



## Joel Erickson of Corde Valle Golf Club

By Ken Williams, CGCS

Joel Erickson has enjoyed prosperity as a relative newcomer to the golf business. He has proven that hard work and devotion have brought him success in this business. After switching career paths in 1995, he walked on as a crew member at Saddle Creek GC in Copperopolis during grow-in. Finding he loved the business, Joel enrolled in a two-year turf management program at Penn State and graduated with honors in 1999. Today he finds himself as the Golf Course Superintendent of Corde Valle, one of the most prestigious courses in California.

Corde Valle is an 18-hole private club nestled in a secluded valley south of San Jose, west of highway 101. It was designed by Robert Trent Jones II and opened for play in the spring of 1999. The property is composed of nearly 1700 acres, 110 acres under turf grass. The majority of the site is preserved as open space, making Corde Valle unique to most golf courses built today for the development of real estate.

Corde Valle was built for the businesses of Silicon Valley

With numerous amenities, it offers a place for companies to have corporate meetings, retreats, and relaxing overnight accommodations. Amenities include a 36,000 square foot clubhouse with locker rooms, full spas, treatment rooms (massage, facial, etc. etc.), swimming pool, library, banquet facilities and conference rooms. There are also 45 overnight rooms/villas with fireplaces and spas overlooking the golf course.

The golf course is composed of approximately 44 acres of fairways and 44 acres of roughs. Greens and tees measure a total of seven acres with greens averaging 6750 square feet apiece. Greens are composed of Dominant Creeping bentgrass and tees/fairways are made up of Champion GQ Perennial ryegrass. Roughs are a blend of three ryegrasses and two Kentucky bluegrasses. There are also large areas of native grassland/wildflower areas.

The staff is made up of 36 employees in the summer and 28 in the winter. Work is divided up into sections with Green Keepers responsible for

the maintenance of three holes each. Greens are walk mown daily at 1/8", tees and fairways are cut three days a week at 3/8", and roughs mown twice a week at 1 3/4". Bunkers are both mechanically raked and completely hand raked daily. The design and construction of the bunkers does result in a lot of washouts during the winter. From a maintenance standpoint, bunker washouts are one of the biggest challenges Joel and his staff face with the course.

No major projects are in the offing at this time but there are plans to add nurseries, trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding, a helicopter pad, and additional practice/teaching facilities.

Joel came over from Saddle Creek in the spring of 1998 to accept the position of Assistant Superintendent to Jim McPhilomy at Corde Valle. When Jim became the Director of Maintenance Operations, Joel was promoted to the position of Golf Course Superintendent in August of 2000.

Joel is quick to give credit to those who have influenced his career. "I've been lucky to work

with some great people in my short time in the business," says Joel. "Paul Cushing and Chris Weaver at Saddle Creek as well as Jim McPhilomy here at Corde Valle have all helped, taught, and assisted in my knowledge and advancement." "And especially my wife Liz, who has been tremendously supportive, patient, and helpful. She even assisted me with my Weed Recognition and Collection assignment from school." (Authors note. For some reason MY weed collection at school always got me in trouble! ) Joel's learned some valuable lessons in the business including flexibility, accepting others ideas, and experience in problem solving. "I've found it to be important to look at situations from more than one viewpoint or perspective." "Jim's really been influential in teaching me that."

When Joel is away from work, his hobbies include traveling, playing other courses, swimming, volleyball, and gold prospecting. Through his hard work and devotion, he's already on his way to finding a pot of gold at Corde Valle.

## A Profile of Mr. Herbert Graves

By Gary Carls, CGCS

This month GCSANC will conduct the 2nd Annual Herbert Graves Scholarship and Research Tournament. This event is named in honor Mr. Graves who passed away in 2000 and was a GCSANC member for 53 years. He was awarded an honorary GCSANC membership in 1986. It is important to understand a little about this gentleman to appreciate the way we all have benefited from his dedication to our association.

In 1917 H.V Carter Co. was

the 1st Jacobsen distributorship established and therefore it is the oldest in the country. David E. Graves, Berts' father, purchased the company from Mr. Carter and kept the name for the company. The company has been run by the family ever since. Besides being involved in the equipment business, Mr. Graves also had some interests in other aspects of our business. In 1946 he did a presentation for GCSANC members about a 2-4D preparation called

Weedicide. Mr. Graves was also involved in the early development of aerifiers with Tom Mascaro and one of the first advocates of the benefits that could be achieved through using aerification on your golf course.

In the early years of GCSANC the affiliate members did not always enjoy the active role that we see today. The organization was a superintendent group and vendor partici-

pation was often quite limited. Despite this role, certain affiliate members such as Mr. Graves often participated through presentations of various topics to the superintendents. He felt it was important to support the superintendents in any way he could. His most important goal was to be fair and honest with everybody. He expected the same in return. As I searched back through the minutes of GCSANC there were numerous

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