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They "Planned It This Way"

By Chet Billings

Modernization and improvement program at small Iowa club brings in new members and makes possible a year-round program for every member of the family.

SOUND business methods applied to the operation of the affairs of a country club in a small city can make a success of that organization. Fitting evidence of this fact is the story behind the scenes at the Spencer (Ia.) G&CC. Located in north-west Iowa, only a few miles from the renowned Okoboji lakes region, the Spencer CC this year entered into a new and interesting phase of development. As the direct result of a program which this spring brought new stockholders into the organization and made possible the modernization of the clubhouse, year-round activities are being planned for the members. Winter terms, according to E. L. C. White, chairman of the entertainment committee, will include bridge parties, stag nights, dances and winter sports.

Spencer has a population of approximately 6,000 and the club now is able to boast of 100 stockholder members and 84 associates. Club officials firmly expect an upward trend in the membership as a result of the modernization and improvement program which was carried out this spring.

Club Was 'Running Out'

The original articles of incorporation ran out last January and had to be renewed at the annual meeting of the stockholders. The clubhouse also ran out—in a manner of speaking—and had to be re-

newed. This proposition was discussed and at a later meeting all except one stockholder voted to proceed with the project.

Forty shares of stock at \$80 a share were ordered placed on sale. Walter H. Thomas, green-chairman, worked with E. L. C. White in selling the stock. A mortgage of \$3,500 was placed on the property to give the club a total of \$6,700 with which to remodel and improve the clubhouse and fill some ditches on the golf course.

Clubhouse Gets New Facilities

Salient features of the remodeling program which was supervised by White included a heating plant with forced hot air to heat the building the year-round, a caddie room, and enlarged locker-rooms for both men and women.

An insulated apartment upstairs provides living quarters for the caretaker and his family. New kitchen equipment and new furniture have been purchased; the clubhouse has been completely re-wired and brilliantly lighted; the east porch is now enclosed; and a new bar or lunch counter is now installed downstairs in the grill room. The old kitchen downstairs is still maintained as a kitchen for heavy duty work and for a laundry room.

A new system of buzzers calls the manager or caretaker either to the men's



A new heating plant installed this spring will now enable Spencer CC's members to make use of their compact, newly remodeled clubhouse the year-round.

locker-room or the caddie room. The roof of the clubhouse was repaired and re-coated and both the interior and exterior of the building were painted. A new pump was purchased and installed, several new doors were put in and new screens were placed on all windows.

According to club officials, the remodeling program was launched for four particular reasons:

1. They found that each winter when the clubhouse was closed up considerable damage was being done by vandals who would break in and wreck things. It seemed imperative that the club get a caretaker to live at the house the year around.

2. Additional space was needed in the locker-rooms, so the area under a large porch on the east exposure of the building was excavated to get it. About 20 new lockers were then added.

Caddies Provided For

3. The modernization program fitted into the desire of club members for the creation of a caddie system that would keep the boys out of the men's locker-room and the clubhouse. The caddies now have a clubhouse of their own, complete with shower bath, lavatory, drinking fountain and toilet facilities. The caddies are under rigid discipline and have a caddie club with their own officers. Each caddie has to pay one dollar to join the caddie club, entitling him to a badge and the privilege of being a caddie.

If the boy does not violate any of the rules and returns his badge at the end of the year, his dollar is returned to him. Two grades of caddies are maintained and they get work in turn, the first to register each day being the first to be called in his

class. Thirty-nine caddies are now enrolled. Instructions on how to caddie and the rules they are to observe are posted in the caddie room. The boys are allowed to play golf two mornings weekly.

4. The final reason for the modernization program was that the club officials found the big porch on the east side of the building not very practical unless it could be closed in. There was always wind, rain or dust to make it unpleasant most of the time. Now, glassed in, the porch can be used either day or night and the members seem to enjoy this new facility.

Value of Stock Is Fixed

One of the features of the new articles of incorporation is the plan designed to protect the value of the stock, which is now fixed at \$80 a share. There are now 100 stockholders with 84 associate members. All stockholders pay dues of \$25 a year. Associate members who live in Spencer pay \$25 dues for the first two years, and after that, \$30 or not more than \$35, depending on their age. The extra \$5 (or \$10 as the case may be) is put into a sinking fund to apply on the purchase of stock. When the associate has paid in \$30 to apply on his stock purchase he is obliged to pay the additional \$50 to complete his purchase or lose his membership and the \$30 already paid in.

No one is allowed to sell his stock on the street. If he wants to sell, he must file it for sale by the club, which charges a \$5 fee for selling it. If he sells the stock on the street, the purchaser is not voted a membership. If any stockholder gets sick or leaves the community he can file his stock for re-sale and no dues are charged against it. But if he remains in

the city and is not disabled, he must pay his dues or eventually lose his stock.

"This is a plan that clubs should adopt, as it has solved a most vexing problem for us," H. N. Davies, president of the club, declares. "In the old days we found the fellows actually selling their stock for \$10 or even giving it away rather than to pay the dues on it. The result was that our stock had no value whatsoever. Now it has. The plan also forces every associate member to eventually become a stockholder and after all, that is what any club wants. Associates do not have any voting privileges and they cannot serve as chairmen on any committee, but in all other respects they have the full privileges of the club."

There are several forms of associate memberships. Those who live in Spencer pay \$25, as stated previously, while non-residents pay \$10 annually. Young men from 21 to 24 pay \$15 a year. Women, unattached, pay \$15. Non-resident school teachers can pay \$5 a month for the club's privileges.

