

I KNOW WE'VE PROGRESSED . . .

Because the Disposition of Our Members Has Improved

Says FRANK MURRAY, Mgr.

Ravisloe CC, Homewood, Ill.

OF ALL evidences that recovery has substantially progressed at golf clubs, the one that is most significant and positive to managers is the improved dispositions of members.

Increased wages and a restoration of operating methods to the former high standard clubs proudly maintained may have caused some clubs to exceed their house budgets this year, but the tranquil acceptance of this condition by officials and members is the surest sign of conditions being in good shape again. Many budgets for this year were predicted on the continuance of somewhat tough going; consequently these budgets left no leeway for increased expenses necessitated by greater membership, more patronage and higher standards of operation.

The changing situation has placed greater responsibility on managers. When exceeding a budget is advisable to improve the club's position, it requires a decision based on a manager's expert judgment. The manager's responsibility increases with the length of his service, and it is only natural that an important part of the manager's value to his club is in his authoritative advice to committees; especially when a committee is confronted with the delicate and unique problem of steering through prosperity.

After All, Committee Is Boss

It doesn't pay a manager to be too headstrong against the policies of new committees, even though he knows the committee is going to get into trouble with its methods. After giving the committee his advice, the best thing the manager can do is to carry out their instructions wholeheartedly, but with the benefit of his experience employ sufficient counter-check so that nothing goes haywire.

There has been very little complaint caused by rising food prices and their resultant increases in menu prices. I doubt that repeal by itself has been responsible

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Because Our Younger Members Are Getting Married

Says WILLIAM NORCROSS, Mgr.

Essex County CC, New Jersey

DURING the past six months about 25 of our younger members have married. That, to me, is more significant as an index of the rate and stability of recovery than are the facts that we have taken in approximately 50 new members and now have under discussion the building of a \$500,000 clubhouse.

Clubs get old and the men who are responsible for the executive and operating policies of the clubs get no younger. We prize the old traditions and wistfully speak of "the good old days." We worry and we moan about the vigorous and often harsh conditions with which we must content as time marches on. But still the youngsters continue blithely and boldly to marry, thus getting into more problems than we ever have to face in club management.

Value in Both Old and New

So, considering the cases of these happy and hopeful young people has brought to me the belief that one of the vital problems of policy and operation at better country clubs is that of making a sound, foresighted compromise between the best of the old ideas and the best of the live, new elements.

I have seen around the country instances of fine old clubs that have dropped from their former high standing because of an attitude bordering almost on animosity against the younger members. Foursomes that have played together for years resented the intrusion of younger blood and at some clubs, it was with difficulty that younger men got games with the veteran members. Age and the depression took toll amongst the oldsters. The younger men kept on and preserved the club. I sometimes feel that if the older men had been kept more on their toes by closer association with their juniors they would have weathered the late storm in much better spirit and financial shape.

Many of our clubs have been showing improvement in operating statements during the past year or eighteen months.

Thoughtful analysis of the accounts by the managers shows that the impetus toward improvement has been supplied by the members who at the start of the depression were barely in their thirties. They are the people to whom 'now' is pretty good and to whom 'tomorrow' is going to be great.

Changes in methods of restaurant and bar operation are enforced by this constant force of a lively membership.

We see how the bars have made fairly good profits, helping us offset losses incurred by rising food prices and increasing wages. We also see that repeal has brought us moderation in golf club drinking, because the younger element of prohibition times has found its bearings. We usually can depend on the younger element to get oriented correctly, but as human beings managing clubs, the managers may be disposed to pay more attention to the rather surly and imperative demands of some old-time member than to the casual though significant expressions of the younger members.

At the first class country club there must always be maintained an atmosphere and a working program of distinction, but in trying to follow such a course we may have progress choked and retarded by out-grown traditions. The peril we meet in attempting to preserve the fine old order is a rather stubborn resistance to the fact that nothing is so permanent as change. We pride ourselves that our clubs admit to membership only the most desirable candidates, but sometimes forget in our operating policies that the activity, alertness and progress of youth is one of the most desirable qualifications for membership.

My own firm belief, and that of the able club executives with whom I have enjoyed association, is that the factor of constant growth and change is the one factor often neglected but requiring the closest study and most expert performance from club management.

Dispositions Improve

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for the increase in club restaurant volume anticipated when liquor came back. There is a healthy moderation around golf clubs, which keeps the liquor factor in proper balance, and proper balance is the secret of good management and profits at a golf club. I have been surprised by the failure of wine sales to increase at golf clubs to the expected extent. That failure prob-

ably is due to the inertia of the wine-growers in seizing their opportunity to tie-in with the moderation temperament developed since repeal.

The considerate and bright attitude of members generally observed at country clubs this year is to me as definite a factor as any figures could be in warranting a forecast of continued improvement at clubs in 1937. This means that members will expect more from their clubs and that more than ever will there be a need for competent club management in keeping the heavier demands for service of the highest type correctly balanced with the club financial situation.

A Frank President Reports on the Annual Meeting

A BULLETIN from H. J. Leaf, president of the Coos CC, Marshfield, Ore., stirs membership. Leaf's report:

"The annual meeting of the stockholders of the Coos Country Club was held Monday noon at the Chandler Hotel with fifteen present, including our secretary-treasurer, who occupied the fifteenth and sixteenth chairs quite comfortably, thank you.

"The President was quite elated over this large assembly and congratulated those present upon their attendance, minus interest plus curiosity over what it was all about—in fact, he was so disconcerted by the mammoth gathering that he forgot his pet speech, which he so ardently rehearsed during the past two months, and could only mumble something about being reminded of a story entitled "The Gathering of the Nuts."

The usual routine business was quickly disposed of and then all entered into the old and familiar pastime of criticizing the other fellow and trying to impress upon those present their own virtues and incomparable value as club members.

"Next out of order was election of directors and officers, which was disposed of in the usual manner by some dumb guy hammering the table and shouting, 'I move we re-elect the present directors and officers for another term,' which was seconded by a double dumb guy and the whole lazy bunch voting yes.

"So there you are, the same old moth-eaten, inefficient management—and if you think I give a damn, you're crazy."

IOWA Greenkeepers Assn., which has had a prominent part in developing high character of course maintenance throughout the state, had as its October meeting an inspection of six Des Moines courses.