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And as good businessmen, they won't commit the money until they're sold on the expenditure. So when it comes time to face them, here are some of the things you should point out.

Point #1: The Duffer Demands More.

Today's golfer is more sophisticated than ever before. He has seen, and many times played, some of the finest courses in the world. He recognizes the value of a good course. And if yours is sub-par, he'll go elsewhere.

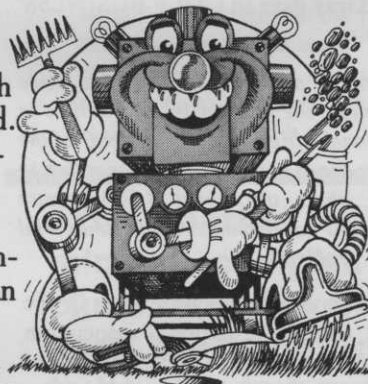


With this more sophisticated golfer comes the need for more sophisticated golf course maintenance. Heavy player traffic has increased the work required to keep the turf in top condition. So jobs that were once optional are now mandatory. Where spiking a green used to be sufficient, today it also needs deep aeration.

All this dictates the use of specialized equipment that wasn't available ten or even five years ago. Equipment that will enable you to build and maintain a top flight course, and help avoid special turf problems that could prove extremely costly.

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In the past decade, the price of labor has tripled. The same number of men must do more work in less time to give you the same value for each labor dollar invested. Mechanized equipment allows you to trim hundreds of unnecessary man-hours. One man can now cut more sod in an hour than six men used to cut in six hours. Or that same man can aerate 18 greens in a few hours instead of a few days.



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Which brings us to the third point.

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Equipment life should be a prime consideration when you select a manufacturer. The longer a machine works, the more it does,

and the less maintenance it requires, the better your investment. And here's where we'd like to put in a little plug for Cushman and Ryan turf equipment.

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Harry Gray: CMAA president speaks

For more than a quarter century, Harry Gray has been a club manager. With his only formal education what he could pick up in restaurants, Gray started out in foodservice back in 1937. Currently national president of the CMAA, Gray has been involved in the national aspects of the organization since 1960. During that time, the native of Orwigsburg, Pa., served as a regional director for the association, besides being on various committees dealing with CMAA business.

Gray started his career as a club manager at the Forest Lake Club in Columbia, S.C. in 1950 and was in charge there till mid-1955, when he took over the managerial reigns at the Edgeworth Club in suburban Pittsburgh. He remained there till December, 1965. He was then on his way to the Lancaster (Pa.) Country Club, where he served till February 1, 1969. Gray then moved to Oakland (Pa.) Country Club and managed there till December 1, 1973. At that time, he left Oakland to go to his present position as general manager at Exmoor Country Club in suburban Chicago. Following is a recent interview Gray gave to GOLF BUSINESS' Managing Editor Nick Romano:

Does the CMAA have a membership problem? Of the three trade associations involved in the business, the CMAA is the smallest in numbers. According to your national office only about 1,800 of the total approximate 3,000 members are at golf facilities. According to the National Golf Foundation, there are about 4,500 private facilities. Just about all them would have some sort of managerial position. Is there a membership problem?

Gray—I'm not certain myself at times why there's a difference in the numbers. I think first we must realize the national association totally depends upon local chapters for the development of membership. I think what you find at times in the local chapter areas is you have two things affect you. One is the lack of interest on the part of a lot of local members on endeavoring to offer the opportunity to managers in their area. Secondly, you have some chapters who are very firm in their beliefs that our association does not require size, but more want the quality of the professionalism of the manager. In this particular area, I think you'll find this retards potential growth. We recently completed a meeting of our membership criteria committee, at which time we re-evaluated our guidelines for eligibility for membership in the association. We have already reworked that completely and will open the door for many people who are in our industry who have not had an opportunity to take advantage of our association.

So, right now there are some plans in the working to maybe adjust to not necessarily a larger membership just because of the numbers, but based on more quality membership?

