

The Willow Park

Bonus:
Interview with
Willow Park's Course
Superintendent
Bernie Holloway

GOLF CLUB NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 2600, CASTRO VALLEY, CA. 94546

Issue: June 2008

Next Club Meeting:

June 26, 2008
6:30pm, WP Bar Annex

Tournament Deadlines:

Wednesday, June 11

Club Officers:

George Vance

President
925-847-2921

Mike Jones

Vice President
925-837-2151

Huge Williams

Secretary
510-537-6844

Robin Paniagua

Treasurer
510-785-5866

Directors:

Dave Albiar
Steve Davis
Daniel Gil
Al Hamilton
Joe Johnson
Tom Joseph

Committees:

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Tony Paniagua
Handicap Chairman
Mark Hemenez
Membership
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Sergeant at Arms
Ken Cadinha
Morale Officer
Herm Kerber
Webmaster
Daniel Turner
Newsletter Editor
Steve Falzone
Postal Coordinator
Peter Krass

2008 Tournament Schedule

June 22	TC Surprise (4 Club)
July 20	Major - Presidents
July 27	Away tournament
Aug 17	Major - Directors
Sept 13/14	Major - Club Championship
Oct 19	+ Willow Cup Skins Competition
Nov 16	TC Surprise (RWB) + Turkey Shoot
Dec 14	+ 1 st round 2009 Norcal Qualifier

+ = Regular tournament PLUS special event

Presidential Focus

Fellow Members,

This month's column is a bittersweet and somewhat melancholy one for me. The inevitable is arriving. The time has come to formally announce that with this year's coming elections; I will NOT be seeking another term as your President.

I've withheld this announcement for some time, for a number of different reasons. However, it is now time to pass the torch to someone who will carry on in the tradition and commitment of all our past Presidents. I submit this declaration with both relief and sadness. I've been proud to serve as your President. I've enthusiastically accepted the position for reasons of Pride, Honor, Respect, as well as the fact that no one would "step up to the plate" to want to job!!!!

I am proud of many things that have been accomplished during my stewardship. Of course, I also experienced and weathered some disappointments. Yet, all is good!!! I surely declare that I will envy the next President. It is a position worth having for anyone with a desire and commitment to the Willow Park Men's Club and our Members. And as I've tried to emulate the direction of past Presidents, and as fortunately, able to seek their counsel and advise as needed, whomever is elected will have my support and assistance, if requested.

When I joined this Club in 1996, I knew almost immediately, by the welcome that I received upon becoming a member, that I wanted to become an integral part of

this club. Yet, as I may be "retiring", I'm NOT going away.

I have the greatest respect, memories and reflections of acquaintances and friends made, both during the course of by tenure as President, Vice President, Membership Chairman, and as well as just being a golfing member. Out there on the course, though, from the bonding within a foursome, or acknowledging from across a fairway, there are a great deal of good people in our Club.....and you all know who you are!

I reflect fondly and proudly on being a Member of Willow Park Men's Club. It's good to be in all your companies. There is a dedicated group of good people giving their time and energy to make your Club the best that it can be. Continue to give them your support.

Great Luck to our Men battling in the NCGA East Bay Zone Qualifying Tournament this June 2-3 at Poppy Hills/Spyglass.

Continued Good Golfing to all.

George Vance, President

NCGA 4-Ball Competition Update

From you ace reporter with late breaking news from the NCGA 4 ball competition

As many of you know our 4 person team of Rick Bierman, Joe Johnson, Craig Pitts and Mark Hemenez traveled down to the Monterey Peninsula to represent our club in the NCGA 4 ball competition. I am happy to report they played extremely well and did an outstanding job.

The team finished the first day in second place 2 shots behind the leaders from Blackhawk CG. At the conclusion of the second round they were able to hold on to second place one shot behind the first place winners from the Bridges CG.

Unfortunately a strong showing from the team from Stonebrae CG resulted in a tie

for second place. Only the top two teams move on so a playoff was necessary to determine which team would move on. Unfortunately our guys lost the playoff and did not move on.

Please join me in congratulating them in a great two days of golf.

Here is the link to the NCGA article.
<http://www.ncga.org/rules-competitions/ncga-east-bay-zone-championship>

Tales from the Deep Rough!

