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**COVER:** The Meadow Club's 16<sup>th</sup> green after removal of two trees from behind the green. Photo by Sean Tully, Superintendent, Meadow Club, Fairfax, CA.

# OFFICERS & DIRECTORS 2011

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A milestone will happen in 2012. The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California will celebrate its 80<sup>th</sup> year as a professional association.

Established in 1932, the organization has undergone challenges and triumphs in its service to membership and the golf maintenance profession. It has led in the education and enhancements of its members and practices of the maintenance profession. It has witnessed the evolution of the industry.

What's next for the profession and industry? The question needs an answer. What's next? Who knows? Who Cares? Who will make those decisions and move forward? A lot of you care but are not too sure if you "know." What's next is for you to determine. In 2005, the GCSANC leadership took steps to set a path and direction for the association. A strategic plan with mission, vision goals adopted. (See Web <http://www.gcsanc.com/about-us/board-of-directors-and-officers/strategic-plan/>)

Implementation of that plan has proceeded for the last six years. We achieved many, but not all, of those goals. Some, not practical, were left by the wayside. Others have yet to be fully implemented. For better or worse, the direction was established and the association moved in that direction.

It's time to revisit, revise and renew the association's goals and plans. A strategic planning session will begin in November. Now's the time to express your desires, ideas and thoughts. Look at the existing plan on the website. What does 80 years really say? Well in 1932 the horse & wagon, pick & shovel were the tools of the trade. Now GPS course design, internet controlled irrigation & mowing are the tools of the trade. The assistant superintendents in 2005 are now the superintendents of 2012. Let your board hear from you. Take a moment to call, email mail, or fax your thoughts. (The enabled email links of all board members and staff are in this newsletter. Just click on the emails links.)

### UPCOMING

**November** will begin the membership renewal process. We will use electronic for online renewal through November. Paper invoices and membership questionnaires will be mailed to those not yet renewed in Decem-

ber. Please be sure to verify your membership information. We try to maintain current information but you are the ultimate source for what we know about you!

Hope you will be attending the **November 6-8** California Conference and Tournament. GCSANC will participate in this event and will receive monies for our Research Fund via the Jason'sList online Silent Auction.

**December 2** is the date of the Del Monte Golf and Hyatt Regency, Monterey Dinner. Make your room reservations ASAP. If you haven't yet, get registered! Sign up today. <http://www.gcsanc.com/events/next-event/>

**January 9, 2012** at Wentle for the Annual Meeting & Elections. President, Glenn Matthews will host the meeting and golf this year. It's a great venue! We always have great support for our organization at Wentle.

**February 27 to March 2** will find many of us at the GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show in Las Vegas, Nevada. The California GCSA Hospitality Suite will be February 29 at the Las Vegas Country Club from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm. This is a great venue and a great opportunity to visit with friends and fellow California superintendents, assistant superintendents and affiliate members. Hospitality Suite is again \$20. Visit the web site for registration. ([www.californiagcsa.org](http://www.californiagcsa.org)) The country club will be open exclusively to the California event.

**April** is the tentative schedule for the Superintendent Field Day. Stay tuned for specifics.

**May 21** we have an Allied Association event on the calendar with the Club Mangers Association, Nor Cal PGA, GCSANC and Club official. For all of you "old timers" much like the Nor Cal Superintendent Pro Tournament of the early 1970s.

**July 2**, at Sonoma Golf Club for the 5th Annual Clifford and Myrtle Wagoner Scholarship & Research Tournament.

**August 13** TPC Stonebrae will host the 2nd Annual Tri Chapters Tournament. Sierra Nevada GCSA, Central CGCA and GCSANC will be hosted by Past President (of two of these associations) David Davies, CGCS.

