

# Club Raffles Memberships

THE Sheldon (Ia.) Country Club put successfully into operation this past winter one of the smartest membership plans to come to GOLFDOM'S attention for some time. The membership idea, which has strong appeal to the gambling instinct, has been a rousing success from the start, and for the first time, the Sheldon club will start the season with money in the bank—and will have the largest roster, by far, in its history.

The Sheldon club, to get the membership idea started this last winter, set a goal of 100 members, a number they deemed sufficient to finance their budget, and memberships were to cost \$25 payable at \$1 a week—unless, and here is where the 'punch' of the plan comes in—the member's name happened to be drawn from a box at a weekly drawing to be held in connection with the local theater's Bank Night. In other words, if a member had paid in only \$1 on his membership, and his name were drawn, it would cost him only \$1 to become a paid-up-for-the-year member of the Sheldon Country Club. P. G. Jarnagin says concerning the Sheldon membership idea, a plan which has also been used successfully by one or two other Midwest clubs:

## Roster Is Biggest in History

"To date, the club has signed 131 people at \$25 per membership. The largest number of members the club ever had before was around 80. There have now been 16 drawings, and of the 131 signers, only six have been lost, and two of this number moved to other cities. In order to eliminate any suspicion in regard to the fairness of the drawing (should an officer or director be chosen), the box containing the numbers (each member has a number) is taken to the theater each Tuesday night, and after the regular Bank Night drawing, the theater operators, neither of whom are country club members, make the drawing for the club and announce the result to the show crowd. Several club directors have been chosen since the drawings were begun, and although we have been kidded a lot, no serious complaints have been made, the public realizing the drawing is strictly on the level.

"Here is how our club went about signing up the 131 members for the coming season: first, we called a meeting at which time the plan was explained in detail to the 20 or 25 men present. Following considerable discussion, most of the men present signed up right then and there. We had club membership contract forms printed up, and these contained all the rules governing the drawings, payments and benefits. Signers were given these 'membership club' forms, entitling them to all club privileges. Space was provided for a complete record of the weekly payments.

## Use Teams to Sell Prospects

"Our next move was to divide the previous year's membership roster up among several workers, with each one calling upon 8 or 10 who were members during 1939. This gave us about 75 signers for the 1940 season. Next, we took all of the prospects we could think of and divided them the same way as before. We met with unusual success with these prospects, and many signed up, I am sure, because of the gambling appeal.

"A strange part of all this is the fact that many of the signers who had objected to paying \$20 last year, willingly agreed to pay \$25 this year with the chance to get in for as little as \$1. Formerly we had about 15 'sustaining' members who kept things going by paying \$30 a year, while the rest paid \$20. Now we all pay \$25 a year.

"The new membership plan at Sheldon has also succeeded in collecting considerable of last year's unpaid accounts. We obtained 13 signers (included in the 131) who still owed part or all of their 1939 dues. To date these 13 have either paid up their balance in full or are still paying it at the rate of a dollar a week in addition to the dollar they are paying on their \$25 membership. As soon as their account is cleaned up, they will pay only one dollar like the rest.

"The last drawing will be held May 7, which is just ahead of the official season opening at the Sheldon CC. Then we can enjoy a debt-free season with no dues

*(Continued on Page 50)*

(Continued from Page 28)

to collect at the last minute to pay off notes and other obligations. We have made no plans for a celebration after the drawings are over, and I doubt if we will. The hurrahs will be held in abeyance until the next annual meeting, which will be in January, 1941. However, it seems certain that we will repeat the membership plan."

Jarnagin points out that the Sheldon

club does not wish to claim that the plan it is using is of its origin. He concludes, "The plan was 'borrowed' from the Ida Grove, Ia., club, which is now using it for the second time. We understand that other Midwest clubs have used it, too. It was largely upon the recommendation of Chas. W. Lakin, associate editor of the Ida Grove Pioneer-Record, that we investigated the Ida Grove plan and adapted it to fit our needs."

## Recent Golf Divots

MRS. BABE Didrikson Zaharias had a round of 70 over the tough Lakeside (Calif.) course the other day, with all putts holed. Babe's best round so far is a 65 over her home course, Brentwood, making the 18th hole in an eagle 2. The course is 6,600 yards in length. . . . Construction of a \$30,000 clubhouse has begun at the Bobby Jones course (Atlanta, Ga.), and plans to lengthen the layout 460 yards have been completed. . . . A mortgage burning ceremony was the highlight of the stag party staged late in February at the Manistee (Mich.) G&CC.

Charlie Erickson, greenkeeper at the Minakahda (Minneapolis district) CC the last 39 years, suffered a broken hip in an accident at the club last Feb. 21. Charlie, who is convalescing in the Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis, would appreciate your dropping him a line. . . . Attendance at short courses this year has reached an all time high. Dr. John Monteith estimates he has appeared before 600 persons at the various conferences. . . . Watertown (S. Dak.) municipal golf course opens this spring with every one of its 18 holes in grass, which makes it the only all-grass course in that part of the country. The course, which is more than 20 years old, has been having its putting surfaces grassed the past four years. Greenkeeper there is Owen Palmer.

Woody Laffoon, 22-year-old brother of Ky Laffoon, has been appointed professional at the Park Hill GC, Denver district. Woody assisted his older brother for 5 years at Chicago's Northmoor club, before coming to Denver. . . . Maurie Luxford, past president of the Lakeside (Los Angeles) GC, has been chosen chairman

of the 41st annual California State golf championships, which will be held over the Lakeside course June 17-23. . . . Cyril Wagner, formerly pro at the Chicago district Tam O'Shanter CC, has been appointed to the pro post at the Mohawk CC in the same district. Cyril spends his winters as pro at the Ponce de Leon course in Florida. . . .

Clarence "Doc" Yockey has been named golf pro at the White Lakes GC, Topeka, Kans. . . . Melvin 'Chick' Harbert, Battle Creek's outstanding amateur golfer for nearly a decade, has quit the amateur ranks to sign as professional at the Battle Creek (Mich.) CC. . . . Joe Kirkwood, Jr., 20-year old son of the famous trick shot artist, has taken up his new duties as assistant to Pro Howard Beckett at the Capital City GC, Atlanta Ga. . . . Joe Rush, Minneapolis CC supt., succeeds Len Bloomquist, Superior GC, as Minnesota Greenkeepers Assn. president. . . .

Denny Shute recently underwent a wrist operation and will not know for six months whether he can compete again. A cyst was removed from the bone of his right forearm at the wrist joint and the defect was filled with bone grafted from his shin. We're all pulling for you, Denny. . . . Ben Hogan, so often a 'bridesmaid,' finally got that win he has been seeking. Ben took down top honors in the North and South with a record 277. He did even better just a few days later when he also won the Greensboro (N. Car.) \$5,000 Open, with a record score of 270—and each of his 4 rounds was under the 70 mark! . . . They liked the way the Tri-State Greenkeepers Assn. officers handled things in 1939—the entire slate was re-elected for 1940.