

THRU THE GREEN

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

NOV / DEC 2015



TPC Harding Park in San Francisco

*Host site for the 2016 GCSANC Annual
Meeting on January 25, 2016*

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On the Cover: TPC Harding Park in San Francisco, host site for the 2016 GCSANC Annual Meeting on January 25.

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The Year in Review

By **JIM ABATE**, 2015 GCSANC President, PGA Tour Agronomy

As the holidays rapidly approach, and we prepare for the GCSANC Holiday Meeting and time with family and friends, it is difficult to believe that another year is coming to an end.

Certainly, this was a year dominated by focus on the drought and responding to the directives of the Governor and regulators. As we anxiously anticipate what virtually all of the experts project to be a very wet winter, let's take a moment to reflect on the association's activities and events in 2015.

Beginning with the Affiliates Breakfast at Oakhurst Country Club in January and concluding with our upcoming Annual Holiday meeting on December 4, GCSANC will host a total of nine events this year, plus held an informative webinar presented by State Water Resources Control Board staff.

The Annual Meeting at Metropolitan Golf Links drew 69 attendees (including 35 Superintendents and 2 Assistant Superintendents) and featured a keynote speech by NFL Hall of Famer Raymond Chester.

Next, we were treated to an impressive slate of speakers at Poppy Hills for the GCSANC, USGA, NCGA Regional Conference. 119 registered for that event, filling the room at Poppy Hills. 43 Superintendents and 10 Assistant Superintendents attended the meeting that featured presentations on golf course sustainability, water conservation, the Poppy Hills renovation, and the US Open at Chambers Bay.

Following that event, we enjoyed a day at The Links at Bodega Harbour for our North Bay Regional meeting. More than 25 Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents and their guests were among the 43 who attended and heard presentations on wetting agents, acquisition strategies/financing and leasing and Aquatic Plant and Algae Management in Irrigation Ponds.

The Annual Scholarship and Research Tournament at Palo Alto Hills Golf and Country Club attracted 72 participants, including more than 30 Superintendents or course representatives, resulting in the award of \$7,000 to six worthy recipients.

Coyote Creek Golf Club hosted the Tri-Chapter meeting, where 74 were in attendance, including 33 Superintendents and 3 Assistant Superintendents, as well as their guests.

Most recently, we resumed the Institute, which was last held in January of 2013. This year's very successful event was moderated by Dr. Ali Harivandi, Jr., and included live presentations by Cole Thompson (Turf Program, Research, and Extension Work at Cal Poly), Mike Blankinship (WOTUS), Dr. Jim Baird (UC Riverside Research Update), and arborist Steve Swain (Tree Stress Points in Oaks and Redwoods During Drought). Additionally, Frank Wong, who was suffering from pneumonia, generously joined us remotely to offer a presentation on Pollinators, Pesticides and Policy: Impacts on Golf Course Management. The 47 in attendance included 22 Superintendents and 2 Assistant Superintendents.

In addition to increasing overall attendance at GCSANC events, the organization is focused on increasing participation by Superintendent members. The Board has begun calling Superintendents prior to events to encourage their attendance, and Executive Director Marc Connerly has undertaken a campaign to call those members who have not attended recently, learn more about their reasons for not participating, and ask them to become more involved.

We are also committed to holding an event in the East Bay in 2016, and are actively seeking member courses throughout the GCSANC region at which to hold an event. If you would like to hold a GCSANC event at your course next year, please contact the GCSANC office or a Board member to express your interest.

GCSANC has 494 members, which includes 146 active Superintendents, 69 Assistant Superintendents, and 137 Affiliates, plus 142 other classified members (e.g., Honorary, Life,

Continued on page 10

NORCALENDAR

January 25 Annual Meeting

TPC Harding Park,
San Francisco

March 14 GCSANC/USGA/NCGA Regional Conference

San Jose Country Club,
San Jose

NEW MEMBERS

**Almaden
Golf & Country Club**
Josh Lewis

BASF
Corbett Schnormeier

**Palo Alto Hills
Golf & Country Club**
Grady Steele

Pasatiempo Golf Club
Ray Parker

San Jose Country Club
Ryan Borris

**The Villages
Golf & Country Club**
Michael Scully



Letter From the Editor

By **SEAN TULLY**, *Meadow Club*

I hope that you find this newsletter interesting! Water is a big issue, and I feel that the work done by Tim Youngberg at Mira Vista needs to be seen by others in our industry as an option to offset the drought and increased scrutiny regarding the golf industry's use of water.

Adam Van Dyke is an independent researcher from Salt Lake City that I have gotten to know over the last couple Golf Industry Show seminars. I have found his research on Poa seedhead reduction to be very interesting.

I also made a quick trip to visit Ed Bale at Northwood Golf Club, and love the energy and appreciation he has for his course and the area. If you haven't been to Northwood, it is truly a special place in Northern California!

I hope that you enjoy the newsletter, and if you have a story that needs to be told, give me a call.

Enjoy!

ren·o·vate *vb.*
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2: put in good condition
3: to restore

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Executive Director's Report

By **MARC CONNERLY**, *GCSANC Executive Director*

As we head into the final month of 2015, we are preparing for this year's final event, the Holiday Meeting at Del Monte Golf Course and Hyatt Regency Monterey Hotel & Spa. This year, we are very happy to announce the addition of childcare to the festivities, and we thank Pacific Material Resources for their generous childcare sponsorship.