**October/November** Superintendents Institute planning is underway. Watch for updates.

# NORCALENDAR

**NOVEMBER 6-8**  
**California GCSA Annual Meeting**  
*Silverado Country Club*

**DECEMBER 2**  
**Holiday Gathering**  
*Ole Del Monte Golf Course,  
Monterey Hyatt Regency*

**JANUARY 9, 2012**  
**GCSANC Annual Meeting**  
*The Course at Wentle Vineyards*

**FEB 27-MARCH 2**  
**GCSAA Golf Industry Show**

**FEB 29, 2012, 6:00-9:00 PM**  
**California GCSA Hospitality Suite**  
*Las Vegas Country Club*

**MAY 21**  
**GCSANC/NCPGA/NCCMA**

**JULY 2**  
**Wagoner Scholarship  
Research Tournament**  
*Sonoma Golf Club*

**AUGUST 13**  
**Tri Chapters**  
*TPC Stonebrae*

**OCTOBER-NOVEMBER**  
**Superintendents Institute**

*More Details?*  
Visit Us Here

# NAUMANN'S NORCAL NEWS

**Lou Tonelli** has retired as Superintendent at Lake Merced Golf & Country Club in Daly City. Lou had worked at Lake Merced for the last 46 plus years and over 32 as superintendent. Lou is being replaced by **Zach Ohsann**, who had been the assistant super prior to his promotion....

# NEW MEMBERS!

**Luke Bennett**  
Tilden Park Golf Course  
*Superintendent Member (SM)*

**David S. Brown**  
Gavlin College Golf Course  
*Class A*



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



## GLENN MATTHEWS

*The Course at Wente Vineyards*

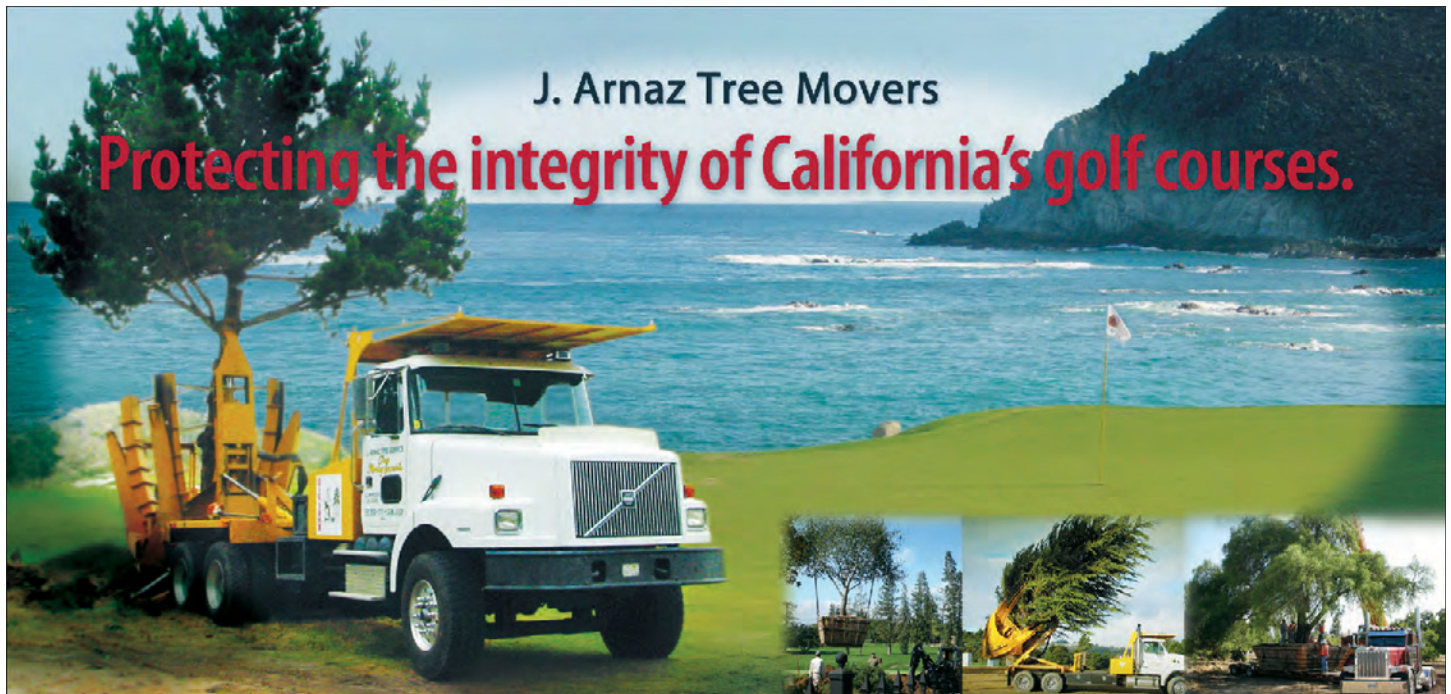
### *Moving forward, looking back*

I love an Indian summer. 2011 is almost in the books, seasons are changing, and it is time to plan for the coming year. Before I move on to next year, at my course, I typically take time to look back and reflect upon the year past. Association business is no different. We have to evaluate what worked for us and where we may improve for the coming year.

