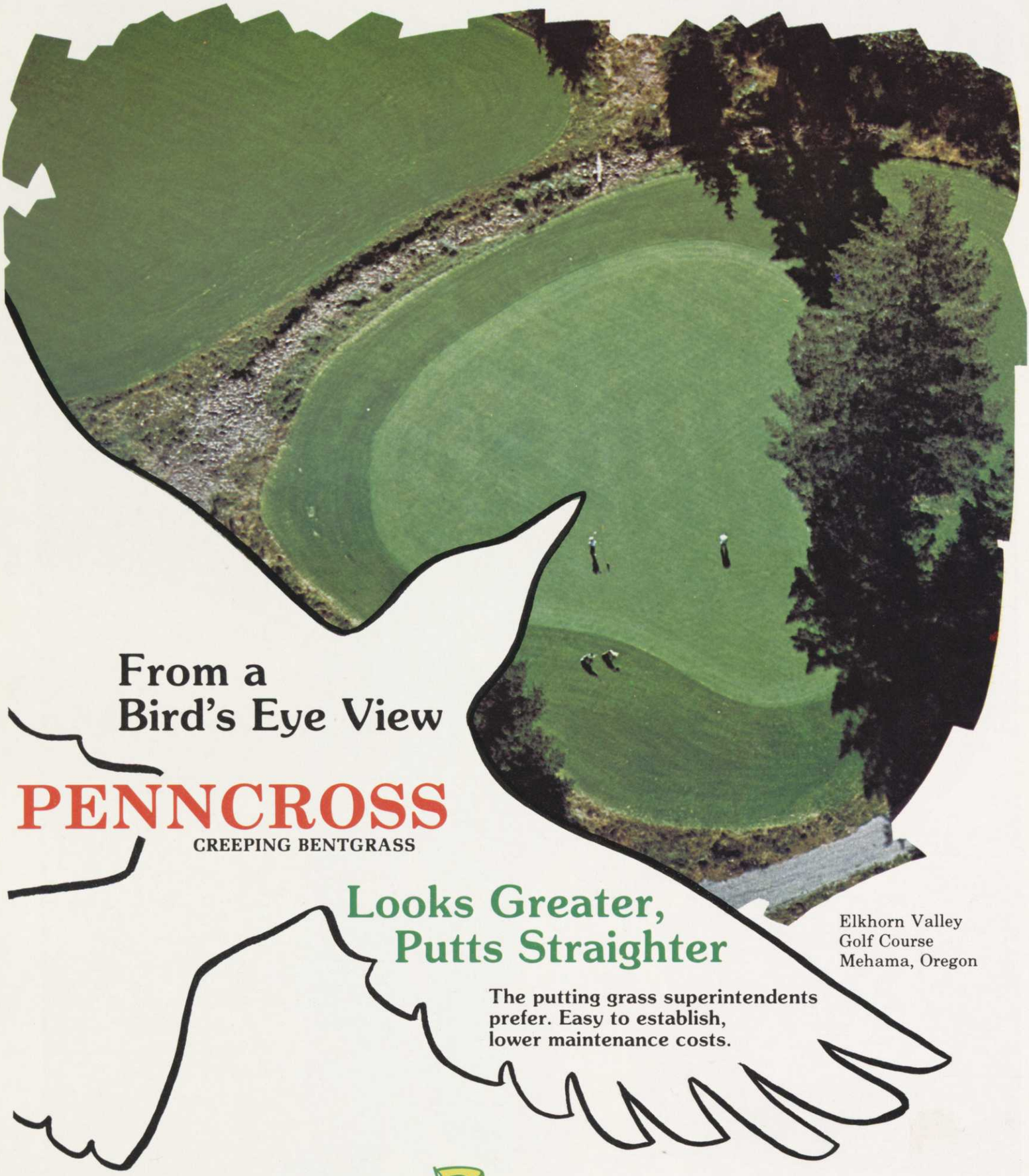

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golf business
FORMERLY GOLFDOM

APRIL 1977
Vol. 51 No. 4

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This is a new regular column in GOLF BUSINESS, but it's written by a seasoned veteran of the industry. Every column promises to give fresh insights — tempered by hindsight — into the golf pro's life.

