

THRU THE GREEN

July, 1998

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

— Committed to Responsible Turfgrass Management —



Wente Set To Open, Host Superintendent/Pro

Ask most Northern Californian's what comes to mind when they hear the name Wente, and they'll likely respond, fine California wines. On July 15th that's about to change. That's the day the Wente Vineyards and Wineries will christen what will soon be recognized as one of California's premier golf facilities, The Course at Wente Vineyards. NorCal Superintendents and their club professionals will join in the celebration just a week later, when Wente hosts the Superintendent/Pro Golf Tournament on July 22nd.

Demanding, scenic with a California flavor would best describe the Greg Norman creation. Winding through the hills of the Livermore Valley the site offers impressive views of Mt. Diablo as it traverses through Wente's vineyards

While your being soothed by the scenery and the ambiance of a California Winery, your patience will be put to the test. Shotmaking is a priority as you will soon learn on this arduous layout. Each hole offers a different challenge that is sure to make the golfing experience one you are not likely to forget.

For host superintendent, Jeff Shafer, being a part of The Course at Wente is an experience he is not likely to forget either. Shafer's enthusiasm for the project is evident as he describes the excitement of opening day. "I've managed four new constructions and have been a part of six others," says Shafer. "This one is by far the most gratifying and special. All of us at Wente are thrilled to be a part of this year's tournament. It's going to be a great opening week."

With the demands of course construction you would think Shafer would be looking forward to a chance to get away. Not Jeff. "I can honestly say that I love coming to work each day. This is what I love to do. Golf has been a part of my life for more than 20 years."

It all began in Michigan, as a member of the high school golf team. He launched his career in golf a short time later at Lincoln Hills Country Club, where he spent time both in the shop and on the course. "That was an invaluable experience," reflects Shafer. "The time I spent as an assistant pro has helped me have a greater understanding of golf operations." Shafer chuckles when he recalls his decision to focus his attention on course maintenance. "I thought it would be less political and of course, like most superintendents, I loved being outside."

By 1984 Shafer found himself on the west coast, establishing his career at such notable courses as Wood Ranch, Bear Creek and Hiddenbrooke. Aside from his ability to maintain quality golf courses, Jeff soon earned the reputation in the industry as a talented construction superintendent. He honed those skills during a stint in the landscape industry when he served as the landscape construction superintendent for Harold Jones Landscaping. Recognizing the need for a formal degree in today's competitive marketplace, Shafer

made the decision at age 30 to attend the Turfgrass School at Rutgers.

When the Wente Family began to fulfill their dream of building their own golf course, Shafer's experience, talents and love of the profession were just what they were looking for. "It's been a great opportunity," says Shafer. "We are extremely proud of what we have accomplished." Much of the credit Shafer insists belongs to his capable staff and his Assistant, Eric Mickleson. "I can't say enough about Eric, his expertise has been invaluable throughout the entire project."

For Shafer, life right now is like sipping a vintage glass of Merlot, with the summer sun setting on the horizon. "I have all I want, a wonderful wife and family, and a job and profession I truly love."

Media Director Makes Pitch To Board

Greg Crawford, Media Director for the Northwest Turfgrass Association and South Texas Superintendents Association made a brief presentation to the Board of Directors during the June Board Meeting. Crawford, in his address, spoke of the increased recognition superintendents in the Pacific Northwest have received as a result of numerous stories which have appeared in the local media. "Throughout our area, there has been a deepened awareness of Golf Course Superintendents, and the role they play within the golf community," said Crawford. "It didn't happen overnight. The process takes time to develop. It's a matter of being persistent and establishing contacts within the media that ultimately makes it work."

Bob Costa, who has championed the idea for the past year, thinks it's time has come. "Whether it's Greg or someone else, we need an individual who has the expertise to market our value to the industry. I think most superintendents would agree that public relations is important to us individually and to our profession, but often there just isn't sufficient time, or the appropriate contacts to make it happen. If superintendents are going to make an impact, particularly on a local level, we need someone like Greg who is trained to market and promote our position within the industry."

