

If This Be ARSON . . .

Then Let's Make the Most of It!

A fire like the one Baltusrol had—the burning of its \$187,000 mortgage—is something to talk about—and Baltusrol talks!

By HERB GRAFFIS

A LOUD note of cheer rings out over dismal mutterings about the prospects of the private golf clubs. Baltusrol burned a \$187,000 mortgage at a celebration April 12, and the famed million-dollar golf club at Springfield, N. J., is debt-free.

Debt-free; almost 46 years from the day when Louis Keller and 29 others officially opened the nine-hole course on what had been the farm of the pioneer Baltus Roll!

Debt-free; with 36 fine and superbly-conditioned golf holes, a large and handsome clubhouse, and all the trimmings that are supposed to be shoving the expensive private golf clubs into the hands of receivers!

Debt-free; despite a depression drop of 230 members and a reduction in initiation fee from \$600 in 1929 to \$0 in 1933!

Debt-free; an achievement registered during the toughest period U. S. private golf clubs have undergone.

Baltusrol's national championship record is high. Baltusrol has had the Open

in 1903, 1915, and 1936; the Amateur in 1904 and 1926; the Women's in 1911. Only Chicago Golf and Merion, with 7 apiece, have had more USGA national championships than Baltusrol.

But international fame has meant very little in handling the financial and management problems of a big golf club during the past 11 years. Something practically historic in American golf has happened at Baltusrol during the past 17½ years, and has had an increasing effective influence on club operation. That something is the management of the club's business by R. Avery Jones, general manager of the establishment.

J. Stewart Baker, president of Baltusrol, 1930-38, gave a close-up of Jones' performance in commenting:

"I think no one can review the record of the past 17 years without knowing this achievement has been made possible largely through your efforts. Some of us who have been intimately associated with the club's affairs know how conscientiously

Snow mold injury has been especially severe in several sections and the Green Section is advising those whose greens have been hard hit to visit the Green Section experimental green nearest them to see which of the strains being tested have been most resistant.

In the Chicago district there were early hopes that snow mold injury might be light, but about March 15 greenkeepers learned differently, to their sorrow.

and intelligently you have handled the business of the club—the operation of the activities of the club is a business.

“As I have told you the very nature of your position carries with it certain problems and circumstances which are not to be found in other types of business management. Don't let these disturb you if you can help it. In a very real sense I send you my congratulations on the tangible results of a job well done.”

The unique “problems and circumstances” Jones handled calmly and boldly. In his opinion changes on committees create the real problem. The new men, expert in their own fields, treat the old problems of golf club management as new ones. They want to do something, so errors of the past are repeated over and over again. At Baltusrol, Jones avers, there's far less of this than is customary at clubs.

Jones has been one of the most discussed men in the business phases of golf. The Baltusrol innovation in business management was not without its shocks and clashes in adjustment to strictly business principles while maintaining the service and amenities of a distinguished club. Jones stood up and stood pat. You can't have much more of a happier ending than the burning of the mortgage, although Jones himself enjoys a non-commercial bonus in the high regard of his teammates in the operation of Baltusrol and in the respect and appreciation of the club's members.

Jones Schooled in England

Jones was schooled for estate management in England. His scholastic education included study at the Surveyors Institution of London, Grosvenor School of Science and Art, and Bangor Agricultural College. For four years he was assistant agent for a 30,000 acre estate in England and when the war came in 1914 he enlisted promptly. He arose from private to brigade major; all of his promotions were won on the field. He was in the line for 3 years. Until 1920 he was in the British army.

In 1921 he met Dr. C. V. Piper and Lyman Carrier. It was Dr. Piper who suggested Major Jones' present career. In 1922 Major Jones managed the Wilmington (Del.) CC. In 1923 after a course rebuilding job Jones became general manager at Baltusrol. During the time he has been in that position the club has had \$560,000 in net income. That \$560,000 writes the Baltusrol chapter, to date, of the Jones biography.

The achievement at Baltusrol under Jones' general management has focused considerable attention of club executives on the job that has been done and the way of doing it.

The past 11 years at Baltusrol is summarized in the following statement released by the club:



Maj. R. A. Jones

“In 1930 the club had a full membership of 650 proprietary members and had a gross income of \$223,725. It had just completed the building of the grill and had doubled the size of the dining room and carried out extensive improvements to the entire clubhouse, such as new showers, tiled locker-room floor, etc. All that had to be paid for later; therefore, we started the 11 year period with a debt of \$187,000.

Then Came the Depression

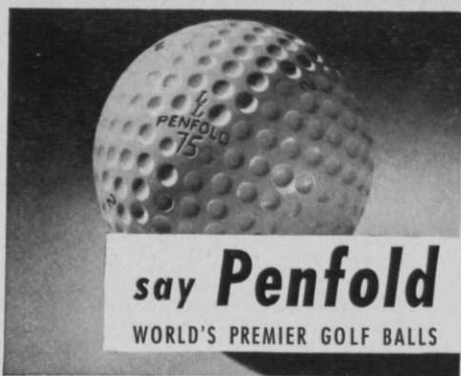
“Then came the full effect of the depression. The membership dropped from 650 to 420 members in three years. In those three years gross income dropped from \$223,725 a year to \$124,573—nearly \$100,000. The larger clubhouse, the improved golf courses including the water system remained with us; consequently, the staff could not be greatly reduced.

“Prior to the depression new members paid an initiation fee of \$600, but that fee had to be reduced and was wiped out entirely in 1933.