Gray—The object of our association states very emphatically it's to promote and advance friendly relations between and among persons connected with the management of clubs and other associations in similar character. To encourage the education and advancement of its members and to assist club officers and members through their managers to secure the utmost in efficient and successful operation. Quite honestly, we feel and when I say we, I'm speaking for the membership criteria committee, we have failed in our obligation to abide by the object of our association. We have been reticent to offer the opportunity to people in our industry to join the association and we're going through some of the changes we're recommending. Hopefully, we can convince our membership they should extend the privilege to people. One of the individuals who probably is hurt the worst by his inability to join the association is the new manager, after taking over a club. Our current guidelines require he manage the club for a year before he is eligible to join the association or he be an assistant manager of a club for a period of two years. With that type of a guideline, the new manager is definitely hurt. One, he probably



"When you talk about people under 30 years of age, you're talking about a reduction in interest in the private clubs. The word club still reflects what we lived through in the 1960s. The status symbol of the establishment and the negativism that existed with it."

needs the association more in his first year of operation than he does later. It isn't correct to say he doesn't need the association, but the educational program and all and fundamentally, he's restricted from having that opportunity when he really needs it. We are endeavoring to correct this situation.

Is the CCM program successful? There are supposed to be about 565 of them right now. I guess you're one of them. Out of a big membership, is it successful relatively speaking?

Gray—It has been very successful. The testing program we installed a few years ago has had somewhat of a retarding effect on the opportunity for people to become certified, though. Our members who are above 50 or 55 years of age looking down the road towards possible retirement 10 or 15 years away are very hesitant at that age to sit down and take a test. It's been many years since they've finished high school or college where they're accustomed to testing procedures and they are reticent and very careful about exposing themselves.

Much like the problems the PGA is having with recertification?

Gray—Same type thing. We had originally selected five textbooks on which these exams were given and have found our managers who have taken the tests, perhaps the first time may fail one section of the five, but upon taking the other section later have been able to pass it and become certified. The primary question there is, are you really judging the man on his ability to manage the club or are you judging him on his ability to read a textbook and remem-

his mind on management

ber what he's read to the point he's able to answer questions that are placed upon him? Our certification committee is endeavoring to decide now which is the best technique to be used for the purpose of testing.

The long range planning committee's is looking at the financial problems some private clubs are having. Has the CMAA adopted any kind of national policy that would help club managers in these specific clubs help the management of these clubs or help talk to the members that own the clubs work these financial problems out? There's been an awful lot of talk about financial problems but it seems no one has taken any action.

Gray—Financial problems at a private club are, of course, the individual club's problem. It does affect the total industry. We have endeavored through our education program to make the manager more professional in his ability to handle all segments of the club operation. They must know the food and the beverage, personnel, labor, labor costs, accounting procedures and understand financial statements and what goes into the development of financial statements to be more cognizant of control of the club operation so they can assist and keep the club in a better financial position. We have not, being an association of professionals, endeavored to establish any mandates as to what our managers, members of our association, should do in private clubs as a policy towards assisting in control of financial conditions to where the club is on a more sound basis.

Why is that? Just because you don't think it's any of the association's business what the clubs do?

Gray—What the clubs do certainly affects the members of our association. We endeavor to give our members, through the continuing education program and our seminars as much up-to-date information and knowledge as we possibly can that relates to club operations and to their ability to perform properly and efficiently for the club. We don't endeavor to tell them in any form of a dictatorial way or a policy way what they must do, must not do.

People in the industry say the trend is away from the private country club and maybe the NGF figures back this up and maybe it's going towards the residential development. Is the CMAA keeping abreast of this and also are you planning any kind of increasing educational effort to get the member ready so he could be hired at this kind of development?

