

# IS YOUR CLUB READY FOR THE FAMILY?

by

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THE title, "Is Your Club Ready for the Family?" represents a challenge. It is a challenge which every country club must face. Some already have accepted the challenge and made great strides toward a solution.

It is a fact that, at the start, most clubs centered largely around golf—golf for the man of the family. But there are very few country clubs which are for men only now.

Saucon Valley Country Club has been a family club to a degree for many years, but five years ago we realized our facilities were inadequate to handle the family properly. Children were over-running the place. We heard complaints of children taking over the terraces, sitting on the furniture in their wet clothes, running through the living room, swinging from the draperies, jumping on the furniture, being in the men's and women's locker-rooms and plugging up the drains with turkish towels.

Having recognized the problem—and that wasn't very difficult, since many people had brought it forcibly to management's attention—we decided in 1950 to develop means to meet this challenge. A committee was appointed to investigate precisely what our needs were. These people wrote the program. A second committee was appointed to develop the means for financing the program and a third committee, which we called our building committee, was appointed to obtain the necessary professional advice, develop detailed plans and build the required new facilities.

### *The Program*

We realized the initial necessity of a



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master plan and the need for top-side professional advice. The Program Committee's investigation resulted in a four-point plan:

1. Some golf facilities for the juniors.
2. Clubhouse facilities for the youngsters, probably in the form of a separate structure, complete with canteen, locker-rooms and browsing area.
3. Improved playground facilities.
4. A new, larger and departmentalized swimming pool to better serve all age groups.

Two years ago we set aside one corner of our property and there developed a short six-hole golf course, an interesting layout with a minimum of hazards but

## NEW MEMBERS OF THE USGA

### Regular

Bostonia Country Club, Pa.  
Carthage Golf Club, Ill.  
Cazenovia Golf Club, N. Y.  
Chippanee Golf Club, Conn.  
Churchville Golf Club, N. Y.  
Crow River Country Club, Minn.  
Desert Mashie Golf Club, Ariz.  
Elks Golf and Country Club, Okla.  
Green Hills Golf and Country Club, Ind.  
Leavenworth Golf Club, Wash.  
Lewistown Elks Country Club, Mont.  
Memorial Park Golf Club, Wash.  
Mitchel Golf Association, N. Y.  
Monacan Hills Association, Va.  
Moorhead Country Club, Minn.  
Newton Country Club, Iowa  
North Park Golfers' Association, Pa.  
Officers' Open Mess Golf Club, Md.  
Oxford Country Club, Ohio  
Pine Lake Country Club, Iowa  
Ramsey Golf and Country Club, N. J.  
Rehoboth Beach Country Club, Del.  
Streator Country Club, Ill.  
Vero Beach Country Club, Fla.

taking advantage of the natural contours to present a great variety of shots. Its success, marked by its use by our children and others who formerly were non-golfers, surpassed all our expectations. It is a rewarding sight to see fathers walking around with their young sons and daughters, each carrying a golf bag with three or four clubs, teaching these children the fundamentals of the game, developing new family ties and certainly contributing to the improvement of the game of golf. Incidentally, it also avoids a great deal of hacking on our regular course.

At the same time, we selected a spot on our property, a few hundred yards from our main clubhouse, and there erected a junior clubhouse, which we call the field house. Here boys and girls from toddlers—and I mean toddlers—to about 16 years old have their own locker-rooms, small, individual lockers good enough for youngsters of that age. And here we installed a canteen in the form of the old-fashioned soda fountain.

This building has removed the total burden from the clubhouse. Incidentally, we have had as many as 1,000 individual transactions at the snack bar in a single day.

Between the main clubhouse and the field house we had our tennis courts, and adjacent to these we had an area referred to as the playground. It was badly underdeveloped. We redeveloped this playground area and now have a grove of trees which camouflages the activities that go on there. There are opportunities for young people to play shuffleboard, volley ball, handball, basketball, horse-shoes and quoits, as well as a few swings, seesaws, sandbox and some modern play sculpture for the very small fry.

The founders of our club thirty-five years ago realized the need for some family facilities, even then, and courageously installed a swimming pool. However, the ravages of time had taken their toll. We have just completed a new pool, or a series of pools. There are four pools in tandem, all served by the same mechanical equipment, but architecturally divided into a diving pool, a 75-yard swimming pool, a shallow junior swimming pool and a wading basin.

### *Most Important Factor*

Before I get to the problem of financing, let me emphasize what, in retrospect, we found to be probably the most important factor to consider. That was to select as our Building Committee a group which would be sensitive to planning and good design, reflect a cross-section of the membership and have the authority to go out and secure the professional talents which our club deserved.

We carefully avoided home-made designs and plans, either in our golf course construction, field house, playground, swimming pool and even in our landscaping. The best professional advice represents a very small, but necessary, addition to the cost of any project undertaken.

It takes a courageous committee to handle the financing part of a problem. Our program was a large one, requiring a substantial amount of money. Even after generous contributions by a few individual members, we still were faced with the need to raise \$200,000. We have a membership of about 600. The problem was complicated by the fact we had on our books, as of 1950, a mortgage for \$95,000.

The Finance Committee first recommended that the mortgage be discharged by debt reduction contributions on the part of all members, either in a lump sum or by monthly payments over a 5-year period. Most members selected the lump sum payment, which amounted to about \$114 each for active members, or one-half of that amount for associate and non-resident members, rather than a time-payment, which amounted, in this case, to \$132. It was well received by the membership and the participation in this program was almost 100 per cent.

#### *Financing Plan*

The Finance Committee then marked time until the Building Committee's plans had progressed to a point where costs could be more definitely established. In 1953 the Finance Committee recommended to the membership through the Board of Governors a plan which would raise \$75,000 from the active membership by contributions of approximately \$150 per member, \$25,000 by transfer of regular club funds over a 3-year period and a re-mortgage of the club for \$100,000..

This was our \$200,000 financing plan. Most families already had assimilated the debt-reduction contribution for the 1950 mortgage and readily accepted the suggestion to contribute \$150 for this new building fund. Once again the option was given to contribute in a lump sum—\$144

—or \$7.50 a month for twenty months. Thus by June of this year the old mortgage had been completely discharged, the \$75,000 building fund completely subscribed and the \$25,000 from regular funds transferred to the building fund. We will take out the new \$100,000 mortgage this month. This will give us the required \$200,000 and allow us to discharge all construction costs.

Our financing plans have been so well received by our entire membership that we have planned a new debt-reduction program by monthly contributions, this time at \$2 per family, which we calculate will amortize this new mortgage within the next eight years.

We believe by the end of this summer we will have completed all the facilities required. It takes time; it takes courage; it takes money. We think we are ready for the family. Are you?

### **MEN'S HANDICAPS FOR CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Effective this year, handicaps submitted by amateurs as a basis for eligibility for the Amateur and Senior Amateur Championships must have been computed in accordance with the USGA Golf Handicap System for Men (1953 edition). Either basic or current handicaps will be acceptable.

While the USGA has long maintained a handicap qualification as a basis for eligibility of amateurs in its championships, it has not previously specified the method by which these handicaps should be computed.

Scores to be recorded shall be only those made when the player has complied with the Rules of Golf. Scores made under "winter rules", general "teeing up" or "preferred lies" must never be used for handicapping purposes.