

**Park Views Article October 2019**

## **Amazing golf course, amazing season, best yet to come!**

*By Oak Knoll Golf Course Manager, Patrick Oropallo, PGA*

Recently, it was discovered that famed golden era golf course architect Samuel Whiting was commissioned to design the layout for Oak Knoll Golf Course. Whiting is credited with several notable designs including The Olympic Club Courses, TPC Harding Park, Stockton Golf & CC and Sonoma Golf Club to name a few. This recent discovery is very noteworthy and will put our beloved golf course “on the map” in Oregon and in the United States. This discovery is truly amazing and would be similar to finding a Picasso at a rummage sale! Oak Knoll Golf Course opened on June 22, 1927, with great excitement and expectations. A small group, comprised of 40 community members had a vision to provide a quality golf course that would attract visitors to Ashland and provide an unequalled leisure experience for all. Nearly 93 years later we are still recreating, gathering and enjoying this beautiful course.

Since joining Oak Knoll Golf Course in January I have been blown away by the number of community members that recreate here. I see people of all ages playing golf, practicing golf, walking, birding and playing footgolf. We had a great season filled with many fun events including golf tournaments, concerts, weddings, instruction programs and other parties. Most notable was our “Rock the Knoll” concert series that hosted approximately 800 people who enjoyed live music, delicious food and friendship. Our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Ashland City Championship golf tournament was well attended and will become one of the premier events at Oak Knoll for many years to come. What has become clear to me is that Oak Knoll is much more than a golf course at the south end of town, it is an integral part of the community and has been for years.

We have had a tremendous season in terms of rounds and revenue. People are very happy with the improved course conditions and are playing here more than in previous years. Of course, when rounds increase revenue increases as well. Improved reputation combined with one of the very best weather seasons I can remember are the driving factors in our financial success this year. By years end we are forecasting an increase in revenue of almost 30%! To put this accomplishment in perspective it is typical to budget for a 3-5% year over year increase in revenue. My goal since day one has been; increase revenue, decrease expenses, improve the reputation of the golf course in our community and improve customer satisfaction. I believe that we have made good strides in this direction.

What's next? How can we continue to make Oak Knoll better? We are going to continue with all of the great events we hosted this year and introduce new leagues, more instruction opportunities, continued course upgrades/improvements and position Oak Knoll as a historic golf course that is environmentally aware. The introduction of new golf leagues will continue to increase rounds, revenue and guest satisfaction. Continued focus on instruction will also drive additional revenue and expose many new players to Oak Knoll and the game of golf. A Focus on course improvements that are within budget and improve the playability of the turf will drive more rounds and revenue to Oak Knoll. Finally, offering a historic golf experience is still our focus for this biennium along with becoming more pollinator friendly and completing our Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program Certification. To learn more please connect with us on social media (@OakKnollAshland) or through our e-newsletter, these are the best ways to stay connected with Oak Knoll.

Oak Knoll is a special place that is multi use in nature and has become one of the many features that makes Ashland a great town to live in. I want to thank those 40 community members who built Oak Knoll almost 93 years ago.