Gray—Yes, in our continuing education program, we will be offering a specific course on property management and real estate development. What we are planning to do is offer this on a three-year basis of a continuation of this primary theme, preparing our managers to move into the current condominium complex type development club. Recently in Houston, I looked at a place called April Sound which is 65 miles from downtown. A 27-hole golf course. Director of golf for the facility is Davey Marr, a former PGA champion, internationally known and also a commentator on ABC-TV golf telecasts. There are very handsome condominium facilities, property on which they have homes that have been built there, swimming pool, the lake, the small marina, all of the facilities that we normally would find at an average club plus the built-in membership living in the area. We've got to prepare our people to be able to handle the problems and ramifications of this type of development.

What do you think about a development company, management company, like the Club Corporation of America, which comes in with their own trained people and runs a club for the membership? Do they have club managers that are in the CMAA?

Gray—Yes, they have managers on their staff running their clubs who are members of our association.

Do you anticipate utilizing these people to help convey this development idea to the rest of the membership?

Gray—Whether we would use CCA managers, I'm not certain.

Do you think club membership is still important for those people that can afford it? Dues are going up and in services, a lot of clubs are cutting back and there's discussion people in the 20-30 age bracket, upper middle class aren't really interested in joining clubs.

Gray—Generally, the private club as a status symbol for the upper middle class as we have known it to be for years still retains some of that status. It still retains status for those who are affluent enough. The status of social growth and also the opportunity to participate in sports activity within a confine where they know they can enjoy themselves and share time and effort with people of similar social backgrounds is still attractive. When you start talking about people who are under 40 years of age, or perhaps you might say under 30 years of age, you're talking now of a reduction in interest in the private clubs. The word club to a lot of those people 35 and under still reflects what we lived through in the early 1960's. The status symbol of the establishment and the negativism that existed at that time towards the establishment and clubs were part of it.

“The market is changing. Condominium complex type development clubs look like the future of the business. We've got to prepare our people to be able to handle the problems and ramifications of this type of development.”

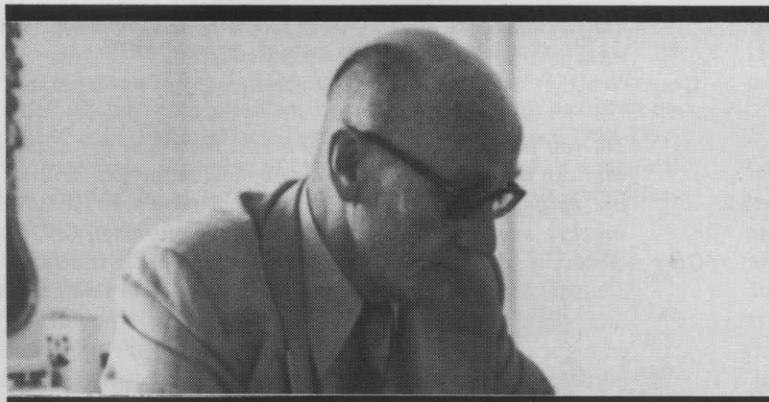
Are there any kind of club recruitment programs? Many club managers or club presidents have some sort of hesitation about that word recruitment.

Gray—Let's say there's not a specific recruitment program, but I can give you a feel of what happened right here at Exmoor. We've had young men who have grown up here, who played their golf here as 12-year-olds, 15-year-olds, 20-year-olds, who at the time they reached 24 had to make a decision since they were no longer a dependent member of the family. Whether they would or would not join the club in their own right. They've enjoyed curling with the men and the adults because this was another sports activity they were exposed to as a junior through the program we run here for children. Suddenly, we found because of the initiation fee and the dues structure, they were going elsewhere to join clubs which were offering the opportunity at a much lower rate. Our board faced this problem last fall when we lost, I guess a second or third son out of our membership to another club. We established a more reasonable initiation fee and a more reasonable dues structure. We dropped from an \$800 to a \$200 initiation fee. We dropped from \$60 a month to \$20 a month for the junior members.

That really has to hurt a club. You've invested a lot of time and probably a lot of money into cultivating this youngster and then all of a sudden he's gone.

