

Feedback

Liked article, but . . .

Congratulations on a fine article in the November/December issue of GOLF BUSINESS headlined "Mountain course greens up quickly thanks to seed, sod, and irrigation." The Broadmoor's Chuck Clark and architect Edwin B. Seay, with Arnold Palmer, have combined talents to produce a truly magnificent addition to one of the nation's great resorts. One has to see it to believe that the Broadmoor South does, in fact, fulfill the edict set down by the late Spencer Penrose that everything added there be "permanent and perfect."

The article, however, does have a couple of serious omissions: the irrigation system is from Toro and features custom-made controllers designed and built by Cyril Stultz, a member of the Broadmoor staff.

John R. Skidgel
Golf Course/Government
Marketing Manager
The Toro Co.

Keller gives service too

I'd like to clear up a misunderstanding about the Walter Keller retail operation.

In your January issue you refer to us as one of the "downtown shops." (Actually, we're in Westwood, a suburban neighborhood of Los Angeles.) You quote Spalding sales rep, Red Walters: "Those places are just mass display at the lowest prices. There is no merchandising there."

As for "mass display," you're right about that. A \$400,000 inventory of pro-line clubs, \$200,000 worth of golf shoes, and an inventory of golf bags that keeps me awake nights.

As for "lowest prices," it would be more accurate to say that we price *competitively*. We're in business to make a profit, not to give the equipment away. So no matter how tough the competition, we never mark down to cut-your-own-throat prices.

As for "no merchandising," someone is dead wrong there. No merchandising implies "no service." We have three indoor driving ranges with Electronic Swing Analyzers and videotape replay. Club fitting is carefully done by our staff of professionals. We give a money-back guarantee if the clubs aren't right. Plus free lie and loft adjustment on irons.

Recently, California Golf, which operates 17 courses in this area, asked me to manage shops at two of their clubs. We installed Keller inventory and club fitting policies at Sunset Hills Country Club and Camarillo Springs Golf Course. Within three weeks, sales increased 85 percent. Apparently, the country clubs like our brand of merchandising too.

In 1965, Southern California PGA President Howard Smith and I started a new teaching system in the Los Angeles High School Golf Program. We staged benefits to raise money for the first Training-practice clubs, nets, mats, balls and audio/video equipment. (I donated thousands of dollars, and also equipment from my shop.) Today, I'm assisting the National Golf Foundation and the National Association of Golf Club Manufacturers to expand the High School Program nationwide.

I started as a teaching pro in 1934, then the PGA tour, time out for World War II, followed by driving ranges in Chicago and Los Angeles, then on to my present shop and golf school in Westwood, which has grown and grown with golf. It all adds up to many long, hard hours of work, and a dedication to my profession.

So, please! Don't classify me with the golf discounters who give no service, and take the money and run.

Walter Keller
Los Angeles, Calif.

● There has been some misunderstanding about just what was and was not said, and by whom, in Managing Editor Nick Romano's January article, "Take advantage of the salesmen who call on your pro shop."

Careful reading of the section headed "Downtown pro shops in the west" will show that it was Romano, not Spalding salesman Red Walters, who used Walter Keller and Jimmy Powell as examples of downtown pro shop operators in Los Angeles. Furthermore, Romano was not implying that Keller and Powell brought their colleagues malicious or destructive "trouble" — for, as the letter above clearly shows, they are honest and honorable businessmen — but rather "trouble" in the form of stiff competition.

It was not our intention in the article to question the way Keller or Powell run their businesses. Our intention was merely to point out that competition from shops such as theirs, not allied with any specific golf club or course, had troubled the club and course pro shop operators who are the majority of our readers on the pro side of the business.

Furthermore, what was said in the article should in no way reflect negatively on Red Walters or compromise his credibility. All he was saying was that what club pros have to offer is *service*, since they do not have mass volume sales to enable them to sell their merchandise at lower prices. — *Ed*.