Well heading into the summer months one can only wonder where is the warm weather. Except for that hot spell a couple of weeks ago the weather has been more spring then summer. Oh well it's still early yet so maybe the warm weather is just over the horizon.

The colored ball competition seemed to go well. We had 14 groups with 6 finishing in possession of the ball. 1st place was the team of Al Hamilton, Dave Freais, Chet Grywczynski and Joe Johnson. 2nd Place was the team of Larry Becker, Tom Holmstrom, Steve Falzone and George Pritchard. They both came in with net 70 with first place awarded on the tie breaker of a better net back nine. The prize Pro Shop certificates of \$20 each for first and \$15 each for second.

Of the 8 teams that lost their ball here is where they disappeared. Holes 1(2 teams), 2, 4, 7, 10, 11, 12

After much discussion I have decided that the June tournament will be a 4 club only for all who participate. We will play lift clean and place. Play will be from the White NCGA Markers, White Balls and Red NCGA Markers.

You are also expected to arrive at the first tee with only your 4 club selection.

Please also remember that the deadline for your entry is Wednesday June 11. No late entries can be accepted.

I have updated the entry form for the away tournament. It will be held on Sunday July 27 at the Seascape golf course in Aptos. The first tee time is at 12:00 noon and the estimated cost will be around \$50. The entry form is posted to the web site. I will make sure there are some entries around at

the next tournament and perhaps on the information board in the spike room. There are only 40 spots. The course wants final payment several weeks in advance so please get your entries in by the deadline.

Please also keep in mind that you must be a member of the WPMC to participate.

Finally our "Majors" are around the corner. The July (Presidents) and August (Directors) are just about here. In addition to being a "Major" they will also be the qualifying rounds to determine the 4 low Gross and 4 low Net Skins players. The July and August scores will be combined and the 4 low Gross and 4 low Net players will participate in the October skins.

Please keep in mind that in addition to having to play in both tournaments to qualify in order to keep your spot you will have had to play in at least 50% of the tournaments between January and August. The away tournament is included in the total tournament count so it looks like the number will be 4. If you haven't played at least 50% after the September tournament your spot will be forfeited and given to the alternate.

Upcoming Tournaments

Date: Sunday June 22, 2008.

Deadline: Wednesday June 11.

Club Tournament Entry Fee : \$50

Format : Individual Stroke Play with flights.

Special Event: 4 club only tournament

Date: Sunday July 20, 2008.

Deadline: Wednesday July 9

Club Tournament Entry Fee: \$50

Format : Individual Stroke Play with flights.

Special Event: This is our first Major and the first round of the two round tournament to decide who the lucky 8 participants will be for the October Skins Competition

Tony Paniagua – Tournament Chair

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Tom Joseph, Member WPMC

"At Large" Columnist

Each month this column is from a different Officer, Director or Chairperson.

To all the members of Willow Park Golf Club,

Hi I'm Dan Gil, one of your club's directors. I can't believe it is June already. Boy, half of the year has flown bye.

This is my second year serving on the board. It's rewarding hearing all of the positive things people have to say about the club. Our golf course is in the best shape that I can remember. The new cart paths being put in look great.

Friendly Reminder: This time of year you don't want to go hunting for too many lost balls. The poison oak is bad!!

With half the year still ahead of us, I hope you all achieve your golfing dreams. Mine is to play better!! With gas prices soaring, we are lucky to have a course so close by and so affordable.

May the golf gods be generous to all,
Dan Gil

Away Tournament Entry Form

Our annual Away Tournament will be held on Sunday, July 27th at the Seascape Golf Course in Aptos. This is a limited field event of 40 players. The entry deadline is July 8 so get your entry in ASAP. Entry forms are now available on the website and in the spike room.

With the current cost of gas, we are recommending that players organize car pools to help defray the costs. We will try to release the tee time pairings earlier than normal so players can see who else is going. Don't forget this event is a sanctioned club event that counts towards the Willow Club.

The Willow Park

GOLF CLUB NEWSLETTER

By Steve Falzone (Newsletter Editor)

I had a chance to sit down with Willow Park's new Course Superintendent, Bernie Holloway, last week. Here are some excerpts from our conversation.

WPMC: Where did you grow up?

Bernie: I grew up in the LA area of southern California, Engelwood. Right around the LA Forum.

