

# Revive New England Club By Making It Social Center

By EDDIE BAGGETT

**M**ONOOSNOCK CC HAS DISCOVERED that a country club is more than just a fancy name for a golf course.

Leominster, Mass., where Monoosnock is located, is a typical small New England industrial city of about 23,000 population. The city grew up around celluloid products. In the last decade it has converted to plastics and its postwar future looks good. Monoosnock was built in the lush '20's by a group of affluent citizens as a private plaything.

A compact little nine-hole golf course was built in a beautiful setting a few miles from the business center. A large summer clubhouse was built and another building containing the locker-room, showers, and golf shop was erected nearby. There were also the usual implement sheds for mowers and other equipment. A pair of tennis courts were tossed in as an added attraction.

The club got rolling and did pretty well during the boom years. A tip of \$10 to a good caddie was not unusual in those days. But soon afterward the depression hit and Monoosnock, like so many other small concerns, hit the skids. The club staggered along somehow, but memberships dropped to record lows. Things improved somewhat during the middle 30's but not enough to pull the club into the black.

But as the turn of the decade neared someone had a bright idea. "Business as usual" had always been the slogan. A little group of rebels reared up and shouted, "The devil with that!" A quick survey showed that the club had among other facilities during its worst financial years the services of a professional, though there were less than a dozen members interested in golf lessons. The condition wasn't good for a pro or for the club that was barely surviving.

All expenses were slashed to a minimum. The club found it would have to get along without a pro. That and other enforced economies allowed some long-needed improvements to the course, such as a new drainage system and weeding of the greens. The condition of the course

improved noticeably. So did membership.

Someone else had a bright idea. For years a small group of tennis players had silently used the courts. The golfing fraternity had come to regard the racket-wielders much as sheepherders are by cattlemen. But the leaders of the progressive elements which had taken the reins decided something should be done about the situation. Money was actually spent to modernize the courts. Efforts were made to popularize the tennis sideline. County championships were staged at the club. A team—and a good one—was raised to represent Monoosnock. Older members volunteered to instruct tyros. The tennis membership almost doubled overnight and Monoosnock had scored another gain. Last fall a girl's high school team adopted the courts as its official "home." The game is still gaining friends, especially among the younger set.

But the greatest innovation was yet to come. Club officials looked at the clubhouse, a great roomy structure with a large but empty kitchen. The clubhouse had been designed for summer activities exclusively. It was not walled inside, had no ceiling, and was heated in cool weather only by two huge stone fireplaces.

For over twenty years the whole neighborhood had been trekking to the club each winter to use the rolling slopes of the golf course for skiing and tobogganing while the clubhouse, boarded-up for the winter, slumbered calmly and quietly.

The new spirit of the club demanded something be done. Promptly the board of directors arrived at the conclusion that there was no reason why a country club should operate only three-quarters of the year. They decided that the club would sponsor a winter sports program, too.

The first necessity was the clubhouse alteration to fit it for year-round use. Walls and ceiling were promptly added and the building insulated. A central heating system was installed. The bar was modernized and enlarged and in the spring the club is going into the food-and-drink business. It promises to be a great success.

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*Postwar Planning of Golf Courses*

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**Jacobsen Explains Mower Situation**

★ RACINE, WISC.:—New lawn mowers will not be available as soon as might be supposed from the recent order of the War Production Board rescinding restrictions on their manufacture. In a statement released for publication, the Jacobsen Manufacturing Company, Racine, Wisconsin, explains its position which is representative of the mower manufacturing industry.

Until the Japanese war is finished, little relief can be expected. Heavy present contracts for production of military items for the armed forces call for the limit of the Jacobsen Company's productive capacity—and to date there has been no intimation that major cutbacks in these schedules will be made.

An even greater obstacle to the resumption of manufacture of hand lawn mowers and power mowers is the lack of available materials. Grey iron and malleable castings in particular are in critically short supply, due to continuing tremendous need for these to fill high priority military orders for the next six to eight months.

"Until the war with Japan is definitely over," said Mr. O. T. Jacobsen, president, "the production of hand or power mowers, in our opinion, will be greatly curtailed and the probabilities are there will not be as many units available in the 1946 season as there were in 1942. However, irrespective of our current military contracts, we shall make every effort to resume production of hand and power mowers just as early as basic materials become available."

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**Revive New England Club**

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But everything did not go smoothly. Originally it was planned to build a giant ski-tow, embracing the crest of a neighboring farmer's hill which the club will be able to use during the winter, toboggan runs, and skating rinks. First, a shortage of materials was encountered and it was found that the ski-tow would have to wait until 1946.

Then the most serious problem was encountered. Because the club had been built only for warm weather use the watermains had been laid only a few feet beneath the surface of the ground. Of course no one anticipated the trouble until it was too late and a public building is crippled without running water. Skating rinks are also impossible.

But the clubhouse was opened on Sundays and a table-tennis set placed in operation. The popularity of this single feature has been startling. Enough so to prompt officials to plan to install other games, such as badminton, next winter. The social angle is to be emphasized this summer for the first time. Golf is slated to become the main one of many features of the club. Dances will be held every Saturday night for members and friends.

Before the shut-off of water the club had a chance to try out its new ideas and was delighted at the response. Two dances were held for members and friends and each found the building crowded to capacity. Many of this crowd were "friends" but the chances of their becoming social members this spring are considered excellent. This word-of-mouth advertising is the most effective of all methods. Local newspapers have done a great deal to inform the general public of the new projects.

Renting of the clubhouse was also proven feasible for special parties and dances. The local P. T. A. twice held socials and most of the parents got a chance to look around for themselves for the first time. Again excellent advertising that will certainly pay off.

The old mistake of high membership fees to make the club "exclusive" will not be made. Memberships (especially social which may be as low as \$10 per year) will be kept to a minimum. Special low-prices for children may be inaugurated next winter.

Monoosnock has discovered that the secret of a country club's success lies in its ability to make itself an integral part of the social life of the entire community; a nice but not too expensive super-playground for everyone, old and young.