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The city of San Francisco decides to let the citizens in on running its municipal golf system after losing more than $300,000 in 1976 . . . turfgrass was covered thoroughly at the Midwest Regional conference last month at Purdue University . . . golf professional Tommy LoPresti celebrates 50 years in the industry at age 68 at his Sacramento, Calif., municipal course . . . Chicopee offers free tee towels . . . officers gain control of Grafalloy . . . New Jersey seed firm gets USDA approval on two seed types . . . Hahn finally out of financial storm . . . National Club Association and appraisers group sponsor research competition on taxes.

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30 **EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH NEW PGA PRESIDENT**

Managing Editor Nick Romano hooked up with new PGA President Don Padgett in an in-depth session that sheds new light on many areas in the association and the industry. Padgett tells what direction the PGA is headed during his administration, especially in the area of employment. Must reading for the golf professional.

40 **WHAT MAKES A GOOD CLUB MANAGER?**

Foodservice Management Editor Herman Zaccarelli analyzes the qualities that make up club managers as the foodservice experts they must be in the business today. Zaccarelli also describes the signs of managers on their way up and on their way down.

43 **HEAVY PLAY DICTATES REGULAR PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE**

When you're director of operations for two heavily played 18-hole golf courses, like Dick Slivinski in Pompano Beach, Fla., you can't afford to lay back on maintenance procedures. Here's how he runs a strong preventive maintenance program to keep his turf in shape.

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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, fulfull 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.

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.

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.

• 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.***

Feedback continued on page 7

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FORMERLY GOLFDOM

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golf business

Idea file

Golfer communication: put in suggestion box

Good public relations with your golfers is something that can be easily improved. Superintendents and pros in many facilities have put up suggestion boxes to get feedback on what their customers or members really want.

You could put up question blanks, along with the box, asking "Did you fully enjoy your game today?" or "What can we do to better serve you on the course and increase the enjoyment of your game?"

The box can easily be placed near the clubhouse entrance or in the locker room. You might even get some compliments.

Changing your image is just in a name

What people think your operation is might not be what it actually is. If you are a daily fee operator, a matter of semantics may be costing you additional customers.

If your public operation has the name "club" attached to it, consider changing it to "course." Many daily fee golfers will pass up your facility, if they think it has anything to do with a private club.

After you make the initial change, make sure your listings in phone books and other directories are indicative of a public operation.

In-house laundry saving you energy?

With the escalating cost of energy facing every facility, clubs with in-house laundry systems can do several things to decrease the cost of operation.

Try not to overheat the water that you use for washing. Attempt to regularly test water heater controls, adjusting or repairing those that overheat. Insulation should be checked on hot water storage tanks, pipes, and steam lines. Drain and flush hot water tanks twice a year, or more frequently if water contains impurities.

If your water is unusually hard, consider the installation of a water softener.

Document problems, be a photographer

Course maintenance is a subject where the picture can truly substitute for many words. Recording the headaches that you meet on the course, and the subsequent success with which you tackle them, can all be documented by the camera.

After you leave your course for another position, the photographs you leave behind can be invaluable for the next superintendent. Such shots can help in the location of irrigation pipe, valves, or tile lines.

Eventually, you can utilize slides for the education of your crew and even in communicating problems better to your board or management.

'Rent-a-pro' answers small operation needs

Many small public courses and country clubs can not afford the full-time services of a PGA professional. There is a way, though, these facilities can get help in pro shop organization and the vital area of teaching.

When dealing with so many beginning golfers, as the smaller facilities do, the need for an accredited teacher is essential. Many facilities have recruited professionals from nearby courses and driving ranges to teach on a part-time basis.

This has been successful for many operations and gives the customer or member an opportunity to get some competent assistance with his or her game. The best way to go, though, is hire a full-time professional, if at all possible.

Enforcing dress codes may take a reminder

Although times are changing at many clubs and the days of the strictly enforced dress standard are less stringent, those clubs that still maintain dress codes may employ some subtle suggestions to the members to maintain their rules.

A policy definition about the code can easily be placed in a separate mailer to the membership or in the club newsletter. This can state on which special occasions the code will be in effect and in which areas of the clubhouse certain attire is presentable.

This practice can clear the path to better communication with the membership and at the same time remind them of rules they promised to keep when they joined the club.

golf business

Personal

Tax reforms protect your legal rights

Taxpayer rights have been greatly expanded under legislation that has recently passed Congress. Most of these new rules deal with the rights of the citizen versus the interests of the Internal Revenue Service.