At the beginning of 2011 I was cautiously optimistic about the industry of golf and felt the economy would provide our industry with flat or negative growth in rounds and revenue. That prediction has more or less come to fruition and 2012 is shaping up to play out in a similar manner. Moving forward, it is inevitable superintendents will play an increasingly important role in how the business of golf is run. We administer the largest asset of our clubs or companies and manage the largest percentage of the overall operating budget for the facilities as a whole. There is a trend of our peers being promoted to General Manager and Director of Golf positions based on the skills they developed as superintendents. I would not be surprised to see the trend continue in the future as clubs continue to adjust staffing models in an effort to streamline expenses.

The Board began the year focused on delivering quality education at meetings, promoting our new sponsorship program, and advancing our strategic plan. Looking back at 2011 association programs, we are beginning to achieve expectations. We are providing educational opportunities with valuable educational units. And the new sponsorship program is offering vendors the ability to reach membership through a variety of advertising options. The Board is currently working on our strategic plan to shape the direction of the association in coming years with the goal of delivering even better programs and services to members in the future. In 2011 the number of meetings on our calendar decreased, but attendance to meetings is up. Educational opportunities were provided at the annual Field Day, the Tri-Chapters meeting, and the upcoming State Meeting in Napa. Sponsor participation and exposure at events is at an all-time high. The event calendar for 2012 is almost complete; however we are currently looking for event locations for the 2012 Field Day and Institute.

*Continued next page*



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## The calendar for next year looks like this:

### **JANUARY 12**

Annual Meeting—Wente Vineyards

### **FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 3**

Golf Industry Show—Las Vegas

### **MARCH**

NCGA/USGA Meeting

### **APRIL/MAY**

Field Day—TBD

### **JULY 2**

Clifford & Myrtle Wagoner  
Scholarship & Research Tournament—Sonoma CC

### **AUGUST 13**

Tri-Chapters—TPC Stonebrae

### **SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER/NOVEMBER**

Superintendent Institute—TBD

### **DECEMBER**

Holiday Event—TBD

The next event to look forward to is the annual State Meeting being held at the beautiful Silverado Resort in Napa. GCSANC is forgoing the annual Institute to support this meeting as the host association. The State Board of Directors has put together an outstanding educational program highlighted by key note speaker, golf course architect, David McLay Kidd. I look forward to seeing friends from around the state at this event.

In preparation for the annual Election Meeting hosted by Wente Vineyards, we are looking for nominations to recognize excellence in our region. Nominations are currently being accepted for Superintendent of the Year, Affiliate of the Year, Distinguished Service and Turf Grass Excellence, Private and Public. I encourage you all to help recognize deserving members by submitting nominations.

Approaching the end of the year we inevitably look back. We reflect and learn from our experiences, successes, and failures. The past is departed; it is time to move forward. While my year as President has been enriching and fulfilling, I am looking forward to being Past President, but intend to always provide service to the association when needed. For those who have not contributed to the association by serving on committees or the Board, I encourage you to get involved. Nominations are currently being accepted.

See you on the course,

*Glenn Matthews*

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# ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT PROFILE



**Name:** Chris Eckstrom

**Employer:**

The Course at Wente Vineyards

**Position:** Assistant Superintendent

**Years in the Business:** 10

**Previous Employment:** El Dorado Golf and Beach Club, Los Cabos, Mexico

**Education:** Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

**Other Organizations:** GCSAA

**What was the first car you ever owned?** 1993 Jeep Cherokee

**How fast did you drive it?** As fast as she'd go...70?

**How did you get into the business?** Started as a summer job in high school. I used to spot water at the Moraga Country Club in the afternoons.

