

# Selling Club to Members

By HARRY O'HAGAN  
Manager, Sunset Ridge Country Club

**S**ALESMANSHIP, as one of the manager's duties, may be relegated to a dangerously minor detail due to the press of other important and urgent duties, but it is one of the important parts of his job.

The successful manager sells his club to its members and keeps it sold. The foundation of every selling campaign is the product and here is where the manager figures as a manufacturer as well as the sales manager. Primarily he must make his service better than the other fellow's. Then he has the basis for a continuous and energetic solicitation of patronage on the right platform, better value for the money. There is a common tendency to think of the manager's province as restricted to the departments that the average club member thinks of as merely a vest pocket edition of a hotel and restaurant business, operated solely for the convenience of the members and guests, with the commercial side of the picture out of sight until the board sessions come at the end of the year.

Several factors are serving to correct this condition. Development of the golf club managerial ability has been hastened by competent men who have been working in the golf club field. One of the first signs of recognition of the calibre of men now at the top of the golf club management professional has been the appointment of these men as general managers of their clubs, with duties and responsibilities in keeping with their titles. This involves, in some cases, general supervision over the entire grounds, as well as over the operating details of the clubhouse. Under this arrangement the general manager serves not only as an executive but as a liaison officer between the committees and the major employees. The outcome is a co-ordination of each phase of the club's work so its selling proposi-



HARRY O'HAGAN

tion is made better and the club benefits from its increased and satisfied use by its members.

Many clubs have a continual conflict between committees that see their own problems and their solutions probably quite plainly, but fail to visualize the picture as a whole. Harmonizing these committees and putting their recommendations into work quickly and efficiently is a big job for the club general manager and calls for some man-sized work as an organizer and arbitrator.

The club official will realize what the manager is up against in preparing a good selling proposition when he will think of

the club as a business like the official's own. What would happen to the sales curve if the owner's manufacturing, purchasing, accounting, shipping and sales departments were tangled up all the time? There has to be a practical operating head with authority if the enterprise is to proceed steadily and profitably. This idea of general management as the foundation of a successful campaign for selling the club to its members is available in a practical way. There are plenty of able, hard working managers who will make it go with the co-operation and trust of the club officials.

## Campaigning for Trade

It has been my experience that the idea of energetic selling of a club to its members is one quickly put over in a club that is favored with alert elective officials. I had one case in the east where my club's dining room business had run down so it was being operated at a decided loss. The club house was ideally situated; a short drive from the center of an active manufacturing town. Members of our club were active in other clubs around the city, Rotary, Kiwanis, and other business and luncheon clubs. I sold them on the idea

of having their luncheons out at their own club, where they'd get as good luncheon as money could buy and a change of scenery and escape from distraction that would add pleasure and business value to their meetings. I also played up the comparison of home meal costs and the labor-saving ideas so ably used by the washing machine and other household device manufacturers, so we built up the evening meal business. This was done by a few words here and there among the members. Naturally the wives were for the idea and with their O. K. the house accounts for meals could increase without the criticism that might come from the actual head of the household when the nominal head is thought to be spending too much money at the club.

Following this line, the first year I was with the club I doubled the business, and during one month (May) made the club a profit of \$1200 out of its dining room. I made a specialty of bridge luncheons and special parties. By picking out the most active hostesses in the city at the start I was able to get this detail over quickly, for it soon became the proper thing to hold the really nice parties at the club.

At Sunset Ridge since we opened, three years ago, we never have lost in any department and have showed a fair profit, which is almost a record for a new club. The club probably has the youngest average membership of any club in the Chicago District. The members are lively, but discriminating spenders, and the way that we have kept their entertainment money coming to the club in a volume is by food and service that we confidently rate as the best one will get in the entire Chicago District. By establishing and maintaining a character of cuisine and service that has won a reputation we have been able not only to sell Sunset Ridge to its members for extensive use, but each of the members is a salesman for the club. The members boast about the meals and the service at their club and the force never throws them down. We always have big attendance at the Saturday dinners and dances during the season, no matter what the weather may be, and our business on Thursdays and Sundays when the domestic help at the homes of the members are taking their half-holidays, is large throughout our operating season. We do a big bridge luncheon business and I have found that close co-operation with the women who are giving these affairs, al-

though full of exacting details, always pays the club and builds our business. I see to it that the tables are decorated in good taste with flowers from our own grounds, and have the force trained so the efforts of the hostess are minimized.

