

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Frank de M. Hill, M.D.

Jean & Ralph Libby
Family Membership

SAVE THE DATE
SAVE THE DATE
SAVE THE DATE

PAHA ANNUAL DINNER

at

*Ming's
Restaurant*

Wednesday
June 5, 2013

6:00 PM Social Hour
7:00 PM Dinner

**“Turning Points
in
Palo Alto History”**

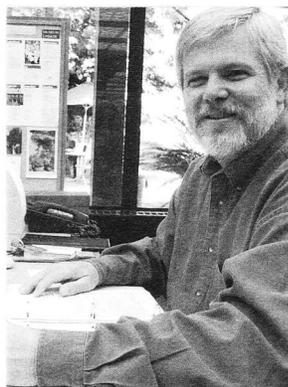
**with Larry Klein,
Palo Alto City Council**

*Reservations required
\$50 per person
Contributions are welcome!

SAVE THE DATE

The Palo Alto Golf Course

ON SATURDAY MAY 19, 1956, A FOURSOME OF COUNCILMEMBER Clifford Simpson, builder Joseph Eichler, sportswriter Walt Gamage and civic booster Bill Miller had a tee time at the new Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course. They were the first golfers to tee off on opening day.



FROM THE DESK OF
THE HISTORIAN
Steve Staiger

A golf course in the baylands was proposed as early as 1933, when City officials estimated that a 9-hole course could be constructed for \$75,000 (*PA Times*). The Stanford Golf Course had opened in 1930. By the end of World War II the idea for the baylands was accepted, but funds were tight. By 1953 the City had engaged architect William F. Bell as the designer. He and his father were known for their golf course designs in southern California such as Torrey Pines in San Diego and popular courses in the Los Angeles and Palm Springs areas.

The City accepted the plans with an estimated cost of \$225,000, provided that a citizens group raised at least 1/3 of the cost. As chair of the mayor's golf course committee, Bill Miller and his team went to work. The Lucie Stern estate contributed \$25,000, and the Elks Club provided \$2,500. The Palo Alto Clinic and



A group golf lesson at Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course, 1957 (PAHA; Guy Miller Archives)

Hewlett-Packard each contributed \$500. A Moffett Field VR-3 squadron donated \$1,200 and the PALO Sports Club raised \$3,300. The committee reached their goal, and construction began in July 1954. The Palo Alto airport runway was realigned to make room for the 18-hole course built on 184 acres.

The clubhouse was built by Joseph Eichler as his contribution. The opening was delayed several months while two fairways were re-seeded due to salty soil conditions, a preview of what was to come. Although the golf course was built on land owned by the City of Palo Alto, it was actually in San Mateo County until the county line was adjusted in the 1960s. Pat Mahoney was the first golf pro at the new course. Soon after opening, Jimmy Saitta, the lunch counter concessionaire, applied to the State for permission to sell beer to his customers.

By the 1980s much of the course was below sea level. A \$5 million renovation project in the 1990s raised many of the fairways and greens on beds of sand. In July of 1999, the reopening of a much improved course was celebrated.

Now the golf course is about to undergo another renovation. Funded in part with flood control money, it will be re-designed to accommodate flood control needs plus several athletic playing fields. As I write this column the exact date had not yet been determined to start the work. The cost is \$7.5 million.

In 1956, a round of golf cost \$1.50 during the week and \$2.50 on weekends. The most recent posted fees are \$39 during the week and \$49 on weekends.