



Looking from west over lake. Bellerive's spacious clubhouse in background.

Small Cost Improvements

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SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS and professional men have organizations, with membership confined to those engaged in the same field of endeavor. They meet at regular intervals, exchange ideas and experiences, and all benefit from learning what the other fellow tried and the results he obtained. Golf pros learn the hard way, usually by trial and error. We seldom meet but if by chance we do get together there is little if any time for discussing details that concern our work. We are all in a hurry to play golf. That we would benefit through an exchange of information is certain, and the columns of **GOLFDOM** offer an ideal medium for such exchange—without interfering with our golf games. Confidently expecting to obtain valuable pointers from articles by other professionals, I hope what follows will prove of some small benefit to them.

First, I wish to tell about a few changes made in our golf course during the war years, at a cost of practically nothing for labor or material, that have been well received by the members and will be continued. It would be a source of personal satisfaction to claim credit for these ideas, but the brain work was done by a member of the club who insists his name shall not be mentioned. Head of a large retail store in downtown St. Louis, he escorted me through the several floors of his establishment, explained how minor and inexpensive alterations here and there had resulted in a better display of merchandise and increased sales, and convinced me the same policy could be applied to a golf course and a pro shop.

At our club, and the same can be said of many clubs, cutting greens and fairways had been left to the discretion of the men operating the mowers. That the men should follow the line of least resistance, and cut where and how the cutting was easiest, was only human nature. They, rather than the original golf architect, had become the designers of our course. This seemed a logical place to start using the advice of my club member executive.

Over a period of several days as time permitted, I went out on the course and studied the fairways from all possible angles. The purpose was to determine where changes in the cutting lines would result in a fairer test of golf, without causing undue hardship to high-handicap players. In other words, this was to be something more than narrowing the fairways to make the course more difficult. Notes were made on these inspection trips and finally, armed with a generous supply of stakes, I established new cutting lines.

The greens were studied with equal care. Being easier to cut a square or rectangle, the majority of our greens had become squares and rectangles. Irregular patterns were designed that would not penalize reasonably accurate approach shots. This resulted in somewhat smaller greens, but wider aprons. The men with the mowers now follow the new lines for greens and fairways, and actually have less grass to cut than formerly. The better golfers at our club consider their course more interesting, and complaints from those less proficient have been negligible.

Another simple and inexpensive piece

Golfdom

of work has found favor with our members, and is worth trying on any course having more than one set of tees. Our course has three, each set identified by the color of the markers. In my shop during spare time I cut stakes 30 inches long from scraps of 2 x 4 lumber, and sharpened one end. The stakes were then painted in colors to match the markers on the tees. I also made a reel that would measure three distances—150, 200 and 250 yards.

Helpful Distance Markers

Our short course is indicated by red tee markers, and 150 yards from the markers, on each side of the fairway, I placed red stakes. White stakes were placed 200 yards from the white markers on the medium tees, and blue stakes 250 yards from the blue markers on the championship tees. The purpose was to give players a reasonable mark at which to shoot when playing the tees their golfing abilities justify. As color indicates distance, yardage figures were not painted on the stakes. Honesty compels the admission there was some confusion for a few days after the stakes were put in place, but after a short time the members found them helpful and expressed considerable satisfaction.

Brighten the Pro Shop

Another piece of advice from my merchant member, the benefits of which I saw in operation in his store and have copied, is well-worth passing on. **Clean up and light up your pro shop**, with emphasis on that portion used for the display and sale of golf goods. Painting walls and ceiling with bright and appropriate colors is not an expensive job. A strip of carpet in front of display case or counter will help a lot. Have plenty of light, fluorescent if possible, though you turn them on only to wait on a customer. To quote my adviser, "Most people, and certainly the class of people you golf pros cater to, are accustomed to buying personal merchandise in attractive surroundings. If you hope to obtain their maximum patronage you must make your shops equally inviting."

Birds Interest Members

My experience with birds—not birdies—started as a "no cost" project. How it has grown, and where it may end, is another story. Three years ago I knocked together—and knocked is the correct word—a few bird houses from small scraps of lumber. Please note I knew nothing about birds or the kind of habitations they prefer. Evidently the housing shortage extended to the feathered kingdom because my make-shift affairs were fully occupied shortly after being hung in trees around my shop. Many of the club members shared my pleasure in watching the daily life and antics of the inhabitants. One member, who has made a comprehensive study of birds, conducted informal classes that were

very interesting. In the fall he gave me a book containing plans for houses for various kinds of birds.

The following winter I made a few more small houses, this time according to plans, and in the spring they were promptly tenanted. Interest of the members increased with the expansion of the housing project, and it was decided we not only needed more, but also larger, houses. At this point we very definitely departed from the "no cost" category. Encouraged and assisted by the members I have just completed, for 1946 spring occupancy, a bird house to end all bird houses—until I see plans for a better one. It contains "apartments" for 108 families of martins, and will go through the door of my shop, but hoisting it to the top of the pole where it is to rest may require the service of a competent engineer.

The officers and directors of our club have prepared plans for extensive improvements to buildings and grounds, and funds are available. However, as this is written it appears certain material and labor for any purpose other than the erection of small homes is at least 2 or 3 years away. Anxious to continue low cost improvements until the more costly one can be undertaken, I have run out of ideas. More to the point, so has my merchant adviser. That brings us back to the matter discussed in the first paragraph. In future editions of *GOLFDOM* I expect to learn—and copy—ideas my fellow pros have used with success under existing conditions.

WALTER McCALLUM, DIES

Walter R. McCallum, 52, widely known golf writer for *Washington Star* died at Sibley hospital, Washington, D. C., following a 5 weeks illness. McCallum was born in Boston. His family moved to Chicago and he graduated from the University of Chicago. He was public courts tennis champion of Chicago and active in that city's golf tournaments prior to moving to Washington where he became a member of the *Star's* sports staff in 1916. He was active in golf competition in Washington and at one time was champion of the Washington Golf & Tennis club. He covered most major tournaments and was prized as a friend by many of the nation's amateurs and pros and sportswriters. All considered him exceptionally competent. He became a war correspondent for the *Star* in 1943 and waded ashore on D-day in Normandy. He remained in France until the Yanks captured Cherbourg peninsula, then came home on a brief leave. He returned to be with the 101st Airborne division for a year, staying with them through the Battle of the Bulge.

Walter is survived by his widow, Mrs. Helen McCallum and his daughter, Mrs. Helen Jane Boggs.