

# THE FIRST MODERN COURSE IN THE BAY AREA

*By Sean Tully, Meadow Club*

I am often asked about the early history of golf in the Bay area and what are some of my favorite courses for one reason or another. I am drawn to the early courses that formed near the end of the late 1890s. Burlingame, San Francisco Golf Club, Oakland Golf Club (Claremont CC) and San Rafael Golf Club were the big four courses into the early part of the 1900s. Burlingame is the only course of those four that has stayed in its original location. As more people took up the game and improvements to clubs and balls led most courses to lengthen their courses or look for more property to start over again.

Golf courses up to this time were mostly laid out by a Golf Professional—they could layout a course in the better part of a day. Most of these courses were built on flat land and incorporated a bunker style that seems more similar to equestrian jumps than the bunkers that we are familiar with. In the Bay area courses like Sequoyah Country Club 1913 and San Francisco Golf Club 1918 would open up their courses

only to see the need to make a number of changes to the course.

In 1920, Robert Hunter the noted author, Socialist, and Lecturer at UC-Berkeley started what would become Berkeley Country Club. He would go over the property a number of times with the likes of John Black, Sam Whiting, and William Watson. Hunter drew up plans and even made plasticine models for each green as he launched himself into designing a first rate golf course. Hunter had soil tests done and studied the property from every angle and brought in William Watson a noted golf architect to inspect his work and make some changes. His efforts at Berkeley Country Club would be the formation of his ideas that would later get published in the highly respected book, “The Links” and lead to his partnership with Alister MacKenzie.

Berkeley Country Club would play a big factor in another way as it helped to introduced Sam Whiting to Olympic Club. It would be Robert Hunter who had Whiting come to BCC after he had a lesson with him some years prior in the UK. It was a big deal as the locals felt that

## ELECTIONS—CANDIDATE STATEMENTS



**POSITION: VICE PRESIDENT**  
**Jon Christenson**

My name is Jon Christenson, Superintendent at Monarch Bay Golf Club. I have enjoyed my current tenure as a director on the Board, as well as my service to the Education Committee. I would like to continue to serve the profession that has given so much to me by running for the office of Vice President.

As a past chapter President, I have seen the importance of having strong leadership and organizational skills and how these skills help guide an Association down a successful path. Service for nine years on various GCSAA committees and as a Chapter Delegate has given me the necessary guidance to evaluate how a chapter can serve its members and their needs. I have been a Golf Course Superintendent for 17 years and have 5 years experience as a General Manager/Superintendent, which has given me valuable insight into the issues Superintendents face on a daily basis.

I take great pride in serving, and in giving back to the profession that has given so much to me. My service has and always will be met with professionalism and dedication. I would appreciate the opportunity to serve the GCSANC as Vice President.



**POSITION: SECRETARY TREASURER**  
**Tim Powers**

I am running for the position of secretary/treasurer because I think we have made some improvements to increase the value of our membership and we want to continue doing that. We are planning our events well in advance so people can make plans to attend and offering educational opportunities to help us do our jobs better. Meetings are a great place to build our network.



**POSITION: DIRECTOR**  
**Stacy L. Wallace**

Golf Course Superintendent  
StoneTree Golf Club

After 25 years in the turf industry, I feel it is my time to give back to the organizations that have helped my career along the way. If elected, it would be a great honor to serve and help as so many have done for me over the years.

My career started out back in 1986 working for my brother on the local municipal golf course. After college, the profession took me to the Chicago area until I landed in beautiful Sonoma County back in 2005. Since the fall of 2006, I have been the Golf Course Superintendent at StoneTree Golf Club in Novato, CA. As everyone knows, our industry has been challenged in recent years and it is important that we change with the times to help our facilities achieve their goals in today's market. If elected, I will strive along with all the directors to provide avenues to help us all achieve our goals.