### Remember the Children

In your selling campaign, don't forget the children. We always have some party favors in stock and I make it a point to give the youngsters of the members some little thing to carry away with them. This is one of the easiest and surest ways to sell a club as a popular family eating place, and about all it costs is a little thought and cheerfulness on the part of the manager. He soon will find the youngsters are doing a great job of boosting for the club and for the manager and his force.

With the volume we do, we are careful to see that we are not kidding ourselves on the gross. I not only supervise the buying of all foodstuffs, but have supervision of buying of all supplies used for clubhouse, grounds and greens. We are operating our place, not to make big money, but certainly to run comfortably ahead of our losses.

## Traveling Golf Club to Study Southern Courses

MARCH 17 will mark the tee-off of the third annual session of the Training Trip Tourists, an array of ordinary and experts golfers who have been in the habit of making a spring golfing trip of ten days' duration each year, traveling in their own specially allotted cars on the Illinois Central. All golfers are invited.

A number of club officials from the Chicago District and other middle western points will be on the trip and expect to make a close study of the recent rapid development in southern golf.

Laurel, Miss., with an exceptionally fine course, is to be the first stop. The next five days will be spent on the gulf coast, Biloxi, Pass Christian and Gulfport. Pine Hills, Gulf Hills and the Biloxi Golf club's new 18 are the lately completed additions to this section. Columbia, Miss., New Orleans and Memphis also will be visited before returning to Chicago, March 28. J. V. Lanigan, general passenger agent of the Illinois Central, Chicago, is arranging the trip for the golfers as part of his able efforts in boosting golf development along his road's line.



# Equipment Care That Pays

By JOHN MACGREGOR  
Greenkeeper, Chicago Golf Club

THE subject of golf course maintenance is receiving more attention than it has heretofore from the men who are responsible, so I believe it is well for me to remind my fellow greenkeepers at this time that there is one branch of our profession which has been given very little thought. It is the care of golf course equipment.

First comes machinery, which includes tractors, green, tee and power mowers, compost mixers, compost screens, compost distributors, seeders, wagons, spraying outfits, etc. Treat this equipment as something of great importance. There should be an understanding that when a machine does not operate properly there is something materially wrong and the cause most usually is an accident, or that the operator does not fully understand the working of this particular machine.

When anything does break it should not be repaired with a piece of wire, but should be inspected by someone who understands machinery, and will, if necessary, secure the parts to repair it from the manufacturer. The most important point is to teach the operator what he should personally do to keep the machine he operates in proper working order. There are a great many who need much instruction, and who do not appreciate the value of proper care in the operation of the particular machine. I want to impress on everyone concerned that the operators of machinery be given a thorough understanding of their responsibilities. The importance of lubrication should be made clear to them. When they have finished for the day (especially cutting grass) the hose should be turned on the machines to free them from grit and grass. All bolts and nuts should be gone over every day and tightened where necessary. Such instructions usually come with machinery, and should be followed more closely. When the equipment has been taken into the barn at the end of the season, work should be started immediately on the overhauling.

## Overhauling Pointers

The tractor should be the first to receive attention, the work to be done depending

*\*Paper read at meeting of Mid-West Greenkeepers' Association of which Mr. MacGregor is president.*