Bank records, which before this legislation were available to IRS agents without any notice to the taxpayer, can only be reviewed by the government with your advance knowledge. If you do not want the IRS looking in, you can force them to obtain a court order.

This rule also applies to other records, such as those of: issuers of credit cards, credit firms, stockbrokers, credit unions, and savings and loan institutions.

Booklet can help you buy new house

Thinking about purchasing a new home? A booklet from the National Association of Home Builders can help answer a lot of the questions raised, when you go to buy.

The ***Home Buyers Guide*** can give you an insight on picking a neighborhood, getting a loan, signing the contract and will even give you tips on how to get involved with the Home Owners Warranty Program. Local home builder associations around the country are also listed.

To obtain the pamphlet, send $1.00 to the NAHB, Dept. SP, Fifteenth & M Sts., NW., Washington, DC 20005.

Families of future: small, but many

Zero population growth is fast becoming a reality in the United States and government statistics are beginning to bear out predictions that the family in the future will be smaller.

Population figures already indicate the flight of the middle class family to the suburbs and it is a good bet that this will remain a trend. Growth rates in the suburbs are growing at twice those of the population as a whole.

Divorce will continue to remain high in the years to come. The law has made it easier to get a divorce and most couples splitting will continue to take advantage of this.

Certified mechanics can be trusted

Consumer groups have long railled at the incompetence that seems rampant in the auto repair industry. Now, though, some positive action has been taken to give the car owner some security when he pulls into a garage for service.

An organization known as the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence has been put together to verify the ability of mechanics through rigorous exams. You should be reasonably assured that work done by NIASE people will be thorough.

Industry backing is fully behind the NIASE program. For a directory of the firms hiring such mechanics in the contiguous United States, send $1.95 to NIASE, 1825 K. St., NW., Washington, DC 20006.

Preventive dental care: pay now or pay later

It's an old axiom of good health, but you and your family should see your dentist at least twice a year.

Cavities remain a constant problem for many people these days, but the loss of teeth due to gum disease is becoming more prominent. Peridontal disease is the number one cause of tooth loss in adults. An accumulation of a sticky substance called plaque under the gum line can bring an onslaught of the disease.

Dental flossing at home is important to remove trapped food particles. A thorough job of removing plaque is necessary.

Cheaper cuts answer to soaring meat costs

Added costs in the supermarket have obviously changed many of the eating habits of the American public.

There is little doubt that as prices for meat continue to soar due to inflation, some people will be looking for other ways to still eat well and stay inside their budgets. Preparation of cheaper cuts of meats different ways may put some of the spice back into life.

Marinating meat has long been a way to make cheaper cuts easier to eat. It costs less, too.

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 embarassing 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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The old pro

Watches progress in golf schooling

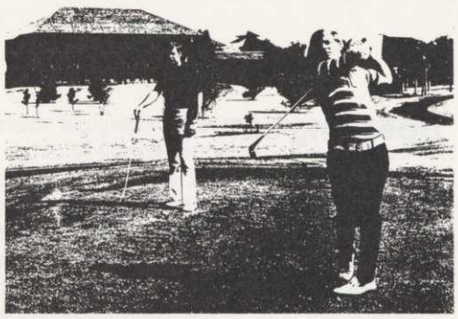
Freddie McLeod, 1908 National Open champion and for many years professional at Columbia Country Club, was talking to Jock Hutchison. Jock won the 1920 PGA and 1921 British Open Championship. For a long time before his retirement, Jock was pro at Glen View Country Club and, before that, at Allegheny. They became expert teachers. McLeod said to the other veteran, "Jock, the first five years we were teaching golf we should have been paying our pupils.

"It took me at least 5 years before I found out that men and women who were getting the most out of my lessons were learning more than I was teaching them. Now I believe that every good golfer, pro or amateur, I ever have known learned far more golf than ever was taught them. That certainly goes for me. But now what bothers me is that we who make a profession of teaching golf didn't learn earlier how to get through to the pupils first so they could teach themselves to learn as our expert players do."