**POSITION: PRESIDENT**  
**Rodney Muller**

For the past three years, I have served as a Board of Director and Vice President for the GCSANC. I would like to continue my leadership roll as President in 2012. I have served on the Education Committee and co-chaired the Committee for two years. I believe we are in one of the most difficult times of our careers and I will continue to add value to our association through education, web-site enhancement and fund-raising.

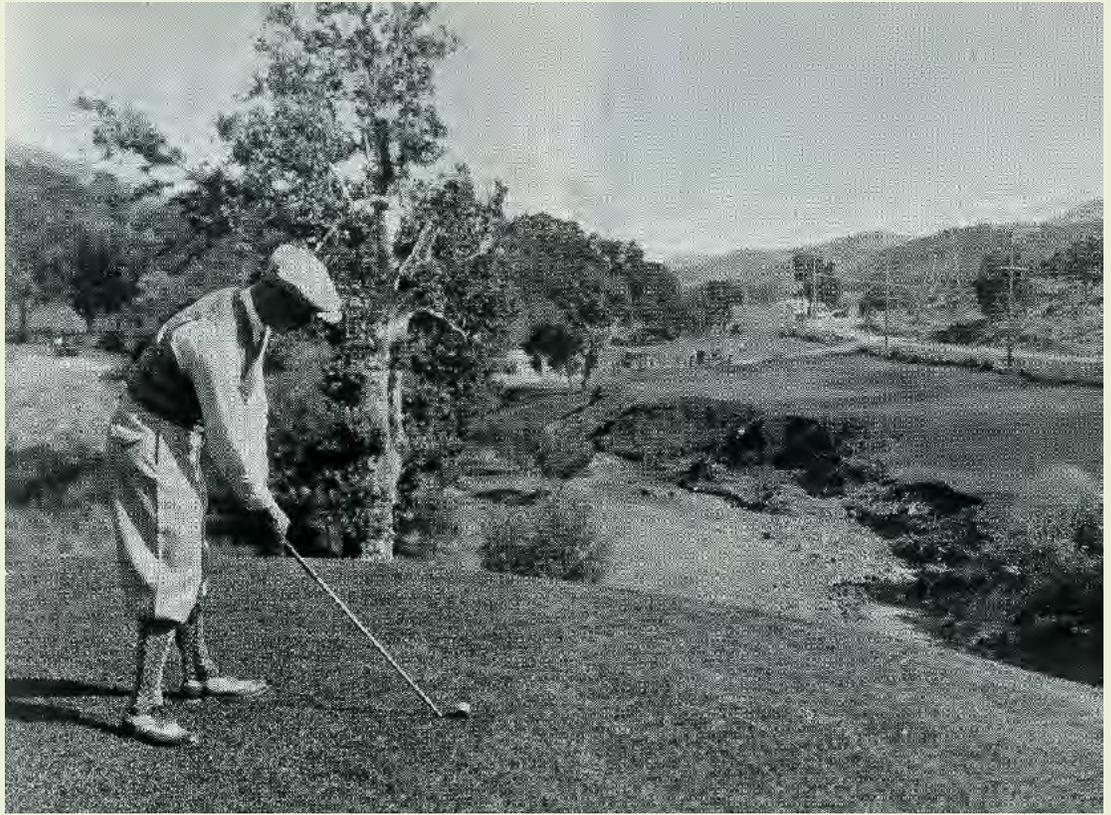
there was a good enough local man or two that could meet the club's needs. Hunter would go onto writing a letter to the San Francisco Chronicle spelling out his reasons for hiring Whiting. As construction was slowed and eventually halted due to a strike the club released Whiting from his contract and he took up shop at The Olympic Club.

Berkeley Country Club is better known today as Mira Vista Country Club.

The last photo was of the 8<sup>th</sup> green at Northwoods in Monte Rio. It was taken shortly after the course opened in July of 1929.

### PHOTO QUIZ

Here is this issue's photo quiz: this course was designed by William Watson and opened in 1924.



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