Gray—What the board did when they established these reductions in rates, they also established a maximum number of young men they could take in. To protect the sons of members who might be interested, the club turned around and set the priority system, so the son of a member would have preference if he's on a waiting

Harry Gray: A Club Manager's Perspective



"I think there is a saturation point in the members' eyes as to how much dues they can afford to pay. Increasing the dues will continue because the increase in normal inflation is something we can't control."

list to join in that category, would have preference over a young man who is endeavoring to join who is not a son.

Has the CMAA ever adopted policy on the general manager concept? There are an awful lot of people in the association for it and you're a general manager.

Gray—We have never made a formal statement on this. The primary reason for not having made a formal statement is we did not desire to antagonize the other two primary trade associations. The men with whom we work, the golf professionals and the superintendents. We are all living with our own philosophies on this particular thing. Generally, most private clubs are finding a need to go to the general manager concept. They no longer can devote, as individual board members, the time required to properly oversee and control the function of the various departments of the club. They find also they need one central control especially from the standpoint of communications and finance. This equates to developing in this situation where the general manager concept becomes involved. One man has to stand up and be counted for the total performance of the club and its operation.

Do you have that situation at Exmoor? Do the superintendent and pro both answer to you? How long has it been that way?

Gray—Yes, since I came here.

Is there any animosity between the various associations about who will get the general management positions? I noticed at the GCSAA national conference two years ago in New Orleans they had a seminar with a lot of superintendents worried about it. Lately, a lot of golf pros are concerned about it.

Gray—It has caused some conversations both locally and nationally. Under the old system of club operations with committee function, committee chairmen serving, the superintendent and the golf professional reporting to committee chairmen enjoyed a great privilege of absentee ownership. They might have one meeting a week with the individual chairman to whom they're responsible. The rest of the time they were free to do as they wished with no control, no supervision. Five years ago, I was up in Albany, N.Y., to speak to superintendents, professionals and managers of that area. The subject was general management. I found, there were three men sitting in the room who were superintendents, who had been made general managers of their respective clubs. It falls back on the point, I've always made. It's the club right and responsibility to select, if they go into this concept, an individual either from their staff if they have that talent or secure the talent elsewhere. It's a requirement, that if they select their current pro or superintendent, they must replace that individual in that particular respective job so he functions as a general manager. He then has the key department head in the position which he has vacated.

Of course a lot of clubs haven't done that. They've just cut costs and not hired another man.

Gray—This is true, they haven't hired the extra pair of shoes to fill in. It's very difficult to function as general manager if you also have to function as a superintendent at the same time or function as a pro or function as a regular clubhouse manager as well.

Does the association have any figures on how many of its members are general managers?

Gray—I don't believe we've ever really taken count.

Last March in Skokie, Ill., the PGA had their first annual General Manager Seminar. What does the CMAA think about it and also the fact you didn't have anybody there to speak at this function and the GCSAA did.

Gray—Do you know why? The PGA didn't ask us to participate.

What do you think about the PGA starting this program up? The GCSAA has talked about it but there has never really been any kind of formal seminar other than at the national conference.

Gray—I think the association has the right to offer that type of service to its membership. We must be aware of the fact the general manager must operate in the concept he is the administrator of the operation. And he must use the technical abilities and expertise of his department heads. The same as the club manager using the expertise of his chef. He must count upon those men to give him the advice and guidance of specific techniques and information required in their respective areas, so he can be aware of their problems and perhaps give them some input towards solution to them. But certainly, not be the man who decides that yes you should go out and water the greens today. This is kind of where you count upon the ability of the superintendent to do his job or to involve yourself with the professionals in the extent you tell him how his boys in the shop should function.

Is there any kind of legislation pending on service charges that could be thorny for club managers in the future?

Gray—The majority of clubs today are handling things on the basis of a service charge rather than on the basis of tips in the private clubs. Now the area that gets involved here is what the club does with the service charge it collects. Some clubs will collect a service charge and not give any of it to the employees except by paying them a higher hourly wage rate than is generally paid throughout the area in which the club is located. Other clubs take the service charge and pay back all of the service based on the waiters name on the check in the form of gratuities to them and then report it as income which is taxable. Then other clubs will turn around and take the service charge and share part of it with the employees in the form of monthly bonuses or retain some of it for perhaps Christmas funds.