It's taken too long for what McLeod noticed to become generally and usefully applied. Everybody in golf has suffered because of that delay. Years ago I read in a golf magazine of about 1900 that 90 percent of all American golfers scored 90 or higher. Several years ago I read another magazine's survey of many district golf association handicap records and public course pro estimates indicating that scoring averages may have deteriorated and now 95 percent of the nation's 12 million golfers score above 95.

The slow progress in better scoring by those who play golf as a pleasant game certainly is not due to a lack of competent instructors in the fundamentals from which the game can develop into a skilled scoring art. Club pros for too long a time have been regarded as ex-caddies instead of authoritative instructors.

Club officials have not seen that the better the standard of play is at a club, the more play there is and the larger the volume of business and membership applications. Private clubs which are worried about their tomorrow have been completely blind to the importance of golf instruction in attracting and serving the members they want and need.



The public courses and privately owned daily fee courses are even low in their business rating because of their failure to use free basic golf instruction to attract revenue at hours when business is dull.

I see the brilliant sunshine of tomorrow in golf business as the result of the tremendous recent advance in golf instruction made among boys and girls at the major universities and leading high schools by the collaboration of the physical education departments of these schools, the educational program of the PGA, and the dynamic organization and coordination work of the National Golf Foundation. Unless you have been at one of the Foundation seminars you don't know what is happening to improve the popularity, the enjoyment, and the proficiency of young golfers who are going to be leaders for many years.

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golf business

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MUNI GOLF

San Francisco gives it back to citizens

Ever wonder how you could lose more than $300,000 in the golf business in a year? You might want to take a lesson from the city of San Francisco, which after eight declining years of play on its municipal system is turning the direction of course management back to the populace.

It reads like a horror story. The fate of muni golf in the city by the bay has been poorly handled by the local administration and the Recreation and Parks Commission. Recently, the San Francisco board of supervisors relented under pressure to the formation of a citizen's golf advisory committee, to focus in on the problems of the 81-hole system that contains six different facilities.

Critics of the golf program in San Francisco point to the continuing deterioration of all courses in the system over the last decade. Diversion of allocated funds for golf course improvement by the present administration of Mayor George Moscone or his predecessors has been charged by a citizens group vitally interested in the city's recreational projects.

Frank Proctor, a 67-year-old semi-retired management consultant, drew the nod for the citizens' committee head post and he says the municipal system can be on the right track by this summer.

"We have established a finance committee, a grounds committee, a materials and equipment committee, and a personnel committee. These committees will take a look at just what is existing with the city courses. Simultaneously, we are setting up standards for each golf course. At the same time, we will be looking for outside funds — state and federal," Proctor told GOLF BUSINESS.

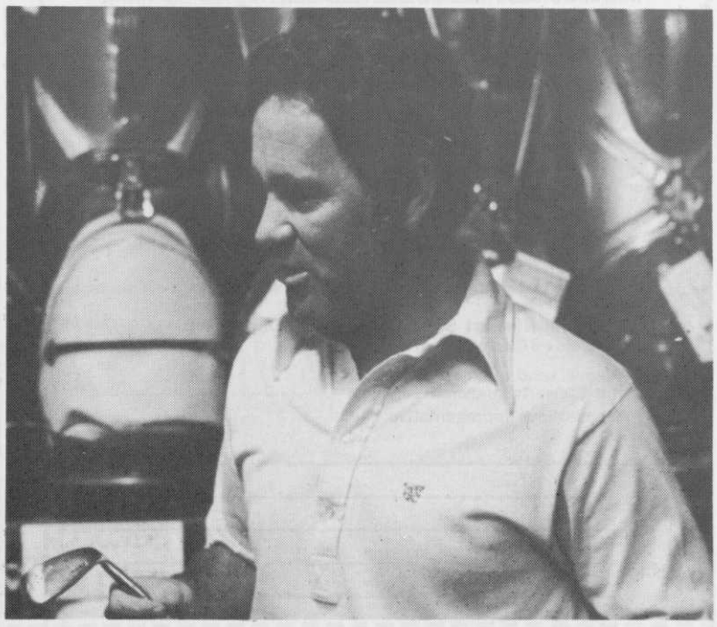
Proctor made it clear this was not the first time that such committees have been formed in San Francisco. Similar groups have been put together to focus on the problems of muni golf and failed. Proctor adds, though, that the whole-hearted support of the board of supervisors has not been with such committees in the past.

