



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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A Profile (Cont'd)

mentions of participation by Mr. Graves or staff at H.V. Carter Company in GCSANC functions. In continuing the active involvement from the company, Rex Gentry was the 1st affiliate BOD member to cast a vote after the recent bylaw change giving the affiliate representatives a vote.

Mr. Graves enjoyed his many years of active involvement with GCSANC and his family was truly honored when the Scholarship and Research Tournament was named in his honor. Some of his greatest memories were of working with his friends in this organization. Over the years he looked

forward the GCSAA Conference and Show and had many great moments there with his good friend Cliff Wagoner CGCS. You'll have to talk to Cliff to get further details of those days. He never lost his love for the great industry we all work in. Let's hope that we all can share the same passion for our industry and be active participants for over 50 years as Mr. Graves was. Hope everyone can attend the tournament and enjoy a day of camaraderie with friends. I also hope this article has offered those of us who really did not know him a little more insight into Mr. Herbert Graves. /

2002 GCSANC Meeting Hosts Still Needed

If you would like to host a GCSANC meeting in 2002, please contact GCSANC Board Members Roger Robarge or Jeff Shafer. There are still many opportunities available.

Membership Report from the June 13th Board of Directors Meeting

New Member

Alberto Julian Canedo Gilroy Golf Course Class B

A Superintendent's Dream *By Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG*

If I could imagine the worst day for a greenkeeper, it would go something like this

5:05 a.m. — Wake up an hour late as alarm clock fails. Take alarm clock to back yard and strike it crisply with 9-iron.

5:35 — Arrive at office and play answering machine. Five employees call in sick.

5:37 — Go over crew assignments with both assistants. Decide we can't rake bunkers or mow fairways because of absent employees.

5.50 — Instruct the second assistant to put out the pink colored, ladies day flags while performing the daily course setup.

6:01 — Second assistant calls on radio to tell me of many severe indentations in the practice putting green, likely cause during the previous night's wedding rehearsal from high-healed shoes. Says there must be 1,500 holes in the putting green.

6:11 — While touring the course, find severe vandalism to No. 1 green from 4-wheel drive vehicle doing "donuts" on the putting surface. Call police, general manager, insurance company and green chairman to notify them of the damage. 9:45 — Head Pro calls to tell me (for the first time) that there is a 10:00 a.m. ladies shot-gun today with two groups on all 18 holes. He asks if we will have enough time to get everything ready, including placing flower pots on every tee.

11:05 — Club accountant calls and says I am \$120,000 over budget for the fiscal year maintenance budget that ends in June.

Noon — Have lunch with the new green chairman. His first question is where can he buy a Stimpmeter. He asks why we always do all of the maintenance on men's day instead of on other days. He has a third martini for dessert, then excuses himself to chair his first green committee meeting.

1:32 p.m. — Back in the office I

have a message on the answering machine from the new green chairman instructing me to firm up bunkers ASAP

1:33 — Get a call from my former green chairman. He says the bunkers are playing too firm and I am "advised" to "loosen them up."

1:37 — Club president calls. He says the bunkers are just right and finally playing exactly the way he wants and expects.

1:40 — Fill sink in bathroom with very cold water and soak my head for as long as I can.

1:44 — Excedrin headache No. 77, called "why can't they ever make up their mind?"

1.55 — Ladies' committee chairwoman waves me over to the side of No. 8 fairway and scolds me for putting out the pink-colored flags. I am told to never, ever patronize her or the other female golfers again.

2:01 — Have meeting with the general manager. She wants the

greens faster ASAP to a consistent 10.8 feet on the stimpmeter all season long, no excuses. I explain that the green committee wants them at precisely 11.5 feet for the season, the head pro wants them at 10 feet during the season, the ladies committee wants them at a uniform 9 feet all season; and the junior boys and girls committee wants them at a uniform 9 feet all season.

2.11 — Run into the men's club champion in the locker room who wants the greens to roll 12 feet immediately and wants to know what is taking me so long to get the speed increased on all of the greens. When I tell him about the pro's suggestion of 10 feet, he provides some instructional advice about the pro which, I respond, would be anatomically impossible.

2:31 — Head lifeguard calls me on the radio. Says there is a brown-colored object at the bottom of the swimming pool and that I should send over a crew to clean it up. I tell him it's a Baby Ruth, remind him of the

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