Pizza Fest Results In Institute Program

Developing an educational program that suits the interests and needs of a broad range of members can be a formidable task. Fueled by 5 large pizzas, the six members of the education committee responded to the challenge recently as they hammered out the program for the 1998 Superintendents Institute.

“Our objective when we gather each spring is to develop the premier educational event of the year, providing practical hands on information to the attendees,” said Bob Costa, Co-chairman. “Some years the program concept comes easier than others.” After much debate and several slices of garlic chicken the group settled on the general topic of Personal Growth and Development.

A similar topic a few years ago was a moderate success which the group readily acknowledges. “This year’s program will be significantly different,” said Costa. “The focus will be less on issues related to staff management, and more on developing skills that will help us perform our jobs better.”

Bruce Olson, a newcomer to the committee strongly favored small group break out sessions, a key component of the morning session. “Group interaction provides such a great avenue for learning and sharing ideas,” said Olson. “It also helps to keep the pace of the program moving.”

The featured presenter is Alex Braun, who heads the management department at Mission College in San Jose. “Alex has made several presentations to the staff at the Villages,” commented Brian Bagley, between bites of pepperoni. “I’ll be the first to admit that I can be a little skeptical about management presentations, but those that Alex has done have been beneficial.”

One other twist to this year’s conference will be the inclusion of a golf course superintendent to the program. “Superintendents relate well to other superintendents,” said NorCal’s perennial educator Ali Harivandi. “The Institute has a long history of superintendent participation, we felt that it had to be a part of this year’s program as well. Bruce Williams, CGCS, past president of the GCSAA has agreed to fill that spot and will make two presentations on “Time Management” and “Communication.” The committee feels fortunate to have someone with Bruce’s credentials on the program. With his addition, we feel as though we have just the right balance,” remarked Costa. “Perhaps the makings for a memorable day.”