Gray—Some clubs in the country have had unions move in. In the Detroit area, the Teamsters represent the superintendents crews. Is this a problem for the future?

Gray—Predominantly, union problems in the club industry are in city clubs in major metropolitan areas. New York City, Detroit, San Francisco, are places where the local hotel and restaurant union is strong. There you will find unions have moved into the private clubs. Now you also find places like Pittsburgh where they endeavored to unionize one of the city clubs and the club was able to keep the union out only because they were paying 10 or 15 cents an hour higher wage than the union was locally getting in the hotel industry for the same positions. The private club continued to maintain this policy. If the union negotiators affected a new contract at the hotels, with increases the club automatically increased to just a few cents above what the union contract called for.

Do you think increasing dues is a trend to continue or will it level off— If not, will it hurt the growth of the industry?

Gray—I think there's a saturation point in the members' eyes as to how much dues they can afford to pay. Increasing the dues will continue because the increase in normal inflation is something we can't control. Our electric bill in the last year and a half has gone up better than 30 percent because of what the Illinois public utilities commission has granted the electrical company. We can't control that kind of an increase. We have no relationship with it whatsoever. We can't even go look for another source. We can do

this with products we buy, but you can't do it with some utility operation. We must be aware that every time we affect a dues increase in the private club industry, we perhaps reduce the possibility of our members utilization of the club facilities. If a member is spending \$1,500 a year and he's paying let's say \$1,200 dues a year and the dues suddenly go up to \$1,400 a year and he has been spending about \$2,500 a year for his pleasure at the club, so that when the dues go to \$1,400, suddenly he's going to have to somewhere think about reducing his other expenditures at the club in order to maintain his budget level at the \$2,500 figure. When dues increase, patronage drops off a little bit on the part of the members.

What's the structure like for a club down south for instance? The northern season is shorter for golf. I'm a golfer, if I'm not into paddle or if I'm not into curling and there's no indoor tennis facilities or indoor pool, does the member in the north get a lot less for his money than the member in the south or are dues higher in the south to account for the 12 month season.

Gray—Dues are more reasonable in the south, generally speaking. Of course, you have a higher tax structure normally on your real estate property taxes in the metropolitan area versus the southern areas. You have more 12 month operations down there than you have in clubs up in the north. The golf season ends in October and from then until April, the member can't play golf. He ceases to use his club in many respects. The northern member usually plans a vacation, if he can, during the winter months to go south and

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play golf somewhere in Florida or the west. So, the monies he would perhaps normally be spending with you at the club are being spent elsewhere. The club loses that potential revenue. Down south they have other advantages in their club operations. In the northern metropolitan areas you usually find a fairly good caddy program, at mostly your good clubs. In the south, you find practically no caddy program, all golf cars. That's very fine revenue. I just came back from a Houston club where greens fee income is over \$200,000 a year. Their golf car income is over \$100,000. There's 100 cars running every day. Take that picture of revenue coming in and you can maintain a low dues profile. Come up north and the average private club generates \$20-\$30,000 a year off the car program. Greens fee program maybe another \$20-\$25,000 if it's reasonably heavy.

As far as cars are concerned, a trend is pros losing the concession and it going back to the club, and when it goes back to the club, assume that this is being administered to by the club manager. Is this what you find and is the club manager making the buying, renting and leasing decisions or do the pro and superintendent still have a lot to do with it, from your own experience?

“We recently were involved in a White House briefing, in which the President's staff tried to let our industry be aware of what the government is doing. But outside of having the opportunity to spend two hours with these people and be briefed by them, that is about as far as it went.”

Gray—I would say generally that on golf cars at a private club, the final decision, of course, is made by the board.

Is the trend to lease?

