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Don't Do It Yourself!

Monument or Monster?—Expert Makes Difference

By GENE O'BRIEN

Professional, Rolling Hills CC, Wichita, Kans.

MOST golf clubs can be persuaded to spend money to improve their facilities if earnest, informed members with good judgment can sell other members or, at least, the directors on the sound value of the improvements.

But by whose appraisal and under what conditions are the proposed improvements "sound value"?

Alterations to a course or clubhouse may be "monuments" to the foresight of whoever proposed or approved the changes or may be, as is so often the costly case, "monsters that will have to be destroyed after devouring far too much of the members' money.

The monuments — or monsters — can be one or more of many things: a new bunker, a new green, another tee, changes in the clubhouse or pro shop or landscaping alterations.

Progress vs. Criticism

If the changes become monuments to the foresight of their supporters the club progresses. If the monuments turn out to be monsters then the members criticize the board for throwing away money and the bad job has to be corrected.

There shouldn't be many monsters because today there is so much expert advice available through organizations such as the USGA and the National Golf Foundation and many individuals who are validly qualified to advise. I emphasize "validly" because of the great overabundance of people without adequate qualifications to advise golf clubs, especially on course architectural problems.

About the only department of club planning and operation that doesn't have a lot of experts—voluntary or mercenary—is club financing.

And when you get right down to facts, financing is problem No. 1.

Many Experts Available

When you consider the extent of expert information that is available, why should clubs waste time getting so many monster



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ideas rather than monuments. I know of one club that spent nearly \$100,000 in improving and changing its course without consulting a competent architect.

That club would have been better off if it had given the money to charity. If money of that kind were spent according to the plans and under the supervision of experienced specialists, it would have been a wonderful monument to the men who wanted the course improved. But they took it upon themselves to do the job and made a horrible mess of things.

Another club that I know of called in a capable architect to handle the building of its course and came up with a near perfect example of what an 18-hole layout should be. Everything down to the trees and shrubs were planted upon the advice of a specialist.

Studied Plans Before Building

Most professionals that I know respect the advice of experts in their particular lines. It's either that or go broke. For example: I have a new shop that's less than a year old. Before it was built I worked with the building committee and architect studying about 50 or 60 shop plans. I knew just about what I wanted — but, I'll confess, in an amateur sort of way. I

allowed a nationally known company to design my sales room. It would have been foolish and wasteful if I had attempted the job myself.

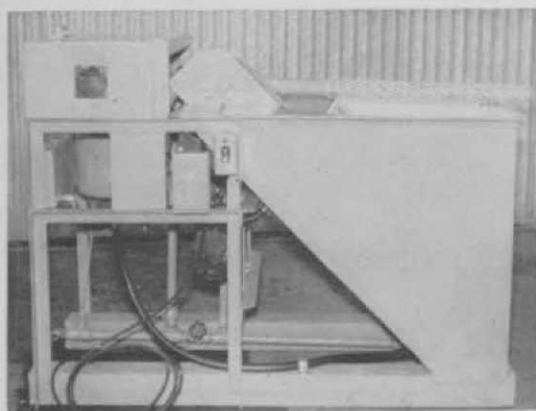
What do I now have in the way of a shop?

It is one of the most attractive in this part of the country and it is profitably functional. I get many compliments on it. But the compliments should go to the pros who designed and built it for me.

If you or your club are planning anything that involves spending a large sum of money, for heaven's sake consult the experts. Your ideas and dreams may be very practical and would enhance the beauty, character and operation of your plant, but don't allow them to become the final word. Let the experts have that and you'll become the hero who has built a monument.

There are a lot of inconsistencies in the golf business; maybe more than in others because of the nature of the way in which clubs are operated. I have seen cases where the directors have hired an attorney to fight parking violations, yet supervise the building of new greens, even to telling the supt. how it should be done. This kind of inconsistency can be costly, especially when it is necessary to call in an architect or construction specialist to rectify the mis-

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takes that have been made.

Whether you have a small club or a large one, whether you live in Shanks Corners or New York, you have available a world of brains and ability to help carry out your ideas and dreams. If you want a real monument, and want to save time and money while building it, call upon these people with ability. Otherwise, you are running a very good chance of rearing a monster.

Record Crowd Attends Midwest Turf Conference

A new record crowd of 600 attended the 24th Midwest regional turf conference Mar. 7-9, at Purdue University. The theme, "Controlling Weeds in Growing Turf," was developed in three sessions divided into golf courses, general turf and sod nurseries.

Robert Mitchell, supt., Sunset CC of St. Louis, was elected pres., and Ernest Schneider of Big Springs CC was elected vp of Midwest for 1960. Mitchell succeeds John McCoy.

Carl Bretzlaff, one of the founders of the Midwest Foundation along with Herb Graffis, Al Brandon and George Donog-

hue, reported on the initial organization and its growth. W. H. Daniel, executive secy., reported that the membership fees from 334 members in 1959 provided approximately \$10,000 in funds for research and education. Al Stanbury, a Purdue sophomore from Cleveland, O., received the 1959-60 GCSA scholarship at the annual banquet.

Fertilizer Controls Weeds

H. B. Musser, professor emeritus of Pennsylvania State University summarized his long observations that adequate fertilizer usage was especially important when chemical weed control was utilized. A highlight of the program was the Turf Quiz conducted by Tom Mascaro. Colored slides were used to test turf managers' ability to recognize the cause of damage to turf.

New on the program was a half day devoted to sod nursery discussions. Norm Goetze, extension specialist, farm crops dept., Oregon State College, reported on the organization of Highland bentgrass and Red fescue commissions in Oregon to support turf education among seed producers and users.

The Midwest turf field days are to be held September 15-16.