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Speaking out

As a member of the PGA, which does not do enough for the individual member to promote his stature locally or anywhere, I believe that the individual member must also help in the necessary "sale" of the product. Therefore as a constructive critic of the system now being carried out, I feel that a critic must be able to formulate some workable, factual, better program or go with the current system. My part, and the part of each and every PGA member, must be carefully and intelligently put into motion to do this selling job of the individual PGA member to all golfers and course operators. I have devised a small contribution as follows:

I have spoken to four groups to date this winter and have about six more to go before the season for Ohio golf begins. These groups consist of mainly the local Kiwanis clubs on the west side of Cleveland, and I have one other business group also. The groups consist of from 25 to around 100 persons depending on the membership of the groups, they consist of men from all types of business and include in two cases ministers of churches. Most are golfers or at least participate to some degree each year in golf efforts.

My program starts with a few questions in order to find out for my interest the "average" golfer's knowledge of what the PGA means to Him: Did he take any lessons from a bonafide professional or just in the group therapy instigated by various city and school programs yearly? Did he buy his equipment from an expert or from other sources? Then I drift quickly into a background of what it takes in time and effort to become a real PGA professional. I get my answers by the reaction which always shows up with smiles or head shaking, and if I feel I cannot read the people, I ask for a hand show but do not make a big or embarrassing thing of it. Not to bore those listening, I make this last for 5 to 8 minutes — unless questions are offered, and then they are answered candidly. I make it known at the outset that I will cover several phases of golf generally, and questions are welcome at each change of subject.

I move quickly into dispensing with fear of the rule book of golf, carefully covering the fact that the rule book is the best ally of the golfer, rather than a penalizing factor. This area could be an entire program, as interest is great once the golfers find out the facts and how to use the book. On some programs I talk of the tour and carry a *Golf World* copy of the year-end figures of earnings for reference as to the so-called trail of gold. Most golfers have no idea how little most of the contestants really make as relevant to probable costs to the participant.

Inasmuch as I do not have written notes for a formalized speech, I have never been one to speak canned, as I always come up with little items to insert as I talk and as the mood of the

listeners is evident. I hate listening to programmed speeches with gestures on cue and the like, therefore, I won't treat others as I don't want to be treated. My notes, the few I have, are figures and reminders to be said or not as I desire at the time. I have been studious with my reading and do not pretend to know it all, but I know where to find out what I want to know and that is more important when making an entertaining talk for interested listeners. It is up to the "talker" to create the interest.

I also have a quick lesson in golf in the event that I have a little time or feel I wish to change the program with reference to the listeners interest. Most programs are only supposed to last for about 20 minutes, but I always live up to my part at that point and any run-overs are the fault of the listeners. There are always run-overs and requests for another program. Acceptance is phenomenal, and it is the easiest "sale" I have ever made in my life — and I have sold something all my life.

I can't for the life of me figure why the national as well as the local sections can't now, nor couldn't have in the past, seen the writing on the wall and started something like this.

Charles A. Putsch
Class A PGA Member
Cleveland, Ohio

Thanks enough

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to all the staff of GOLF BUSINESS for a job well done.

Your constant effort to bring up-to-date information on what is happening in the world of golf business is superb. The addition of the Idea File has brought many worthwhile thoughts to my attention, while the departments bring great insight on people in our industry, new products available, and events we may wish to attend. Yet your true color comes through in your feature articles. These articles provide in-depth information on a vast range of subjects pertaining to our business, again showing your eagerness to serve.

Thank you for spending the time, the money, and the effort to keep us informed.

Scott Harrill
Glen Cannon Country Club, Inc.
Brevard, N. C.

Do you have a gripe with the industry? Or praise for some facet of it? Voice it in **Feedback**: a forum for your ideas on topics we have or haven't covered in GOLF BUSINESS. Readers interested in expressing their views can write to Feedback, GOLF BUSINESS, 9800 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44102.

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