Gray—I think the trend is to own. The professional is probably responsible for the golf program and may be responsible for supervision over the car maintenance man. And in effecting a good program, his salary may be increased somewhat for this added responsibility. The superintendent generally in most of the clubs really has nothing whatsoever to do with golf cars. The clubs usually have a maintenance man handling golf cars and generally he's responsible to the professional.

What do you think about the real estate tax situation, especially in the east? There is an awful lot of grumbling from club presidents and managers that taxes are getting way out of hand.

Gray—Oh yes, taxes continue to go up. The problem that we all live with. Government values land on the basis of what an acre is worth on the market, and taxes us on that. If you were going to build a property development here, we'd close our doors. We'd have to. There's just no way for the club to be paying \$150, \$175, \$200,000 a year in real estate taxes.

What causes high taxes to clubs? Is it just outside pressure from community groups? I get the impression people in state legislatures or their constituents look at private golf courses and clubs as old fashioned playgrounds for the rich and that kind of thing. Is that what stops Greenbelt legislation?

Gray—That plus the fact you have pressures from school boards needing funds with which to operate school systems today.

Is there a way, CMAA chapters can lobby for you at state legislatures where this legislation is begun?

Gray—Well, the National Club Association was founded primarily for this principle and purpose. In New York state they have a state club association. The managers group in the Westchester area got it off the ground along with the help of others upstate. They have been working towards trying Greenbelt legislation, but they haven't got it yet.

What about as far as CMAA is concerned? From a vested interest, if clubs continue to have financial problems backed with tax problems that kind of paints a bleak picture for the club manager. What can you do? Is it just an insurmountable problem the association just doesn't know how to deal with?

Gray—No. If you go back in the history of our association, it was about 1963 when our association assisted in the founding of the National Club Association and its development. And it was through the managers of our association in the private club industry endorsing and getting their clubs to take membership in the National Club Association that it became a viable instrument for the purpose of lobbying on tax and legislative matters. In 1965, members of our association attending the conference in Washington, D. C. went up on Capitol Hill in mass to their congressmen and senators and held meetings with them during the week to make an effort to reduce the 10 percent excise tax that existed on club dues and we were fortunate enough to be able to get good ears and some action. And it did get wiped out. That was the last move our association made in tax and legislative matters.

What about this White House briefing in February?

Gray—The White House briefing in February was merely the President's way of establishing liaison with industry. His staff tried to let industry be aware of what the government is doing and to hear industry's problems. But outside of having the opportunity to spend two hours with these people and being briefed by them, that is about as far as it went. We gave them an awful hard time on EPA.

You mean from the green area?

Gray—From the standpoint of insecticides, fungicides and pesticides taken off the market and are no longer eligible to be manufactured.

I thought the CMAA would be much more worried about OSHA than EPA. OSHA seems more of a threat to you. Is it?

Gray—I think most of the managers in the industry today have got their houses in the proper order in relationship to OSHA. I don't say we can't get hit. The private clubs have not been bothered by OSHA too much.

What are some of the other problems you discussed at the White House?

Gray—The grading of meats. We reflected to them the need for top quality prime beef especially what we have in the club industry, and we felt they were reducing quality of the meats made available because of the grading system they were establishing.

Can your members really tell, really know, or is it just club managers and chefs that know about this grading controversy?

Gray—I don't think the average member is even aware of the fact meats have been down graded. □

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Congressional Country Club: An image of serious business

Private country clubs may become a less important factor in this industry as time goes on. Strong clubs will continue, weak ones will pass into obscurity or be brought up by municipalities or independent owners.

It's doubtful Congressional Country Club will ever have to worry about the whirling industry golf has become in the last few years.

Situated outside Washington, D.C., in suburban Bethesda, Md., Congressional was founded in 1921 when a man named Herbert Hoover became its first club president. The doors didn't really open till 1924, when Mr. Hoover and the club threw an inaugural bash and 7,000 people showed up.

Like the times, though, the fortunes of clubs then were a lot shakier than they are today. Congressional held on until 1940 and was reorganized into the family type operation it is today.