“Restricted incomes and higher taxes made reduction of club charges necessary; green fees were reduced \$1.00 per day, restaurant prices were reduced by 30%.

“Members had become accustomed to

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Baltusrol Is Debt-Free

(Continued from Page 16)

the service which the income of 1928-1930 allowed and it wasn't possible to make drastic changes. Tournaments were a fruitful source of revenue and they were encouraged for that reason, but difficulty was encountered if a tournament conflicted with the pleasure of members; hence tournaments had to be restricted.

"In 1930 taxes amounted to \$17,110 and had risen to \$25,212, by 1939.

"The repeal of prohibition in 1934 resulted in new bar business and we made the most of that—this was the only favorable factor in this 11 year period.

"Prior to the depression between \$40,000 and \$48,000 a year was spent on the house but in the last two years we have spent less than \$27,000. On the golf courses in 1930 we spent \$45,635 and we got along with \$30,551 in 1940.

"All painting and repairs had to be carried out by the club's staff at about ¼ of the normal contract price—even additions and structural alterations were carried out that way.

"The general manager reduced his own salary \$1,000 a year and by selling seed

and fertilizer to the members made over \$1,000 a year profit for the club.

"In spite of the drop in membership, the rise in taxes and the other factors noted, this club in 11 years had a total net income of \$277,562 and of that total \$187,000 was used to wipe out the mortgage and of course through that period interest payments were made. The balance of the net income, \$89,762, was spent on the improvement of the clubhouse and other facilities and the acquisition of land for protection of the club.

"Included in operating expense was the cost of improvement on the golf courses, for progress did not stop when the depression began. At least \$30,000 was spent in correcting errors in golf course construction and in drainage, and grub-proofing fairways and greens against Japanese beetle took an additional \$12,000.

"The principal items of capital expenditure through this period were as follows:

New cellar and two bars after repeal of prohibition.....	\$ 3,289
New showers, women's locker-room	890
Men's lounge and furnishings.....	14,456
New locker-room stairs.....	666
New cloak room and wash room.....	1,459

An indoor golf school that was a standout from every angle was conducted in St. Louis this past winter by E. H. Duwe, pro at Forest Park GC, and Homer Herpel, Crystal Lake GC pro. The school was beautifully appointed for both men and women, with unusually attractive private teaching quarters. The school had ground floor space (at 4535 Delmar Blvd., St. Louis), thereby permitting passersby a 'look-see' at the activities.

New boiler and heating system.....	4,671
Furniture and fixtures.....	13,923
New caddie house	1,468
New implement shed.....	504
Converting Van Liew house into two houses and machine shop.....	500
New well and improvements to water system (6 years).....	7,694
Sweeney farm purchase.....	13,000
Golf Course—	
Bowling green	979
Improvements to grounds.....	1,056 2,036

"Of course is was inevitable that in the period under review there were times when a larger staff would have eliminated some criticism of lack of service. Some things which might have been done had to be omitted. Some suggestions involving expenditure of funds or loss of revenue could not be carried out. Someone had to attach a price tag to all new ideas and plug away 365 days of the year on the basis of 'what we could do without' and not 'what we could do with.' Nobody enjoys economy but everybody enjoys the results of it."

Letter Reminds Members

(Continued from Page 58)

fitted to your individual requirements by an expert who knows your game, and a prompt adjustment if anything goes wrong with your purchase. Also give him the benefit of any golf lessons you may decide to take—he is a competent instructor and his charges are reasonable. Let's give him a fair chance at our golf business—he really deserves it.

Very truly yours,
Rock Spring CC, Alton, Ill.

P. S. The above was composed and submitted by a club member with the suggestion that it be sent to each member of the club. Dozens of club members would be glad to have it sent over their signatures; therefore, we feel justified in sending it to you as a recommendation of members of the Board and Committees of the club.

WM. MACKIE, pro at Daniel Guggenheim's private course at Sands Point, L. I., died April 18 at Nassau hospital, Mineola, L. I., following a 2-week illness.

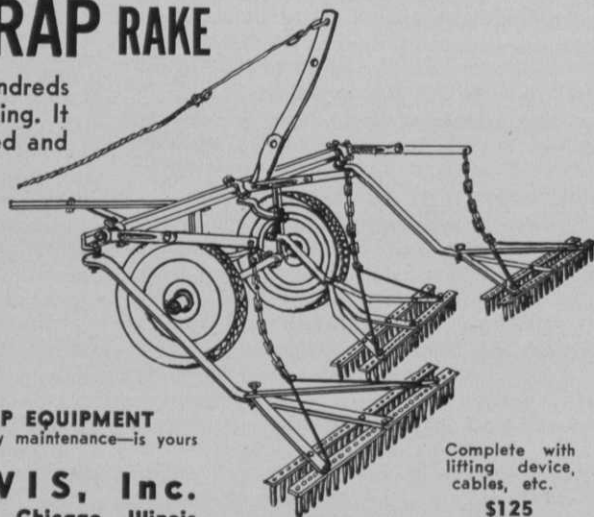
Mr. Mackie is survived by three brothers who are prominent in pro golf; Jack, Dan and Isaac. As a boy in Scotland, Mr. Mackie learned his golf. He came to the U. S. in 1916 and was pro to the late Isaac Guggenheim at Carola Farms, prior to designing and constructing the Daniel Guggenheim course.

His widow, two daughters, and a son also survive this estimable gentleman, whose fine character and conscientious service set a high standard in pro golf.

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