"Personally speaking, I believe that it's important for our Association to engage in activities that benefit each and every member. I'm convinced that in time, this is a program that can."

The support from board members appeared to strengthen as a

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12 Tips For Successful Interviews

Everyone gets a little nervous before a job interview. That's natural. But you need not go in with sweaty palms if you go prepared. Below are some useful techniques that will help you present yourself as the competent professional that you are to a prospective employer.

- Schedule interviews in ascending order of appeal and importance whenever possible. Your performance in interview situations will improve with practice and evaluation, and you can use that to your advantage.

- Keep a record of details of your upcoming interviews, including the time, location, the name of the interviewer, and how to pronounce the name of the company and the person who will be interviewing you correctly. If the interview is in another city, note any travel expenses that will be met by the prospective employer. Never cancel an interview appointment unless you have a personal emergency.

- Research the operation you plan to visit. Try to find out about its history and philosophy, as well as names and titles of decision-makers you should meet.

- Make a list of questions to ask about the company, the golf course and the job itself. Interviews serve a dual purpose: while the employer learns about you, you gather information to help you decide whether this is the right job for you.

- If possible, arrange to arrive early enough to walk the course before the interview. That may make it easier to give relevant examples and demonstrate your interest in the course.

- Get used to talking about what your current job entails. Practice enough — and preferably with someone who can provide constructive criticism — so that your communication is logical and orderly.

- Anticipate general questions about your training, your reasons for choosing this profession, why you are interested in this job and so on.

- Prepare for hard questions, including why you left/lost your last job. Script a confident and truthful answer that shows you in the best possible light. It helps if you and your former employer agreed on an "exit statement" — a brief and positive description of the reason(s) for leaving your previous job. Some possible wording:

- a change in senior management
- abolishment of your job
- an improper match between you and the position you were hired for
- blocked professional growth
- a desire for a career change
- or a wish to relocate

- Dress professionally. Don't underdress. Men should at least wear a sports coat, tie and slacks. Women should wear a conservative dress or jacket/skirt combination. Employers assume you will never dress better than you do for an interview.

- Take several copies of your short- and long-version resumes and a separate typed list of references. For yourself, take another copy of each version of your resume, your research notes, previous correspondence and the list of questions you intend to ask. Review them all beforehand, especially your resume. The person interviewing you will, so don't put yourself in the embarrassing position of stumbling over an answer that's right there in black and white.

- Arrive a few minutes early and double-check your appearance to make sure you are neat and well-groomed. Note the names of receptionists, secretaries and assistants for your follow-up activities. Review company materials such as brochures and newsletters, and pay attention to the appearance and

behavior of the people who work there. These observations will give you a sense of the organization's "culture" and important clues as to what the interviewer is looking for.

- Take a few deep breaths to help ease your nervousness. Many top athletes and successful business people say affirmation and visualization techniques work for them. Remind yourself that you are capable and qualified for the position, and picture yourself answering questions calmly, intelligently and confidently. /

Seminar Schedule Released

It seems a bit early to be thinking about 1999 GCSAA regional seminars in July, right? Think again. For those planning to attend the GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando, early bird registration is just a few weeks away. To help you plan your seminar activity for 1999, here's what you can expect to be offered locally:

- January 6 & 6 Golf Greens History, Theory, Construction and Maintenance
- May 19th Maximizing Job Satisfaction.

Both seminars will be held at the Pleasanton Hilton, in . . . you guessed it — Pleasanton

Media Director (Cont'd)

result of Crawford's appearance. The question that remains is funding the annual expense. "The next step is to take a hard look at various revenue sources," said President, Dave Davies. "I'm optimistic that the funds are available, however we have a fiscal responsibility to the membership that cannot be compromised." I expect that the issue of financing a Media Director will receive some serious discussion at the next board meeting.

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