**What did you learn that they never taught you in college?** Iron does a lot more than turn grass green.

**Please list your fantasy foursome:** George C. Thomas, Ronald Reagan, my grandpa and myself at LACC North.

**What is #1 on your bucket list?** Get my British citizenship.

**What's the best bit of professional advice ever tossed your way?** "Put some seaweed on it, laddie."

**What accomplishment are you most proud of?** Living in a foreign country for three years, and learning the language and culture.

**Beer or wine?** Both

**Favorite course to play:** El Dorado Golf and Beach Club or Laguna Lake GC in SLO.

**Ipod top 5:** MGMT, Time to Pretend; Green Day, Are We The Wating; Yellowcard, Rock Star Land; Arcade Fire, Ready to Start; Matchbox Twenty, How Far We've Come

**What's your favorite vacation spot?** Yosemite National Park

**Favorite hobby:** Camping

**Strangest thing you've ever seen on a golf course:** A bag of Doritos conveniently placed in the smile drain of a green.

**Few people know I like to:** Stand-up paddle board.

**If you weren't in the business of growing grass what would you be doing?** Practicing law.

**What's in your garage?** I'm still working up to the day where I can own one.

**What's in your closet at home?** Wine and sports gear.

**What's in your office?** An extensive collection of hats, flags and books.

**Worst piece of equipment ever owned?** JD greens aerifier.

**Closest to death you ever came?** Let's just say it involved a John Deere Gator and a wicked 1080 spin.

**Do you expect to collect on social security?** Ha! The \$1.20 a month that they are offering me now is starting to look pretty good.

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GEN AD JUNE 2011



# Oh Hell and All Hail...

*Bill Hamilton's blog from China*

It's been a busy time lately. Fall really did come quickly and we've been hustling to get the greens that we have popped and dressed and seeded. I may have to revisit the hustling part. Regardless, the greens are done and now it's on to overseeding the bermuda fairways. This should be interesting with all the resident experts I have on staff. "Well, when I worked at the Kung Fu Country Club, we



did it this way." As much as I like to be patient and listen, I pretty much let them know that I am trying "something new, and don't worry because I will take full responsibility if it doesn't come out right." I can't believe they still bite on that one. Thank Buddha that they've all come out right so far.

I finally figured out what was causing my collar fits over the summer. It turns out that in an effort to add just a wee bit more contour into the green surface the construction contractor doubled up on

the sand volume coming out of the core.

For all you metric fans out there, at 2.5 centimeters per inch, that 60 cm equals 24 inches of sand above the gravel layer! That's double the design specification amount of 30 centimeters/12 inches of "uniform" depth of sand base. Well the sand dunes around the greens' edges dry out much faster, causing grass density to thin. And thin turf is the enviro du jour for black algae in this humidity. We'll be incorporating some profile, or porous ceramics, into the collars diligently over the next year. Where's the local Dry-Ject guy when you need him? Oh yeah, I'm him. With labor my greatest asset, they're going to love this coming job. Grab your funnels!!



Aerification of the greens was interesting too. I found quite a bit of Chinese pea gravel that must have floated to the surface.

If I'm a size 13, that pebble had to check in at a 7. And you can trust me, those guys never travel alone, they go for the group discount. It's always a treat when your aerifier jumps off the ground like it ran over a railroad track when it's supposed to be working on a "sand-based" putting green. I would have thought that the finish guy might have noticed a clanging noise or sparks flying from his box blade.

So I collect my bag of rocks and start the hike to the GM's office for some "show and tell." He's cool and has actually built a couple of courses himself. So he and I can cross "golf course construction methods" off the list of languages needing translation. The GM says "I'll tell this situation to the Chairman of the Board (as well as the too much sand on the collars)." We've got some serious issues being generated from the construction company and their techniques. I'm sure the COTB and the construction company owner will come to terms and resolve these problems. Well, it just so happens that they are the same guy! COTB for the club is the construction company owner. Imagine that? For the record and security reasons, this individual will be heretofore referred to as "FC," as in fire cracker. I don't want to agitate our budding romance.

Usually, as a concerned and conscientious employee of my club, I will fight and defend what is right for my people. How does one fight this battle, especially here in C-doo. The answer is you go "Joe Friday" on them. I whip out my 714 badge and give 'em "the facts ma'am, just the facts." That's all I can do. There's no fine line to walk. Here's the problem and here's the solution. Do you Mr. FC, want to deal/pay with/for it or not? Ball, his court. So far it has worked out great. No loss of face for either face, and the cue ball gains grass cred.