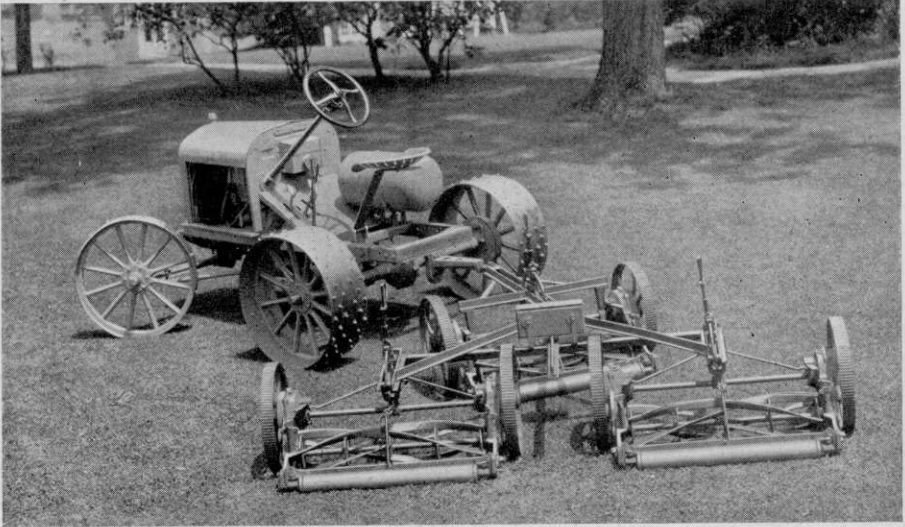
on the age of the machine. If the tractor has been in use for only one season all that is usually necessary is cleaning out the carbon and grinding the valves, going over the bolts and nuts on the chassis and body. All of the grease cups should be taken out and cleaned ready to be filled before operation. If the tractor is two years old or more, it is possible that you have had trouble during the season with fouled spark plugs, which is usually an indication of leaky piston rings. The best way to remedy this trouble is to take the old rings out and replace them with new ones a little oversize, then the connecting rod bearings may need taking up. There may also be worn knuckles on the steering gear that may need replacing. If you are not familiar with this work it will pay you to spend a few hours in a garage once in a while. You will be surprised at what you can accomplish on your tractors.

Next comes the mowing equipment. Every unit should be taken apart and thoroughly cleaned. The cleaning can be done with kerosene and an old brush. Then all of the bearings must be examined as they frequently show a great deal of wear. If so, they should be replaced as it is impossible to set a mower properly with loose bearings. You may find worn gears. When replacing never put a new gear with a worn one, as the old gear will wear out the new one in a very short time. When ordering parts from the factory always order two of one kind, then you will be prepared for an emergency. It is nearly always necessary to replace the bottom knives to start the season. The reels have to be ground at this time. Those who have a lawnmower grinder are very fortunate, as the grinding is of short duration. Those who have no grinder must resort to grinding with emery, which is a laborious task, unless they send their units out to be overhauled. This should be avoided if possible as it means an added expense which can be eliminated.

There are probably a good many who do not know that by grinding the reels too frequently they are shortening the life of the mower. The grinding during the overhauling is all they require. It is only necessary to have an even surface so that the



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bottom knife touches at all points. During the cutting season, the reel should be set so that it just touches the bottom knife, not tight, as this causes undue friction and wears the reel. The green, tee, and power mowers should all receive the same treatment. If inexperienced at this work it is well to mark parts or lay them in such a position that you may put them in their proper place when assembling.

When taking inventory, which should be an annual occurrence, it is very easy to check up on your tools, making notes on replacements and new equipment, then when making up your budget for the year these notes will aid you wonderfully.

Every greenkeeper should be able to take care of his equipment, thereby reducing his budget materially.

All of the machinery should receive a coat of paint. In fact every piece of equipment should be painted, including the tools, as it prolongs their life and removes that dilapidated appearance which everything gets after it has been in service any length of time. If these methods are strictly adhered to by all, especially those who have not given this very particular branch of the profession the care it most decidedly deserves, they will find a most decided reduction in their maintenance budget.

## Notify GOLFDOM of Club Changes

When there are elections or appointments of new president, greens chairman, manager, professional or greenkeeper, please notify GOLFDOM at once.

GOLFDOM is edited expressly for these five men and is to be sent to them, personally addressed, free each month.

Please notify us of names and addresses of these officials at once, to check our present lists, and keep us advised of all changes.

It will help your club to get the most practical benefit from GOLFDOM.

GOLFDOM

The Business Journal of Golf  
225 N. Michigan Ave. CHICAGO

## Local Rule Suggestion for 1927

“Every ball in play shall bear a distinctive marking which will not only identify it immediately in play but will definitely establish its ownership when found by anyone.”

### Under Such a Rule—

Play is accelerated  
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Caddies may receive *honest* compensation for balls found—  
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***This is unquestionably a matter  
worthy of official club action***

The Fulname Company, 707 Southern Railway Bldg., Cincinnati, Ohio will be glad to furnish detailed information upon request.

# Budgets Cut Golf Cost

By H. M. WADE and E. S. MOORSS

**B**UDGETING, in some form or another, is generally displacing the trial and error method of golf club operation. Although a properly prepared budget is not the easiest thing in the world to set up, many clubs find that it warrants its existence by its influence in making committee activities thoughtfully and thoroughly planned instead of allowing committee errors to make their first bold public appearance along with the annual deficit.