Politicians and bureaucrats still hang out there, but they are less obvious and certainly don't stick out in the total membership of 2,200. Washington businessmen, lawyers, lobbyists and even some senators and representatives fill the roster at CCC.

Certainly, more people will notice the club this month, as the touring pros visit the 7,000 yards plus championship course for this year's PGA tournament. But it won't effect the way Congressional has been run for years. The course has top management in club manager Kim Saal, superintendent Warren Bidwell and club professional Bob Benning.

Even though, private clubs are not in the business to make money, Congressional is indeed bottom line conscious. Benning's pro shop generated \$220,000 in gross sales in 1975, while Saal handled more than \$1.3 million in food and beverage the same year. Bidwell handles a maintenance budget well into six figures.

Probably the true focal point for the club, Benning's pro shop handles thousands of rounds a year. The graduate of Purdue Univer-

sity has a staff of four under him including teaching pro Hal Slaton, shop manager Bob Costello, assistant Les Burke and Lynn Hammond, who handles the ladies apparel and bookwork.

"A lot of important people visit this shop, so I have to insist our personnel be sharp, courteous and knowledgeable. These people are used to good service," Benning told GOLF BUSINESS' Nick Romano. "Our keynote is on service. I instill this into the shop people. Pay attention to the customers. Don't ignore them. Indicate to them, they are important people."

Benning has held true to that philosophy throughout his stay at CCC, which started in February, 1973. Between graduating from Purdue and starting with his first assistant pro job at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base's golf course, Benning did a stint in the Marine Corps, then went into the graduate business school at the University of Southern California.

The native of Dayton, Ohio, left his hometown job at Wright-Patterson after only a year and headed for Oakmont Country Club in Glendale, Calif., in 1961. A year later, it was back to the east coast and an assistant position at Mountain Ridge Country Club, West Caldwell, N.J. Benning was there through all of '62 and some of '63, but in the winter of that year went back to California and Thunderbird Country Club in Palm Springs.

Finally, the back and forth trips from coast to coast stopped when Benning landed his first head professional spot at Plainfield (N.J.) Country Club. The job spanned from 1964 to

early 1973, when noted pro Bill Strausbaugh recommended Benning for the Congressional post.

Experience and education have combined to make Benning one of the top merchandisers on the east coast. His shop staff subscribes to the theory that 25 percent of the membership does 75 percent of the business in the shop. "I have to concentrate on good customers. We put heavy emphasis on softgoods. When we merchandise, the most important thing is to display products well," Benning commented.

Smart displays are the rule in the CCC shop. Keeping packages free of dust and always neatly wrapped is essential for added sales, according to Benning. Lynn Hammond is in charge of the women's apparel and her displays underline the merchandising approach the Congressional shop has undertaken.

Women's softgoods are in a separate area of the shop and fitting rooms are available to the ladies. Only two or three blouses or skirts of the same design are kept in stock. Since most of the ladies at the club buy their softgoods in the shop, this alleviates the problem of the same outfits being seen on more than a couple of members.

Benning still has his operation geared on a 40 percent markup and it has proven successful. Shoe sales are a high point of the total sales with more than eight percent of gross sales in this area. In '75, Congressional sold 150 pairs of men's shoes, 75 pair of men's street shoes and a combination of 75 pairs of women's shoes and street shoes.

Street shoes seem to be the way the future of Benning's additional shoes sales may be heading. He regularly confers with manufacturer's representatives to get product information on new lines and then conveys any trends or changes in the market to his assistants.

Cash flow is not a worry for the Congressional shop. According to Benning, all aspects of the golf operation help to give him a good personal income and an optimistic shop picture. In a rough, breakout, 48 percent of his income is generated in the shop, 20 percent on a salary from the club, 10 percent from the golf car operation, 15 from the driving range and seven from lessons. Play will continue to go up, with the addition of nine holes starting with construction following the tournament. Total holes at CCC will then be 36.