WPMC: Where do you live now?

Bernie: I live here in Castro Valley, right off Center Street.

WPMC: Have you been a superintendent at other golf courses?

Bernie: Yes. I was over at Roddy Ranch in Antioch for six years. I was there through the whole construction. It was a great experience. I was also at the nine hole course near the fairgrounds in Pleasanton.

WPMC: How long have you been here?

Bernie: Since September 2007.

The Greens:

WPMC: How often do you aerate the greens?

Bernie: Twice a year. Once in the Spring when we will use 5/8" tines and again in the Fall, when we'll use 3/8".

WPMC: When should golfers expect them to come back?

Bernie: Realistically, you are looking at 3-4 weeks. The larger holes take a little longer. It would be nice to say we can have it back in two weeks, but **that's just not reality.**

WPMC: How about seeding?

Bernie: The greens here, they are predominately poa annua. I do have plans to reseed – overseed with dominantly bent grass when we aerate this fall.

WPMC: Right before you came; there was trouble with an aeration. Thankfully, it appears that the greens have recovered. Is that your perspective as well?

Bernie: Yes. And as long as I am here we will not do that drill and fill type operation. **It's just a nightmare.**

WPMC: Some of the greens like #7, 11 and 13 appear to have damage to them. Is that from the overhanging trees or roots?

Bernie: Yeah, it has a lot to do with the overhanging branches. As the sprinklers go around, they hit the branch and the water just falls down, creating a puddle. That standing water damages the greens.

WPMC: Do you think those areas can be repaired?

Bernie: Yes. The back of 13 is already coming back a little bit.

WPMC: The word on the street is that Willow Park is a beautiful course, but has slow greens. Are you also seeing that as well and are you doing something to speed them up?

Bernie: We are speeding them up, by giving them a little lower cut right now. In the summer we will have to raise the height up a little bit because as it gets hotter we need to promote a little bit more root growth.

To speed them up we're going to do a lot more vertical cutting and a lot more rolling to get the speed.

WPMC: You've been very creative with your pin placement. Since the course is relatively short, are you using the pin placement as a way to make the course more challenging?

Bernie: **It's just more of a rotating fashion.** When I came here I noticed there was almost an automated pin location, **they weren't being rotated.**

WPMC: And is there a plan or strategy to determine where the pins are placed for tournaments?

Bernie: No. We rotate the pin placement in a clockwise fashion.

WPMC: #17 green has a severe slope on the left side. Are you considering doing something to fix that to allow

for better pin placement? Can it be fixed?

Bernie: **Yes, we can. That'll require us putting in a temporary green for a while.** But, as of now there are no plans to do such. That is something I would like to look at in the future but our plate is pretty full.

WPMC: Do you have any other plans for the greens **that I haven't asked about?**

Bernie: **Yes. There's a weed out there called Salvia. It's a real predominant weed.** It masks as a lighter color grass and it spreads in a horizontal way. I am looking to spray the greens to eliminate it. I have done that in the past and **I've had a lot of good success.** I want to do it here but **it's so widespread, we've got to be really meticulous about how we do it.**

WPMC: Would you apply that in the summer or winter?

Bernie: **It's more of a winter thing.** Because if we do it in the summer, **we're going to kill it.** Problem is, we have Poa Annua greens and Poa tends to growth slows in the summer so if **we kill it now, we're going to have big patches there.** So what is best is to just leave it as it is now and spray in the fall, to wipe it out.

Fairways:

WPMC: How often do you aerate the fairway?

Bernie: Normally we aerate twice a year. Because of the fire, we lost our fairway aerator so right now we're looking at just slicing – just to opening them up a bit. But that is something I want to do in the future.

WPMC: It is good to see you have started distinguishing between fairway and rough on most of the holes. What are you seeing as your short term and long term goals for the fairways?

Bernie: I would like to do more top dressing to smooth out the washboard effect some of the fairways currently have. **It's caused by mowing over**

years. That's a long term large project for the future.

WPMC: The fairway on #4 seems to always have a problem (wet in winter or rock hard and patchy in summer). Why is that? And what are your plans?

Bernie: The problems with the left side of #4 being bare is because of the poor irrigation, there's just no coverage over there. I suspect in the summer, mid July – it's going to get a little bare over there unless we use the hose stands that we have. Long term, I want to reseed that area and extend the irrigation. This is going to be a big job but it is on our long term list.