Each Committee Is Budgeted

The club operates on a budget basis. Each committee is given so much to spend and no more. The entertainment committee gets \$100, which isn't much but still "if you know how to do it you can get by with it" as Chairman White put it. The grounds and greens committee gets \$600 and the house committee \$400. The tournament committee and membership committee get nothing. All tournaments are self-supporting by virtue of entrance fees paid in.

Salaries amount to \$1,100 a year; depreciation on equipment is set at \$325; depreciation on the house is figured at \$250; and general expense is listed at \$682, based on last year's expenses. This is a

total budgeted expense of \$4,013. The club's income runs from \$4,200 to \$5,000 a year.

The present club manager is paid a small salary and he retains what he makes on club storage. He is also in charge of the caddies. The caretaker gets what he makes from the sale of food and drinks, but if he makes \$1,800 a year he then must divide on a percentage basis with the club. He gets his living quarters free and is furnished with electricity and telephone in the summer time. In the winter he must furnish his own heat, electricity and telephone but he gets what he makes during those months.

In Good Shape Financially

Financially, the club has always been in excellent shape. It started out with a \$4,500 mortgage in 1919, but that was eventually paid off. There were a few trying days, of course, during the depression years but the Spencer club managed to pull through without incurring any additional obligations. It was completely free of debt when the remodeling program was launched this year. The new mortgage of \$3,500 is to be paid off in eleven years at a small figure per month or \$556.50 annually.

A program of activities for the year is planned by the entertainment committee with sub-chairmen named for each activity. Monday night is devoted to informal bridge, Tuesday is kept open for club members who wish to entertain and Wednesday is set aside as men's day.

From fifty to ninety men attend the Wednesday noon luncheons and more than half of them remain for an afternoon of golf. "The idea is to make it fashionable for men to take a half day off during the week and use their country club without

View is of 9th green, with 8th and 9th fairways in background. Edge of the popular practice putting green is shown lower right.



feeling too guilty about it at the office," White explains.

Thursdays are set aside for the ladies with golf in the morning, luncheon at noon and golf or bridge in the afternoon. Stag parties are scheduled for every other Thursday night. Every Friday night is family picnic night.

The idea of constructing a country club in Spencer arose in the minds of Joseph Cash and E. L. C. White in 1918 shortly before the armistice was signed. In the early part of 1919, Wilson Cornwall, now the city attorney, became interested in the proposal. The three men, assisted by Clarence McClurg, began the sale of stock and soon sold 200 shares at \$100 a share. A meeting of the stockholders was then called and officers and directors were named. White was chosen as the first president and served in that capacity for two years.

A tract of land southeast of the city was chosen for the club, but to get it the officers had to buy an entire farm. This was done without making a down payment. All except 45 acres was then sold at a profit which went into the fund for the construction of the course and clubhouse. A local bank accepted a \$4,500 mortgage on the club and building operations began during the summer of 1919. A \$20 assessment on each stockholder was later necessary in order to complete the initial program.

The course itself now measures 3,051 yards with a par of 36. This includes five par-4 holes, two par-5 holes and two par-3 holes. Sand traps protect 5 greens. Creeping bent is used on all greens. Hills serve to toughen the layout on 6 of the 9 holes.

All in all, the club is an outstanding example of what can be done in a small city through cooperation on the part of the officers, the stockholders and the associate members.

Green Section Sponsors Meet at Arlington Plots

THE USGA Green Section and the GSA are again planning to sponsor an all-day program meeting for greenkeepers, green-committee members and others who are interested in the establishment and maintenance of better turf. The meeting is to be held in Washington, D. C., on Friday, September 22. All who are interested in the problems involved in growing grass for turf purposes are invited to attend.

As was the case last year, the general meeting will open in the morning at 9 o'clock (standard time) on the turf garden at the Arlington experimental farm. During the morning there will be a general review of the experimental work now in progress on the turf garden. This experimental work is conducted by the Green Section in cooperation with the Bureau of Plant Industry of the United States Dept. of Agriculture. In the afternoon, time will be set aside for the visitors to congregate in small groups to discuss with each other and with members of the Green Section staff those experiments which are of most immediate interest to them individually.

Investigate Putting Turfs

The experimental program which will be discussed includes the selection of many strains of creeping bent, velvet bent, Kentucky bluegrass, trivialis bluegrass, fescues and Bermuda grass. Selections have been made for ability to stand up in color, density and texture under adverse conditions, for resistance to disease and in some cases to insect injury, and for ability to withstand heavy trampling. Other investigations include a study of the responses of creeping bent and of Kentucky bluegrass to various fertilizer combinations, under putting green and fairway conditions respectively; the usefulness of such substances as peat, sand, manure, cottonseed hulls, buckwheat hulls and charcoal in improving the texture of the soil; the chemical control of weeds in turf and in compost; and the improvement of weed-infested turf by combining fertilizer application and reseeding with the chemical control of weeds.

In addition to the review of the experimental work there will be exhibits of named turf weeds, of seed of various turf grasses and seeds under binocular micro-

Wisc. Greenkeepers Meet at Madison—Forty-six attended the August meeting of the Wisconsin Greenkeepers, held August 7 at the Blackhawk CC, Madison. Preceding lunch, John Bone, Blackhawk greenkeeper, put on a demonstration of his club's new fairway watering system, which was put into operation last year. After the luncheon at the club, the boys held their monthly business session, featured by a questions and answers session. A round of golf concluded the day's activities.