Looking out over the future of the industry, Benning is optimistic for the young professionals coming up. "The training is so much better today. The PGA is telling the kids what to expect when they get into the business. It seems the manufacturers are a lot more understanding in their terms as far as the young pros are concerned," the 43-year-old added.

Communication with the membership is another important factor in the Congressional

Several lounges are available for the Congressional membership. Beverage service at the CCC is well respected in the Washington, D.C., area. In 1975, the club grossed \$1.3 million in food and beverage sales.



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shop. Benning urges his staff to talk to the membership and attempt to answer any questions they might have about the product.

In essence, Benning tries to carry quality merchandise. For example, he concentrates his equipment purchases among a small number of well-known brands. In the hardgoods area, the CCC shop sold 50 sets of woods and 60 sets of irons in '75.

Golf equipment amounts to 25 percent of shop sales, balls nearly 14 percent and apparel, 30 percent. A successful shop often depends on the visibility of the pro in the club and on the course, "I have an open door policy. I try to get with the members as much as possible. A pro must stay away from the pitfall of playing with just one bunch," Benning noted.

If good public relations is important outside the clubhouse, it's just as important inside with manager Kim Saal. Born and educated in Germany, Saal has been in this country for 13 years, his last two and one half at Congressional. Trained in the intricacies of foodservice, in such foreign cities as Paris, London, Engleberg, Switzerland, and Hamburg, Germany; Saal got to America in 1957. For the next five years, he was involved in foodservice at a trio of Washington's finest hotels.

"In 1962, he had an opportunity to get into the club industry and took the position of general manager at Indian Spring Country Club in nearby Silver Spring, Md. He stayed there 11 years. In March of '74, he left there for the Congressional position.

Clubhouse facilities at Congressional are huge. There are 15 regular tennis and three paddle tennis courts, a children's day camp, two outdoor swimming pools along with a pair of kiddie pools, eight bowling lanes, an indoor pool, guest sleeping accommodations, seven permanent residences and dining and party facilities capable of serving up to 1,000.

"This is not a snobbish club. We do have a diverse amount of facilities. Even with the important people that are part of our membership here, this is a friendly club, interested in tradition," Saal told GOLF BUSINESS.

Staff size for Saal is 150 fulltime people that come under his management. Along with the usual array of waiters, cooks, bartenders and service personnel, Saal also oversees maids for the guest rooms, locker room workers and the office staff.

Saal works closely with Benning and Bidwell plus tennis pro Chico Herrick, swimming pro Don Adams and bowling professional Howard Parsons. With foodservice, though, the 48-year-old manager coordinates activities with his assistant food and beverage manager Dusty Anderson, who supervises service and is in charge of making sure menu selections are available and inventory controls are kept in tact.

Congressional has a strict line of command in its foodservice with training supervised under each department head. For example, all

waiters are under the watchful eye of the club's maitre d. Preparation of food is thoroughly checked by head chef Dominic Bartolomeo, who took over those duties a year ago. Saal is very proud of his chef saying, "even when we prepares a sandwich for the men's grill, the kitchen does it in the classical French way."

Bartolomeo's staff is well stocked with talent. Six people are totally involved with the preparation of food. The CCC even has its own full-time pastry chef, an unusual position for a country club.

Meals at the club are well attended with Sunday buffets the most popular. Congressional will hit a high of 17,000 covers each in the high activity months of May, June and September, but even the downtime of January through March averages 11,000 covers a month.

Simply, Saal attempts to manage in a direct manner with a third of his time involved in planning, a third in administration and a third



An attractive sun room available for a number of functions is probably one of Congressional's most active areas.



Club professional Bob Benning is in his third year at CCC. A native of Dayton, Ohio, Benning is one of the most noted merchandisers on the east coast. His shop did more than \$220,000 in 1975.

Design is an important part of the Congressional selling atmosphere. In women's apparel, Benning has turned over the responsibility to Lynn Hammond. A variety of attractive and stimulating coordinative displays always grace the women's area, which is set apart from the rest of the shop.



"Even though private clubs are not in the business to make money, Congressional is indeed bottom line conscious."