Cash losses over and above expenses for 1975 were considerably higher than last year. Figures for that year showed the city lost $532,000. Biggest headache for the committee, the mayor, and the City Supervisor of Golf John Grant is getting the courses back in shape, so play will increase. "The courses have to be in the worst shape I've ever seen them," said John Fry, head professional at Harding Park Golf Course.

More than 1,600 acres make up the system, greatly enhancing the quality of life in the San Francisco area, but care of that acreage over the years has been questionable. Civil service dictates who will eventually maintain the facilities, and most of the workmen from the Recreation and Parks Commission have little formal training in course maintenance.

When the renovation project is completed, set now for sometime in 1978. Proctor advocates a 50 cent increase in green fees. "Such an increase would add another $450,000 to system income," Proctor noted. Fees at the San Francisco courses are now the lowest in the state, at 50 cents a round. Indications are that fees for nonresidents of San Francisco will be instituted, costing somewhat more than local taxpayers that play.

"The courses have to be in the worst shape I've ever seen them," says Harding Park golf professional John Fry on the San Francisco municipal system. Fry and others working in the bay area may finally be in luck, as city government has relented under citizen pressure and is letting the golfers back into the picture.



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Circle 120 on free information card

San Francisco's system is flooded with seniors, people who by and large do not spend much money in the system's pro shops or concession stands. Concessions are offered to private concerns who contract for the service, but with decreasing play over the years, this additional amenity for the San Francisco muni golfer has fallen on hard times. Concessionaires are not bidding for facilities like they once did. Some concessionaires who have been involved with the system have not offered much in the way of consistent service either.

Civil service played havoc with the system last, year, when a city employee strike idled maintenance workers for 51 days last spring. Work on the six courses ground to a halt with no preventive care of the turf at all. This episode had to have been the worst in the system's history.

With increased pressure from the citizens groups, suddenly money has been found to get the courses back into shape. Last year, Grant requested $54,000 for materials and supplies for the six courses, which in itself was way underbudgeted. Proctor told how Mayor Moscone had recently pledged full support of the committee's efforts and more than $280,000 would be allocated for the overall improvement of the system. Proctor insists the money was always there. That should greatly improve the trend in lost rounds: 180,000 fewer over the last eight years.

Biggest roadblock to Proctor's efforts in the past has been Lou Sabella, a recreation and parks commissioner appointed by previous mayor Alioto. Proctor charges Sabella and others in the department were indifferent to the needs of the municipal golfers in the city.

The city had even thought of raising the fees before the renovation was begun, but the 1,200-member Citizens Golf Association balked at such a move, threatening that they would picket the facilities if rates were raised without adequate improvement of the conditions.

Greatest advocate of the movement inside city government is Supervisor Quentin Kopp, who many in the community look at as a politician with a future outside the sphere of the San Francisco area.

There are indications that San Francisco may go after some solid advice on their system from a city in southern California which has shown that its courses can pay their way well. Anaheim several years ago experienced the same headaches.

Tom Liegler, director of the Anaheim entertainment department, recently reported to GOLF BUSINESS the new net profit figures for the city's courses. The H. G. "Dad" Miller Golf Course netted more than $152,000 in 1976, a 9 percent jump over the previous season. Anaheim Hills Public Country Club, on the other hand, is undergoing a major renovation project that increased operating expenses an additional $59,000 plus, so that facility is operating at a deficit for the time being.

What will occur in the San Francisco case is anybody's guess. Proctor and his committee might prove, though, that the power should belong to the people.

CONFERENCES

Superintendents back to class at Purdue

Always searching for education, superintendents attending the 41st Midwest Regional Turfgrass Conference at Purdue University got enough new knowledge to send them into their spring seasons with renewed vigor.

More than 600 turfgrass managers were on hand in West Lafayette, Ind., for the 3-day run last month. Seminars were offered for superintendents on both sides of the business, sessions scheduled discussed the turfgrass market in regards to both private country club and daily fee operations. Owner/operators were also involved in the daily fee forums.

Top speakers filled the program coordinated by Purdue turfgrass specialist Dr. William H. Daniel and the Midwest Regional Turfgrass Foundation. Most notable of the first-day sessions was the presentation handled by superintendent Dave Harmon, Golden Horseshoe, Williamsburg, Va.

Harman, who also serves on