

Groups everywhere are raising hundreds of thousands, even millions, to finance new golf and social facilities. The dedication of the men and women who make up the steering committees of these new organizations is almost unbelievable. It takes courage, determination and a lot of time to organize, obtain the necessary number of members and then bring the club project to a successful conclusion.

This is true whether the committee represents a non-profit, member-owner club or a non-equity type with a possibility of profit for the founders. It's also true whether, as is so frequently the case in metropolitan areas, the new facilities are being built with proceeds from the sale of a previously owned golf course.

(The National Golf Foundation also has field reps operating out of San Francisco, Austin, Tex. and Chicago.)

Adequate Membership

Numerous groups today feel they prefer a small club of about 200 family members. Experience shows that many groups that organize with this small a membership in mind are successful. But the majority of these small clubs find sooner or later that they are forced through high maintenance costs to expand to 300 or 400 members. They then realize if they had obtained a larger membership initially they would have had an easier time of it financially during construction and may have been able to construct more

IT CAN BE REMEDIED

Lack of Experience is Biggest Obstacle in Club Organizing

—By **GEOFFREY S. CORNISH**

Because most committees that promote a course or club do so only once in a lifetime, it is natural that its members lack experience. Certainly, committees at the end of a project say if they had to do it over again they would go about some tasks differently. After discussion with these veterans, I would say that a dozen factors require more emphasis and thought on the part of fledgling committees if pitfalls are to be avoided. These factors are:

Start With The Foundation

It is of paramount importance that the valuable but free service of the National Golf Foundation be secured by the new group. Here, in New England, I have personally observed field representative, Harry Eckhoff, get group after group off to the right start. Without the field rep's aid, I cannot see how the committee can obtain all the data required to make correct decisions in methods of financing, annual dues, size of membership, etc. Actually, the services of the Foundation go far beyond these in assisting the new organization through all stages of getting a club operating.

elaborate facilities.

Occasionally, men get together with the idea of forming an organization strictly for golf and with no other social activities included. Some of these groups realize their objective. But in the majority of cases it is easier to promote a country club complete with pool and other family facilities than it is to promote something that is really a retreat for the senior male of the household. The trend definitely is toward family clubs.

Battle For Members

Getting the required number of members is a large part of the battle. Some fortunate clubs have waiting lists before construction is completed while others, perhaps the majority, do not fill up until after opening day. In some cases it can be years before total membership is reached. Obviously, considerable soliciting of new members is required. But the new club must not seek new members in too obvious a fashion. Human nature being what it is, people, rich or poor, seem to prefer to apply for membership if they are not too sure they will be accepted.

Effective publicity is of great importance in obtaining new members. This is achieved, first, through brochures and later through newspaper articles. Social events held long before new facilities are ready are useful to attract new members and to reduce resignations. Dances, cocktail and skating parties are obvious starters. Ingenious New England groups have made social events out of otherwise arduous stone picking parties. One group gave prizes for the family picking the most stone on newly seeded fairways, and also to individuals finding certain tagged stones on each fairway. Picking parties give the general membership a feeling of identity with their new club by introducing them to one of the inherent construction problems.

Moving the Fence Sitters

Some committees increase initiation fees at certain stages in their membership drives. For example, a scale of initiation fees frequently used in New England is \$1,500 for the first 100 members; \$2,000 for the second hundred; and \$2,500 for the third. The purpose of this increment is to encourage fence sitters to enter early when their money is most needed rather than wait until construction is completed.

Often this achieves its purpose, but doesn't always work out as planned. Experience shows the first 100 members are the easiest ones to get. These are the enthusiasts who really want a new club and who are willing to take risks. The second hundred are harder to get while it is infinitely more difficult to persuade the third hundred to join. Thus, raising initiation fees for each hundred members often makes it increasingly difficult to reach the final objective of a full membership.

Yet some inducement must be given to members to join early. One is to grant charter memberships to those who join by a certain date.

Piecemeal Building

Progress on a project depends upon the flow of new members into an organization. It has been observed repeatedly that this flow slows down after about 100 members come in. At this stage something dramatic is needed. The committee may resort to starting work on the golf course. This nearly always speeds up membership applications. There is a gamble in starting work with only about 100 members enrolled but often it is necessary.



You can bet this sign wasn't erected by the National Golf Foundation, PGA or any other group interested in promoting the grand old game. Apparently this board of education had to clean up after too many dogs and people and had to replace too many windows that had been chipped. There's one consolation, though: Golfers at least rate above trash.

Since many new clubs are built by a couple of hundred members, with the rest coming in later, some part of the total outlay must be postponed. Most committees in this position prefer to build the course and the swimming pool. A temporary clubhouse is then provided in the form of a cabana or converted farm building. Or, perhaps, just part of a permanent clubhouse is constructed. Most steering committees feel that after the course, a pool is the most important facility from point of view of enjoyment for persons who have already joined the club and in attracting new members.

Another means of postponing capital outlay is to lease land with an option to buy at a set price.

An anomaly sometimes observed is that of a new club, whose membership came in rapidly, being in poorer financial shape than another club where the membership came in slowly.

This results because the second group was forced to exercise prudence in spending. Usually, the first group flushed with success by its membership drive, spent money unwisely.

The same observation is frequently made where an old established club sells its former courses at what appears to be adequate sum for rebuilding, but after reconstruction at the new site finds itself in serious financial condition.

(Continued on page 78)



"ONE MAN OPERATION"



SELECT YOUR OWN HITCH!

Three Point or Universal . . .
Available as standard equipment.



