THRU THE GREEN

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The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

— Committed to Responsible Turfgrass Management —

New and Improved Fountaingrove Hosts Scholarship Event

Hosting what is arguably the GCSANC most prestigious annual event might seem like a tall order for most NorCal superintendents. For Gary Skolnik, course superintendent at Fountaingrove Resort and Country Club it may be the easiest thing he has done in the last 36 months. Skolnik and his capable staff have been immersed in a major renovation that will make those familiar with the former Institute host course shake their heads in disbelief.

The process began shortly after Skolnik arrived in 1996. His first order of business was to contact Pat Gross, USGA Agronomist and the original course Architect Ted Robinson, Sr. Together, the trio began to identify the current needs of the course which first opened in 1985.

With the sage advice of Robinson, renowned worldwide for his course design, the dream of an improved Fountaingrove began to unfold. It was July 15th, recalls Skolnik when the renovation began. With the assistance of Greenscape Ltd., the next nine months would result in a major transformation of the scenic golf facility, located in the heart of the Sonoma wine country.

For first time players, or those returning, among some of the changes you will witness are: the addition of 5,000 lineal feet of drainage, a new irrigation system and pump station, 18 new tee complexes, three new greens, 1,000 trees and a redesigned practice facility. Recently reopened this past May, the numerous course improvements have taken the facility to a new level and subsequently have been met with rave reviews.

For Skolnik, his tenure at Fountaingrove has been as rewarding as anything he has experienced in his golf management career. A graduate from the College of the Desert in Palm Desert, Gary marvels at the skill of course architect, Ted Robinson. "Mr. Robinson was wonderful to work with," says Skolnik. "Throughout the project he continually allowed me the opportunity to participate in many of the agronomic decisions. It's something I really valued and appreciated."

Although the rigors of course renovation can take its toll, the long days and challenges presented by this winter were worth it for Skolnik and his staff.."It was a great learning experience, one of which we are all very proud. We look forward to showcasing our facility, and contributing to an important fund raising event."

Superintendent's Research and Scholarship Meeting

By Craig Kilcoyne

The Scholarship, Research and Education Tournament is fast approaching. This year's event will be held Monday, August 10, 1998 at the newly renovated Fountaingrove Resort & Country Club. Gary Skolnick, Golf Course Superintendent and his crew have worked diligently with the tournament committee, to put together what we hope will be one of the most successful meetings ever. This year's tournament format will feature a 4-person scramble with a twist. I will not give the twist away, but I can say that all abilities will be challenged and all who participate will have a great time. Please feel free to bring a guest(s) to make up your foursome. This is a chance to invite your friends to play golf with you, and meet your peers. If you cannot put a foursome together we will be happy to pair you up. There will be thousands of dollars worth of prizes to be auctioned and raffled. Some of the prizes include: an autographed 1997 49er's team football, and baseballs autographed by Cal Ripkin, Rickey Henderson, Wade Boggs. These are only a few of the valuable prizes available.

For those interested in lodging, the Double Tree Inn has extended a reduced rate for anyone participating in the event. We are also looking for any volunteers or donations of any kind for this event. If you can volunteer or have a donation, please call or send those to Barbara Mikel at the Association Office. On behalf of the tournament committee and golf course superintendent, Gary Skolnick and his crew, we hope to see everyone August 10. Don't miss out!!!

USGA Video Available

The USGA Green Section has announced the availability of the new video, "*Building A USGA Green*". This 22 minute video provides an overview of the construction and renovation of a putting green from preparation of the site and initial grading to final seeding or sprigging. The discussion includes shaping, drainage, determining the need of an intermediate layer, and rootzone blending.

The video is available through the USGA Order Department by calling 1-800-336-4446. The cost is $16.95 for USGA members and $19.95 for nonmembers, plus shipping and handling charges. The video is available in both VHS and PAL formats.