many golf clubs, and are engineered by the so-called "best minds" with a view to rehabilitation, came into effect. The outcome was my election as president and the establishment of a strong board of directors and committee organization.

H. D. Paulson, ex-president of the Fargo (N.D.) CC, who in the space of four years lifted the club, about on the rocks, to the strongest position in its 17-year history.

We were going along swimmingly. We paid off the current obligation, and reduced bonded debt to $8,500 in the first two years and then—fire razed the clubhouse while the drought was burning up the fairways.

Out of the Rough

Today, the club is in the strongest position it has enjoyed at any time in its 17-year history. We have a new club house that cost $31,500. We have a fairway irrigation system covering most of the course, we have begun a course improvement program that will be completed in 1936 along with the balance of the irrigation system, we are going to build a new pro house this spring; and when we get through with all of these improvements, we will still owe less than we owed four years ago.

Meanwhile, our roster has advanced from the low of 140 to a high of 245.

At the outset, stringent economies were necessary, for the first two years witnessed a comparatively slow growth in membership as contrasted with that of the last two years. First of all, we abolished all charge accounts to members, effecting a saving of about $500 a year because, so the records disclosed, the club had been buying a lot of meals, pro house service and merchandise for members who failed to pay accounts. There was the further saving represented by reduced secretarial work.

In the operation of the clubhouse, we were fortunate in finding a competent woman caterer who was willing to undertake cafe and house operation, on a concession basis. We provided all equipment, heat, light, power and a place to do business. She provided all the help required to operate the house. At the end of the year, as we struck a balance, we found we had saved and our caterer had declared a profit for herself.

We "Dragged" in Wanted Members

In common with other clubs, we suspended the initial fee—fixed some years ago at $250—and accepted playing members. And when I say "accept," I mean we went out and dragged them in—men of the community whom we knew should be in the club. At no time, however, have we had to go outside the field of "desirables".

Came the fire that destroyed our house, leaving us with $10,000 in insurance money, and a problem in reconstruction. Meanwhile, our fairways were constantly failing because of the long-continued drought.

The house problem was solved by a fall and winter time subscription campaign. We told the members that we could see but one effective, satisfactory way to do the job, and that was through direct subscriptions. We saw no merit in the sale of bonds to members—bonds which we probably ultimately would have to repudiate. The idea of paying cash for the difference between our insurance money and the eventual cost of the new house proved so novel, and sound to the membership as a whole that we received more than $13,500 through the campaign. Final cost of the new house was $31,500, completely equipped—and the difference between the pledge money and insurance money and final cost was made up through expansion of the 1934 membership, and enhancement of other incidental income. Fact is, we accounted for a net gain of $8,000 in each of the last two years through operation.

When the house was completed in the middle of 1934, our first locker-room meeting was devoted to the necessity of turn-

The lounge of the Fargo clubhouse is a cheerful room. The French doors admit plenty of daylight to dispel the gloom too often found in club lounges.

Aerial view of the Fargo clubhouse, showing caddie yard, pro shop and parking space. Beyond, short of the river, lies part of the golf course.

ing our attention to the golf course itself. We had good tees, fair greens, a fine clubhouse—but we had no fairways. The idea was endorsed, committees set up, and they came back to the annual club meeting with a complete program.

Today, that program is more than half completed. We are carrying, as a temporary loan, $4,000 of the present cost of irrigation and course improvement program, but that loan will be wiped out early in the coming season, other phases of the program will be advanced and, by the close of the year, it is expected that the complete irrigation system will be installed. On the course projects we have so far expended $13,000, and we expect to invest another $8,500, including the new pro house.

Spent $44,000; Owe Only $5,000

We had a net indebtedness of $8,500 when we went into the course irrigation and improvement projects, and we are confident now, on the prospect that we will have a membership of 260 in 1936, that when the job is completed, we will be required to increase our net obligations by not more than $5,000.

In other words, we will have invested $21,500 new money in the clubhouse, $22,500 new money in the course irrigation and improvement program, and of the $44,000 that has been expended in the last two years, or will be expended in the next year, we will have paid off $39,000.

A remarkable accomplishment, we think—yet an accomplishment not impossible of attainment in any club if the proper selling job is carried forward.

After all—if we have done any one thing in this community of 37,000 people in the last few years that has been more important than anything else, it has been the sale of the golf club idea to the people of the city. At all times we carried on a constant selling campaign, intended to let the folks know what we had to offer and, more important, to keep our own membership fully informed and in close touch with every phase of club activity.

Greenkeepers Get Kansas City Season Off to Notable Start

WHAT is confidently expected to be a great golf season in Kansas City was touched off at a dinner meeting of the "Heart of America Greenkeepers Association" held March 6. Pros and green-chairmen were guests and the pro representation was practically 100% from Kansas City district clubs.

Chester Mendenhall, president of the H. of A. greenkeepers group, presided at the meeting. Technical feature of the evening was a talk on Kansas City maintenance problems by Dr. Oyvind Juul Noer of Milwaukee. Benjamin Franklin Bogges, president of the local PGA section, outlined cooperative policies and practices for greenkeepers and pros.

Michael Angelo Lynch, sec. of the KCGA congratulated the greenkeepers on the work they have done and are doing to maintain a high standard of course condition in the territory despite adverse weather conditions and dwarfed budgets.

Clarence Ethelbert McBride, sports editor of the KC Star, expressed the opinion that the informative joint meeting of greenkeepers, pros and chairmen conducted by the H. of A. organization was a highly significant affair in organizing operating effort for a record golf year in the district.