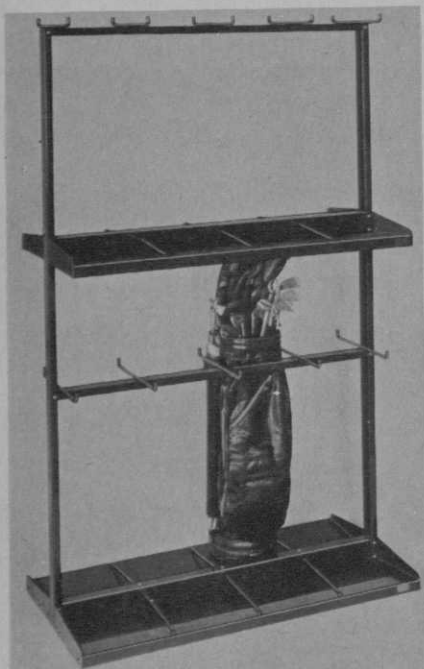


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by Herb Graffis

## SWINGING AROUND GOLF

### Pennies from heaven, it wasn't

Among New Year's resolutions of professionals and superintendents will be to pray for good weather. Nobody will ever know how bad 1969 pro shop business really was because figures for 1968 were abnormally good due to the boost the aluminum shaft gave sales.

Naturally, pros and other retail outlets and manufacturers tried to smile through their tears. But the tip-off was the pro credit rating check-ups in considering the Professional Golfers' Assn.'s Professional-of-the-Year awards. This is a delicate matter, especially since pros have been emphatic about top credit being an important factor in PGA membership. But for the first time in years there was talk about how many fellows were COD.

So 1970 starts out with the sharp reminder that most pro jobs mean that the club gives its pro the chance to assume risks in merchandising and service for the members, and that's about all. The salary, club cleaning and storage revenue generally fall short of meeting the pro's fixed expenses and a fraction of his payroll.

Harris, Kerr, Forster & Com-

pany's 1969 review of operations of 75 selected country clubs shows that the net cost of operations is 7.8 per cent higher than 1968. Course maintenance, for example, rose 5.7 per cent. Even those pros who handle their jobs exceptionally well said that their expenses were up almost 10 per cent in 1969 over the previous year, and revenue at some top clubs was off nearly 20 per cent. The sales slump was bad enough, but the lessons revenue drop was even sharper.

What 1969 added up to for some of those Professional-Golfers-of-the-Year was that for their outstanding service to their clubs, their members, the community and golf in general, the pros went into the red. Considering the increased cost of everything else to the golfer, first-class pro service remains the greatest bargain in the game.

The visit of Golf Course Superintendents Assn. president **John J. Spodnik** to St. Andrews and a few other British courses indicates that the association might be thinking of following the lead of the Club Managers' Assn. of America in holding a convention in Britain. The CMAA's 1971 annual meeting will be in London. GCSAA officials will have to consider the enormous cost to the big equipment exhibitors that goes with their convention. It's an important factor in the GCSAA finances. Whether or not exhibiting manufacturers will consider the additional expenses of shipping their exhibits and transporting their men to Britain is questionable. Also to be weighed is the clubs' attitude toward paying the expenses of superintendents. Now, the majority of top private, fee and public courses pay superintendents' GCSAA convention expenses, but it took a long time to get that item okayed in budgets.

**Johnny Stevens** now is pro

*Continued on page 38*

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## GRAFFIS

*continued*

at Wichita (Kan.) State University course. It used to be Crestview CC... Mission Inn & CC is the new name of the Floridan CC at Howey-in-the-Hills near Orlando, Fla.

More and more pros are owning and operating golf courses than you would imagine. **Tom Niblet** and **Dave McCarthy** own the Holly Ridge par-3 at South Sandwich, Mass. Niblet resigned as pro at Thorney Lea CC, Brockton, Mass., to develop the Holly Ridge property. With increasing property values of pro-owned courses, pros who are unknown nationally are so far ahead financially of the tournament big names pros it's no contest.

**Jack Isaacs**, one of best of the veterans, resigns after four years as pro at Willow Oaks CC, Richmond, Va. Jack is succeeded by his assistant, **Peter Hobson**, an English-born lad.

**Morgan Fottrell**, who helped make Royal Kaanapali, Maui, Hawaii, a major Pacific resort development, resigns and is followed by **John H. Schiebelhut**, formerly with Northern California GC...

Another personable young import, **Bob Verwey** of South Africa, quit the tour to become pro at Sandalfoot Cove CC, Boca Raton, Fla. **Jerry Stetson** from Hollywood Lakes (Fla.) CC goes to superintendent post at Sandalfoot Cove... **John Poole** now pro at Foxcroft CC, Jenkintown, Pa.

**Milt Coggins Sr.** is building Prescott (Ariz.) CC, which will be open for play in spring, 1971... **Carl Bradley** is supervising construction of Turtle Creek Club, Jupiter, Fla., and will stay on when supervising is finished in April. **Bob Rosburg** resigns as pro at Westwood CC, St. Louis, to return to tour. Bob signed as golf director for the Sheraton hotels. The Sheraton chain and motel chains plan increasing tie-ups with courses. □



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