



by Ken Emerson

## ACCENT ON MANAGEMENT

### **NCA convention dialogue:**

### **Stephen Early asks clubs to change now for tomorrow**

*As reported last month, this month's column will be given over to comments made by Steve Early during the recent program in San Francisco, "Operation Aware: A Civil Rights Dialogue." Mr. Early is a native of Westchester County, N.Y., and attends Middlebury College. He is an active participant in anti-discrimination activities.*

*Please keep in mind that the program was presented not to provide Early with a platform, but to report to clubs what is happening in this sensitive area and what is being said and done by vocal and active critics of the private club industry. The following are excerpts from Mr. Early's remarks:*

"The warning or lesson contained in what I have to say is that in the coming years clubs are going to have a harder time attracting young people. Primarily because more and more young people are going to come to reject a system which evaluates people, not on the basis of their character or their individual characteristics, but on the basis of their membership in a racial, religious or ethnic group. I

think younger people today are beginning to place a greater emphasis on the value of the individual, on what kind of person you are regardless of what kind of people your parents were, what skin color you have or where you go to church. I think they are going to object to any group which says "this man is a Jew, we don't want him because he's a Jew, we don't care what his qualifications are as a person.

"I'm here today because I've been involved since last summer in a local campaign to eliminate, or at least reduce, the level of racial and religious discrimination in a number of private clubs in my home town.

"The most significant direct contact that I have ever had with a private club came when I was employed by one as a caddie for three years. Neither I nor my family has ever been a member of any club. I had some further contacts as a member of a high school golf team and I had the opportunity to play at a number of club courses.

"There were many things I noticed about private clubs that would be pretty hard not to notice. The most obvious thing was that membership in all the clubs was generally restricted to people who were fairly wealthy because it was only people with money who could afford the cost of membership.

"More important, perhaps, was that money was not the only qualification for belonging to these clubs. There was a pretty clear distinction between clubs which were primarily for Jews and clubs primarily for Christians.

"This long-standing pattern of discrimination remains very much the same today as it was 20 years ago; the so called 'Christian clubs' are still closed not only to non-Christians but of course also to non-whites. While this latter charge is a little harder to substantiate, it is nonetheless true.

"Now the same thing was true until only recently with respect to

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## EMERSON

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adult guests who were black or Jewish or in some other unacceptable category. Club members who brought people like this to dinner were expected to gain some kind of clearance ahead of time so there could be proper seating arrangements made and precautions could be taken to avoid unpleasant incidents involving other less tolerant members who might resent the presence of such guests. Today, I've been told by people who are active in these clubs, this kind of thing has changed. Policies are much more liberal.

"My concern with the club system really stems from the fact that in this kind of suburban situation, clubs are major institutions. They play a significant role in establishing the social patterns of the whole community and have an enormous influence on the thinking and the outlook of its young people. So many kids in the area belong to the clubs and for them the clubs are a way of life. They grow up in them. They take advantage of the golf and tennis facilities; they learn to sail and swim there. They spend quite a bit of time at the clubs and enjoy it. But very few of them are ever really asked to consider—very few ever consider for themselves—the extent to which the clubs discriminate against many of the same people they willingly associate with at a public high school. The same Jewish or black youngsters with whom they date or socialize in a public high school, they unthinkingly discriminate against in their clubs. Unless something is done to bring to the attention of these young people the nature of the situation, unless something is done to ask them to change both the attitudes of parents and the policies of the institutions, the clubs, which their parents support, these kids are going to grow up to be very much like their parents. I don't consider that to be a particularly happy prospect.

"You may have noticed what happened to the fraternity system on college campuses. There has been a move away from the kind of discriminatory practice that for many years characterized fraternities. On some campuses fraternities have become quite liberal; there is incredible competition for black students which results often in nine or 10 fraternities at one school pledging as their first choices the few black students who are interested in joining. It's quite a change from only a few years ago, and I think it represents a trend—a trend that people whether officers or managers of a club, should be aware of and should think about.

"This is the kind of thing that people are becoming more aware of. They are going to demand that politicians and other prominent people justify their membership in clubs that are not open to everybody in the community. There's going to be more pressure brought to bear on individuals and groups which condone or practice social discrimination. And there's going to be a greater rejection of the values of the private club system because the system continues to deny the individuality of so many good and worthy people." □

*Next month I will conclude with remarks from a man with a more conservative view as well as one with a "the middle of the road" view.*

### Technical schools open

Three two-year technical schools, which should help meet the need for qualified golf personnel, have been established. For information write: the School for Irrigation Technology, South Plains College, Levelland, Tex., attention, B. P. Robinson; the School for Golf Course Operations and the School for Landscape Operations, both a part of Lake City Junior College, Lake City, Fla., to the attention of Jerry Chessman.

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