It's very hard to describe the environment here and how the game is played. The rules are very different and they are written in a different language. This is not a game for the weak of heart, or the hard of head. There is a feudal atmosphere here that never left with the last dynasty. All I know is that I want to be in the round table room with the knights, sucking on that big turkey leg, cause that is where the action is and the overcast view of C-doo is the clearest.

*Bill Hamilton, CGCS Chengdu : Sichuan : China*





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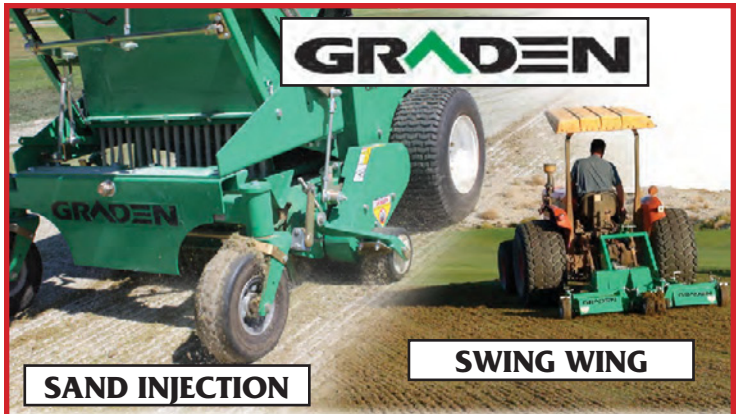
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# Browns & Greens

Golf courses as we recognize them today are a far cry from how the game of golf was played in the early 1900s. Golf courses were laid out with a mathematical zeal that had bunkers off of the tees between 60-80 yards that would have been an imposing hazard for most golfers that had a hard time getting the ball off the ground. Another set of bunkers would be laid out at 40-60 yards in from of the green and approach shots had to be played over them. Then we get to the green, or “brown” in most cases, that would be anywhere from 15-100 feet in diameter and consisted of sand.

As the game of golf was growing, golf courses were built on leased property and laid out over a very short period of time. A home nearby would be secured or a modest clubhouse built and they had a golf club. There was irrigation on a very rudimentary level found at some of the more established clubs, but for the most part sand greens were used. Golf had not taken a firm hold, and until it did, some clubs were reluctant to run up the expenses on something that could be a passing fad.

From what I have read there were two types of sand greens that were played on in the United States. Back East, the greens were made of a clay soil base that had a layer of sand placed over the top. Dependent on the club and its golfers, they would either spread out a thin layer of sand for the better golfers, or a thicker layer for average golfers. Interesting that even then there was some consideration for better players by making the greens less receptive to shots and increased speed.

In the Western states the sand greens were subject to being dryer and issues with the sand blowing away. To remedy this, the greens were built on a bed of gravel and a layer of sand that had an oil substance added to keep it in place. Aetna Springs Golf Course for example, still has some remnants of their sand greens scattered

around the course. Due to the oil and sands exposure to the elements the old greens have the consistency of an old asphalt road. The original San Rafael Golf Club (1898) was one of the first 18 hole courses in Northern California and was located near the now famous Marin County Civic Center. Their sand greens were 50 feet in diameter and the home green was 100 feet in diameter.

Closer to 1900, grass greens were starting to taking shape at The



CLUBHOUSE AND LINKS OF SANTA CATALINA GOLF CLUB.

San Francisco Golf Club at the Presidio and at Del Monte. There is an annual golfing guide that was published for the period of 1916-1931 that covered all of the refinements of the given clubs. In looking at the 1926 edition, one would think that by the 1920s most courses would have had grass greens, but the number is actually closer to only 50%. Of the courses that were still sand most were outside of high population areas.

## Photo Quiz

### Can you name this hole?

Send your photo quiz answer to *Thru the Green* Editor, Brian Netz, CGCS and win complimentary registration for the January 9 GCSANC Annual Meeting at the Course at Wente Vineyards!

### LAST ISSUE'S ANSWER

The photo from the last issue was of the 4<sup>th</sup> hole at the Presidio.