MODEL 60
Tractor mounted unit
with self dumping hopper.

◆ gathers WET OR DRY

GRASS CLIPPINGS • LEAVES • ROCKS • BOTTLES
DEAD BRANCHES • PAPERS • CANS AND OTHER UNSIGHTLY DEBRIS

EACH MACHINE

guaranteed
by

LITTERLIFT

INCORPORATED
OLATHE, KANSAS

◆ maintains

PARKS • GOLF COURSES • BEACHES
HIGHWAYS AND OTHER CIVIC AREAS

Remove THATCH With
LITTERLIFT'S *Raking Action*

The "LITTERLIFT"

... is your solution to the cost-problem of maintaining your civic appearance—makes a clean 5 foot sweep at normal tractor speeds. Self-dumping hopper operates from driver's seat. Rubber "pick-up" fingers won't harm grass—actually stimulates growth.

Lack of Experience Hurts In Club Organizing

(Continued from page 28)

It is of utmost importance for even the wealthiest organizations to obtain a dollar or more in value for every dollar spent. There are plenty of instances where clubs which have spent much more than neighboring clubs wind up with less to show for the higher expenditure.

Although the turf might be better if allowed to mature longer, experience shows that a new club can fall apart unless a reasonably early date is set for an opening and it is adhered to. This may mean the course is rough on opening day, but the membership is always considerate if it can see that improvements are being made week after week.

Equity vs Non-Equity

Because of the failure of some promoters operating in several states to provide what has been promised and the ensuing loss of money to thousands of families who paid initiation fees, the golfing public is apt to look askance at clubs where memberships are purchased without equity.

Yet, there are hundreds of successful non-equity clubs run by civic (if profit)

minded citizens who have a sincere desire to provide the best in facilities. In fact, it is possible for non-equity clubs, through their efficiency in operation, to provide members with the best at the lowest cost and with a freedom from assessments that are the bane of many member-owned clubs. In short, there is a place for both equity and non equity clubs. But to be successful both types have to be governed by responsible citizens.

In arriving at construction budgets, every committee allots money for real estate, the course (including irrigation), clubhouse and furnishings and a pool if there is to be one. But there are other expenses oftentimes overlooked. These are for course maintenance equipment, maintenance of course after seeding is completed, maintenance of the equipment building, shelters, clubhouse landscaping, entrance roads, parking lot, other sport facilities, utilities (electricity, telephone, drinking water), septic tanks and leach fields, surveys, probe holes and other engineering data required for the clubhouse and perhaps fencing. There are, in other words, many ways in which to spend money in getting a course off the ground.

No one can deny that formation of a new country club is a formidable task.

MODERN



LAWN MOWER SHARPENERS

a complete sharpening
shop in one machine

Here's an opportunity to save time and gain accuracy in maintaining your lawn mowers. The simplicity of the Modern Sharpener makes it ideal for anyone to operate and turn out perfect jobs.

Modern precision grinding insures uniform contact of reel blades and bed knife over the entire length of the mower. Your mowers are sharpened true to one 1/1000th of an inch. No hand filing is necessary—blades are ground sharp to their extreme edges. The Modern has a combination grinding head that sharpens both the reel and bed knife with mower intact.

If you're sending your mowers out for sharpening, you'll save as much as \$8.00 per reel in some parts of the country. With a Modern, there's no time lost waiting for outside work to be completed. Your lawn maintenance men can keep the mowers sharp between cuttings.

Send the coupon below for complete details on Modern Lawn Mower Sharpeners.

FOLEY MANUFACTURING COMPANY
3451 5th St. N.E., Minneapolis 18, Minn.
Please send Modern Lawn Mower Sharpener folder;

Name _____
Address _____

But in the last few years my own observation has been that every group that has conscientiously struggled for a new club and used good sense in doing so has attained its objective.

Geoffrey S. Cornish is one of the best known course architects in the U.S. He lives in Amherst, Mass., on an intriguing street known as Fiddlers Green.

Western Pennsylvania GA Awards 100th Caddie Scholarship

At a luncheon held late in Nov. at Chartier CC in Pittsburgh, the Western Pennsylvania GA awarded its 100th caddie scholarship. At the present time, the 62-year old WPGA, third oldest golf association in the country, has 25 boys in school. All attend either the U. of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Tech, Duquesne, Washington & Jefferson, Indiana State Teachers College or Penn State University. The 100th scholarship, incidentally, was sponsored by WPGA's caddie alumni association. Chairman of this group is Dr. William Wietzel, first to get a caddie scholarship in the Pittsburgh area and one of the city's leading surgeons.

Typical of the young men now attending college under the auspices of WPGA is James Linta who caddied for several years at Beaver Falls CC where Carmen Clemons is pro. He is a freshman at the U. of Pittsburgh, was an exceptional student in high school and eventually hopes to enter medical school to study to be a medical missionary.

WPGA's caddie program is sponsored by funds raised among 60 member clubs. Charles K. Robinson is chmn. of the fund which was founded in 1939 and enlarged in 1951 when its contribution procedure was changed.

Royal Canadian GA Meeting

Annual meeting of the Royal Canadian GA will be held Feb. 9 in the King Cole Room of the Park Plaza Hotel in Toronto. Business that will be transacted includes the induction of officers, reading of reports and financial statements and a full report on the membership dues plan.

Gumm Heads Mid-Atlantic GCSA

George Gumm is the newly elected pres. of the Mid-Atlantic GCSA. Stanley Zontek is vp and Angelo Cammarota, sec.-treas.