Also, we tend to have a lot of leaks along that main line that goes through there.

WPMC: Roughly how many sprinklers are there on the fairway?

Bernie: Well, on the fairway, around 18 to 20 would be a good average number.

WPMC: Any thoughts of adding distances on the sprinkler heads?

Bernie: Yes, I've seen that at other courses and I think that would be great. I would like to do that. I'm not sure where that might be on our priority list though.

The Creek:

WPMC: The creek is a hazard on most every hole here. And one of the leading causes for slow play. Are you contemplating increasing the height of the rough around the creek to help stop the ball from going in?

Bernie: That's an interesting thought. We're sort of limited by the county as to what we can do with the creek, so that's a creative thought in terms of slow play. That hasn't run across my mind yet, but that's an interesting thought.

WPMC: During the winter months the creeks flooded many areas of the course. From your point of view, is that a problem?

Bernie: Oh, it is. Worse case scenario it closes the golf course. Our GM has been working with EBMUD to resolve the issue. So, hopefully we won't have to suffer that problem in the future.

WPMC: The course doesn't have a lot of bunkers on it. It seems like there

isn't much sand in the ones we have. Perspective or reality?

Bernie: No, reality. Some are almost at the clay level. It's on our priority list though. I have a very small crew here, as compared to other courses, but we'll be getting to it. Bunker edging is on my list.

WPMC: We partially or completely lost a number of the trees in the past few years. Noticeably the green side one on #13 and one on 17. Why is that and are you trying to prevent that, or is that kind of a good thing to have some of the weakened trees out?

Bernie: It's not a good thing. Just recently we've been losing some more, too. We've just got to trim them, because there's just too much overgrowth on top and they crack from the weight.

General:

WPMC: The course has tremendous wildlife. You can see deer, geese, turkeys almost any time you play the course. Add to that the occasional cranes, heron, skunk, fox and boar. Am I missing anything?

Bernie: I'm concerned about mountain lions too. I haven't seen one but we've found some carcasses out here.

WPMC: Are you seeing that adding the blue ball markers on the tee boxes at the end of last year having any impact on the course?

Bernie: I think so. Now that players can see the longer markers, some people enjoy more distance to their play. I think it enhances the course.

WPMC: Plans on re-opening #9 blue tee box?

Bernie: You know, we talked about that. And we initially started that. We ran into some other priorities. Right now we have put that on the backboard.

WPMC: You started adding cement paths onto the course. What's the long term plans for this?

Bernie: We have been targeting areas that are real messy when driving around in the winter. We haven't spoke about launching a full 18-hole cart path extension. I think the next area to look at would be to run a path down the length of #12. When it's wet that's the hole that

really doesn't permit carts in the winter.

WPMC: Very little on the course has red and yellow stakes. Have you thought about adding them?

Bernie: Hazard and Lateral hazard markers. Yes, I've noticed there's very little hazard marking on the course. And we could use both.

WPMC: In the maintenance area off #18, the sand pile never seems to disappear. Are you trying to discourage us from cutting the corner?

Bernie: Well, that wasn't the intent. We certainly want to use it on the course. We have places to use it. But no, not even thinking of that.

WPMC: Besides the #4 and 12 that you talked about, do you see other problem areas on the course?

Bernie: An extreme one that needs long-term planning. At some point we are going to have to rebuild the irrigation system here. It's 40 years old and has thin wall piping. Because of the thin piping you can see it leaking everywhere. All we can do now is band aid it as we're doing all the time.

WPMC: What would you like to see golfers do to help support the golf course?

Bernie: Repair ball marks on the greens and replace divots on the fairways. They seem like little things, but they help us out.

WPMC: There's no divot mix on the par 3 tee boxes. Is that something you're considering as well?

Bernie: That's something that you see on most course these days. I think it is a budget issue for us, but I will make sure that's on my list.

Finally:

WPMC: Your favorite golf movie?

Bernie: Caddyshack. Of course.

WPMC: Do you golf?

Bernie: Yeah, I do. Actually I took it up about '95. I'm just for going out and play for fun. I have a few beers and enjoy. I'm not that good of a golfer. I just play to play.