

Accent on management

By KEN EMERSON

Executive Director, National Club Association

How can an enterprise operate effectively at the peak of its annual season when its working staff faces a dramatic cut?

This is not the exception, it is the rule for golf clubs all over the country when September brings a new school term and eliminates the labor pool that has been available all summer. School recaptures its student body at the very moment that a combination of good weather and golfing interest combine to tax the club's facilities and staff to the utmost.

Planning for this annual exodus of workers is necessary, and not always successful, though some of the problems it creates are self-solving. Swimming pools for example. Here the youngsters, our best customers, go back to school at the same time that the life guards wade into their fall season.

While some clubs keep their pools open beyond Labor Day, it is usually only a weekend operation.

Other areas of the club are not so fortunate. If the golf course has been using school age boys on its maintenance crews, it will have to compensate for the mass exodus in September; there will be a serious problem with golf car availability on week days as the caddie shortage makes itself felt; the clubhouse may feel the reduction in bus boys, housemen, and kitchen helpers.

More than one club manager has made the decision not to use employees who will leave him at the start of the school year and goes to great lengths to avoid it.

They canvas the homes in the neighborhood for housewives who represent a potential year-round staff pool; they arrange transportation to and from bus lines—in some cases, even buying a small bus for the purpose; they maintain employee

dormitories; and they even trade staff with city clubs whose business is usually limited during the summer and early fall.

For many clubs, however, these sources are not enough. Others find that their job openings are so much in demand—so much a part of the community's summer economy—that competition for the available positions begins in the early spring or even the previous winter. Such clubs continue to rely heavily on the school age group to provide the additional staff necessary to handle the seasonal load.

Planning is the key word for these clubs — and it begins in January when the program for the year is laid out. Club officers and committees should be alerted to the problem, particularly the greens, golf, and house committees, so that the membership will be aware of the expected difficulties and not plan mid-week events and projects that could be scheduled to take place on weekends.

What sounds like a good party or satisfactory trap reconditioning program when plans are made in January may not appear so attractive in September when staffing must be considered.

Where neighboring clubs make it possible, cooperative planning is worth considering. Programs can be staggered to allow maximum utilization of the staffs of *both clubs*.

All possible sources of staff should be considered. In addition to the sources mentioned earlier here are a few others:

- Colleges and Universities.
- Job Corps.
- Summer Job Opportunity Programs.

Most of all, *plan ahead*. Without a plan you face management by crisis — never an attractive prospect. •