

Club Public Relations Program

By EUGENE A. CONKLIN

The Jefferson County GC, Watertown, N.Y., has a planned public relations and publicity program which can be adapted with infinite variations by other golf clubs.

As a starter, the Jefferson County club has a planned method of working hand in hand with local fraternal and social groups of the community such as the Elks, Kiwanis, Rotarians, Eagles. One of the members of the club's board of directors makes it a point to give a short lecture before dinner meetings of each such association, such lectures being of the "human interest" variety, explaining the many items behind the smooth and efficient running of a golf club and replete with incidents which have occurred on the course from time to time. Every such group is interested in securing at no cost an after-dinner speaker of this nature and it keeps interest in the club at a high pitch during the entire calendar year.

Secondly, at the clubhouse are several unique bulletin boards. On one board are displayed notices of forthcoming social events (banquets, smokers, weiner-roasts) sponsored by various fraternal and social groups and the club itself. Each such group appoints a representative to insert such notices on the bulletin board. In this fashion friendly relations with virtually every social organization in the community

are being given continuous promotion.

On another bulletin board are inserted photographs of "key" businessmen and businesswomen of the community who are golfers as well as business executives. On the "executives board" are placed pictures of execs and their wives, children and other family members. Any businessman or businesswoman may supply photographs for such an insertion. This is not construed as out-and-out publicity. The club believes that businessfolk are interested in each other and are genuinely desirous of knowing other business people.

The Jefferson County club is interested in the small fry of the community. By arrangement with the coaches of local junior high and high schools in the community school golf teams meet in weekly championship matches. As a corollary there are "Father and Son" and "Mother and Daughter" golf matches every other Saturday and Sunday in the morning during uncrowded months and from 6 through 8 P.M. during summer months. There is nothing especially unusual in all this but what is distinctly on the novel side is the fact that any youngster may become a junior or member of the club and may compete with other juniors in his or her age classification after school evenings, 2 nights weekly in special events the club

Chick Harbert, surrounded by youthful autograph-seekers at Tam O'Shanter tournament, shows smart public relations in developing the kid golf fans. If the pros would get the bobby-soxers like Sinatra did, they'd have to hire caddies to carry their bankrolls.



provides for the younger generation. Photographs of young golfists are placed in the high school and junior high school papers which not unnaturally result in favorable public relations for the Jefferson County club.

The club has arranged with a local photographer to be at the course a portion of each afternoon to take photographs of golfers in action. Prints are presented to players with the compliments of the club and duplicates are retained for display in periodic photographic exhibits in the clubhouse. The photographer charges nothing for his services as obviously he makes many worthwhile business contacts for the future. Care is taken not to take photographs unless the players are in the "photographic mood" but the majority of players wish photos of themselves in action.

The Jefferson County club has worked out a display which is placed in the lobby of several local banks showing local businessmen and women in action on the course with tie-in posters reminding bank patrons that "golf makes health and health makes wealth." Banks willingly cooperate as such displays get extensive attention. The Watertown library and the art classes of the high schools have worked out an exhibit showing "Golfing through the ages" showing photographs and sketches of famous golfers of past and present, early golf games, the history of golfing from its inception and golf in other countries. Such exhibits interest library browsers and immeasurably aid the Jefferson County club in its membership recruiting.

Perhaps most unusual publicity effort is the weekly award for the best poem, cartoon, humorous anecdote, or witty saying involving golf or with a direct golfing slant. Anyone in the community, member at the links or no, may compete and the best efforts are viewable weekly at the clubhouse. Every golfer has a little of the creative artist in him somewhere and with that thought in mind such weekly contests are excellent public relations ammunition.

Finally the Jefferson County GC keeps a record of the birthdays of its members and the anniversaries of couples (both of whom are golfers). It sees to it that every link member signs the day and month of birth and anniversary date in the club register and a few days before such dates, a personalized greeting card arrives with the compliments of the JC organization, in addition to a congratulatory epistle.

The Jefferson County club has one more interesting public relations promotion worthy of chronicling. It has an exhibit of golf clubs and golf equipment used years ago by community members. Contents of this exhibit are changing from month to month. The purpose of this exhibit is to reveal the changing nature of golfing equipment down through the ages.

"Are You A Gope?" Campaign Improves Golf Manners

Portland, Ore., which claims to have more golf courses per capita than any other city in the world, has been benefiting from a golf courtesy educational campaign conducted by Rudy Lachenmeir, sports editor of radio station KXL.

Rudy's campaign involves clever references on his sports broadcasts which have a strong appeal to sportsmen in the northwest, hunters and fishermen, as well as golfers. In that section of the country any outdoor sport appeals to most citizens and the golf etiquette campaign is not without interest to the rod and gun fans.

Rudy's offer to send inquirers his little booklet on golf courtesy, "Are You A Gope?" has brought more than 15,000 responses and has had a positive effect in making Portland golfers more considerate of each other and of the courses than is customary elsewhere. Rudy maintains that golfers' failure to observe golf courtesy is a matter of ignorance rather than of deliberate offense and for that reason has to receive tactful treatment. People are exceedingly touchy and resentful about being identified as ignorant but can be discreetly conned out of their own faults by having such faults attributed to others.

The "gope"—a term of Lachenmeir's own invention, is illustrated in the booklet by a block-headed figure who looks none too bright. Illustrations show the "gope" failing to replace divots, leaving his bag on the green, furiously pounding the green after missing a putt, walking through a trap and standing on the green marking his score while others are playing up. Al Stadium, treas., Oregon Public Links Assn., drew the illustrations of the "gope." Pres. Norm Tauscher of the OPLGA and other officers and members of the association collaborated in compiling the book. Cost of the book was shared by the following public courses: Broadmoor, City View, Colwood, Eastmoreland, Glendover, Lloyds, Rose City and West Hills.

The booklet defines a "gope" as "one who golfs like a dope" and details his derelictions. It accents the positive side by telling the performances of the courteous golfer and explains golf terms in a simplified way to make it plain to uninformed golfers just what is expected of them by golf rules and by other golfers.

The campaign is one that can be highly recommended to fee courses in other cities that can make a tie-up with a radio station or newspaper. Private courses in many cases could make good use of such a campaign as the standard of playing etiquette and consideration for condition and neatness of the course has slumped noticeably during the past 6 years.