The budget system at the Charlotte (N. C.) Country club has brought the club from a deficit basis to a self-supporting status. The history of the Charlotte budget and its method of working is described by H. M. Wade, president of the club, who says:

"On account of the fact that committees of business and professional men who are chosen to manage the affairs of a country club are busy men, it is very difficult for the finances of a country club to be economically expended. Hence the wisdom in preparing at the year's beginning a budget covering every possible expense of a golf course and a budget covering every possible expense of a club house, and then having this budget thoroughly approved by the Board of Governors.

"The Charlotte Country Club for three years has been operating under a budget system and it has proven to be a money saving institution and each committee lives within the budget prepared at the beginning of the year.

"The budget for the upkeep of the golf course and grounds of the country club is prepared with the greatest possible care, each item of expense being gone into and a definite sum set up to cover that item for the year. When each item of expense has been thoroughly covered by an item in the budget then the total budget is prepared and submitted to the Board of Governors for their approval, rejection or modification, all depending upon the prospective revenue of the club. When this budget has been approved finally by the Board of Governors, the committee in charge of the golf course and grounds is instructed that they are to spend such money as wisely and economically as possible and that, under no

circumstances, are they to exceed the amount set forth in the budget for the year to cover the maintenance and upkeep of the golf course.

"Each of the three years since this budget system has been in operation in our club the committee in charge of the golf course and grounds has been able to save a considerable percentage of the budget as a surplus during the year.

## Course Pays Own Way

"As a result of this budget system during the past two or three years the upkeep and maintenance of the golf course and grounds has been taken care of from the golf fees almost entirely so that the regular membership dues can be applied to the expenses of the club house and other incidental features of club life.

"In other words, under the budget system our golf course and grounds have become self-supporting and we believe in a few years we shall be able from the income from golf fees alone, not only to maintain a good golf course, but to do whatever construction work is necessary from time to time in changing certain features of the course.

"Under this budget system our club has been able to keep out of debt, has been able to pay off practically all of its current indebtedness and has been able to retire quite a considerable number of its outstanding bonds.

"We would not attempt to consider the operation of our club except under a budget system, wisely thought out and wisely prepared at the beginning of the year as we have found that it is the only business-like way to handle the financial affairs of the club. It is an easy matter for a Board of Governors to appropriate funds for every miscellaneous purpose that may be submitted to it because no one has given previous thought to such objects.

"We are now contemplating the employment of a club manager who shall have complete charge of the grounds, golf course and all exterior activities of the club property and place this capable person in charge of the work under a definitely provided budget at the beginning of the year and we believe by this progressive plan that we will be able to save

several thousand dollars over our present expenses."

At Minneapolis they also have found that the budget is a great promoter of businesslike interest in club operation on the part of committee affairs. The Golden Valley Golf club has been using the budget system in cutting the cost of golf. The club adds to its budget system as an operating control factor a logical line-up of the organization's directorate. E. S. Moorss, president of Golden Valley, tells the story:

"A few years ago, when some of the officers of the Golden Valley Golf Club commenced to consider whether a private golf club could be run on a budget and be run successfully, they were confronted by the statement from a great many who had had more or less experience in handling the affairs of private golf clubs, that it could not be done. The golf club was so constituted that a budget could not be adhered to, and, if it could, there would be no advantage derived, critics claimed. Nevertheless, the officers, after careful consideration, decided that they would try it out, and since that time the Golden Valley Golf club has been run on a budget and run successfully.

### History Rules Budget

"In the first place, in preparing a budget, it is necessary to estimate as accurately as is possible the income that may reasonably be expected for the year, and naturally past experience must be considered in arriving at these figures. It is obviously foolish for any club, individual or business, to spend more money than is being received from incomes. If this is done, there is but one alternative for a club to pursue, and that is either raise the dues for more income, make an assessment or borrow the money. If the latter, it must be reckoned with at some subsequent date, and, if either of the former are resorted to, it, to say the least, has unfavorable comment from the members of the club.

"After arriving at the probable income of the club, it was thought advisable to divide the club into departments under the various committees. All golf clubs have their greens committee, golf committee, house committee, the games and pastime committee and so-forth. Besides that there is the administrative expense, other fixed charges or expense. It is obvious that each of these different departments are entitled to a part of the income from

the club compared with their respective requirements, and again by comparing past experience a reasonable amount was arrived at. It, of course, was necessary to confer with the chairmen of these various departments or committees, as you please, in arriving at the amount that they would require for their particular departments and the officers who put this budget into operation were very much surprised with the interest that these various chairmen of departments showed in trying to give the maximum service for the minimum of expense and keep within the budget allotted them, so much so that the club feels that after the few years of this operation it has delivered better golf and better service for considerably less money than was obtained previously. Naturally it is necessary for the chairman of each department to know what expenditures are being made in his particular department and keep a check on them in order to see that the budget allotted him is not exceeded.

"Golden Valley has been fortunate in having business men willing to spend some of their time looking after these details, and it probably is not more fortunate than any other private golf club in this respect. Somebody capable must be at the head of the different departments as well as the whole operation, and someone must be responsible for expenditures as well as conduct of the departments. Naturally these things take someone's time, and without efficient men on the Board of Governors to manage the affairs of the club and efficient workers on the various committees looking after the details in their particular department, there will be a lack of interest from the employes in each department, and this in turn will result in lack of efficiency and waste of funds.

"It has been found that appointing the chairman of the various committees from among the members of the Board of Governors, wherever it was possible or at least having a member of the Board of Governors on each of the committees handling the operation of the club other than the president, who is ex-officio member of all such committees, has greatly added to the efficiency as the committee is then in close touch with the Board of Governors and the Board of Governors are equally in close touch with the work of the committee.



# THE SEED YOU BUY

**I**N THE final analysis, there is no single maintenance item on a golf course that is as important as the seed that is bought. On an average course, the annual expenditure for seed is less than 5% of the yearly budget and yet it is the one item upon which the bulk of all other effort depends.

Even on new construction, the seed cost is out of all proportion to its importance. A new green costing from \$500.00 to \$1,200.00 for total construction will have used less than \$100.00 worth of seed.

No matter how well the soil has been prepared or how fully the thousand and one little details have been taken care of; if the seeds you plant are not right, it is largely wasted effort. This is why we emphasize at all times what we term "The Henderson Standard of Quality" rather than our prices.

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Send us a list of your requirements and you will be surprised to find that the highest quality after all costs but little, if any, more.

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The new part of the Crystal Lake clubhouse, opened by Mr. Smeltakopf, was added to the club's original home which is the remodeled old house shown at the left

## Opening Is Tough Task

By O. M. SMELTAKOPF  
 Manager, Crystal Lake Country Club

I DON'T recall a manager ever having said, "I have the most delightful job before me this year—that of opening a new golf club." The manager who opens a new club house has a burden of woe that he must bear and keep smiling, for the members, impatient, are quick to magnify any of the unavoidable disturbances during the period of opening and the manager finds himself at the receiving end of a list of minor complaints.

Opening a new club is complicated by the fact that the officials of the organization invariably decide to open the club the first big day that the golf bacillus gets in its bite, Decoration Day. This combination of a general holiday crowd and the throng attracted by the club opening solely, overwhelms the new organization before it has a chance to get functioning smoothly. Then also there is the matter of help at the opening. With the proper kind of help the element of well-trained personal service and the resourcefulness of the employee will go far to offset any of the missing details. In club openings the manager far too frequently finds himself handicapped by an astonishing lack of facilities for the help. Especially in the case of country clubs rather distant from the centers of metropolitan districts does the club manager have to do some tall planning in getting for the employees the living fa-

cilities necessary to attract and keep them. When this condition is discovered it is usually too late to rectify it in time for a perfectly conducted opening. But such conditions as this are what determines the ability of a manager to care for his job. If everything had been planned and provided prior to the manager being put on the job, life would be too much of a sweet dream to be true.

It has been my observation that the managers are given to understand that many of the details attendant upon club openings are to be handled by committees. This would be wonderful, had the committees lots of time to spend on the work. They do start out with good intentions, especially the house furnishing committee. After the supplier of the bulk of the furnishings has been decided upon, there comes the place where things don't dovetail. Some committeeman's wife has urged the use of something that doesn't fit into the scheme of things. Another has taken a fancy to some extra furnishings. Countless other little elements creep in and the result is a costly operation, with a flood of criticism in its wake. The experienced manager knows that these happenings are on the books and prays that he will be allowed to get on the job early enough to tactfully steer the eager and