We also appreciate Frontier Golf, our Holiday Meeting Drinks Sponsor, as well as Jacobsen, EZ Go, Turfco, Smithco, DHR Construction, Turfstar, Ewing Irrigation, Russ Mitchell and Associates, Par Consultants, Kaminski Golf Construction, Bryant Taylor Gordon Golf, and Zellers-Plageman, all of whom have pledged sponsorships to the Holiday Meeting as of this writing. Of course, Santa will also visit us from his home at Sierra Pacific Turf Supply.

Although the 2016 calendar is not yet finalized, we are working diligently to have the calendar established before the end of the year or as early in the year as possible. The Annual Meeting will be held on January 25 at TPC Harding Park, and we are very close to finalizing a location and date for the USGA/NCGA Regional Conference. We are also making progress on locations for a 2016 Field Day event, the Scholarship and Research Tournament and the Institute. We are even close to finalizing a site for the 2017 S & R Tournament!

One of the biggest challenges has been to increase overall attendance, and in particular the participation of Superintendents and Assistants. To attack this problem, the Board and staff have begun making calls to members prior to each event to encourage them to attend the next event. I have also started randomly calling members who have not attended in a while, asking them about their event preferences, and encouraging them to re-engage with GCSANC. At the Institute, we also raffled a big-screen TV, a new benefit of attendance that we plan to continue and hope will increase member participation.

The GCSANC Board and staff continue to seek ways to improve events and member participation, and I expect that we will announce additional event enhancements in the near future.

A new website is in the works at GCSANC, and we expect to reveal the fresh, new site at the Annual Meeting. The Web Committee, led by the creativity and hard work of Sean Tully, has reviewed a draft of the newly designed site, and the Board will review and provide their suggestions in December. We are excited to provide you with a more contemporary, functional, user-friendly design.

If you have visited the website recently, you will notice that the cover photos have been updated, and will remain current, highlighting host facilities for upcoming GCSANC events.

As we look ahead to 2016, despite the anticipation of El Niño, water conservation will remain a concern. The Governor recently directed the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to extend the current emergency regulations through October of 2016 unless the current drought conditions have ceased by the end of January. He also instructed SWRCB to expand the regulations to non-potable water, and authorized the Board to amend the regulations based on lessons learned this year. While weather experts virtually unanimously predict a very severe El Niño, with heavy rains anticipated from January through March, and maybe into May, it is unlikely that drought conditions will have ceased by the end of January.

We will also continue to monitor and report on the progress of sustainable groundwater management regulations, which continue to evolve. Additionally, I anticipate legislation in 2016 aimed at water storage, water reclamation funding, and other water-related issues.

Here's wishing you and yours a very happy holiday season, and a prosperous (and saturated) new year!



From the Field

By **JEFF JENSEN**, GCSAA Field Staff, Southwest Region

I hope everyone is having a great fall and enjoying some cooler weather. It was a long summer! Early registration for the 2016 Golf Industry Show Feb. 6-11 in San Diego opened Nov. 3. "Everything Under the Sun" promises to be our best show yet. The San Diego Convention Center and the Gaslamp District provide an unbelievable setting for our annual showcase.

Early full-pack registration cost (before Jan. 19, 2016) for the Golf Industry Show is \$420 for GCSAA members. Seminars are \$180 for a full-day, \$160 for six-hours, \$120 for a half-day and \$80 for two-hours.

Registration is available online at <http://www.golfindustryshow.com/registration>.

In addition to the Golf Industry Show, The GCSAA Golf Championship is scheduled for Feb. 6-8. The event features the National Championship, Golf Classic, Four-Ball and Shamble. This year's championship is being played over some of San Diego's finest courses including Aviara, La Costa Resort & Spa, Maderas, The Crossings at Carlsbad and Torrey Pines, upcoming host of the 2021 US Open.

The National Championship (open to the first 100 superintendents with a handicap index of 5.0 and below) and the Golf Classic (flighted by handicap, using a point quota scoring system) are \$475 per player before Dec. 21 (\$575 for affiliates participating in the Golf Classic). Entry fee for the Four-Ball and Shamble are \$175 per player before Dec. 21 (\$275 for affiliates). The 2012 GCSAA Golf Championship in San Diego had a record turnout, so make sure to register early at <http://www.golfindustryshow.com/gcsaa-golf-championships/registration-information>.

And don't forget about the annual California GCSA "California Room" reception that will once again be held on the USS Midway in San Diego Harbor on Feb. 10. Registration is required, and the cost of the event is \$35 thru Dec. 31, \$50 Jan. 1 - Jan. 31, and \$100 thereafter. It's the only place to be in San Diego on Wednesday night! Register now at <http://www.californiagcsa.org>.

If you have any questions concerning the Golf Industry Show, the GCSAA Golf Championships or need any information about the area, please don't hesitate to call me at 785-840-7879, email me at jjensen@gcsaa.org, or visit the website at www.golfindustryshow.com. I look forward to seeing all of you in San Diego. •

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GCSAA Delegates Meeting: October 27-28, 2015

By **TIM SEDGLEY**, CGCS, Poplar Creek Golf Course

Over 100 Chapter Delegates, GCSAA Board Members, and GCSAA management employees convened at GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kansas to address key initiatives and the state of our association.

President John O'Keefe, CGCS and Vice President Peter Grass, CGCS updated the delegates on the affairs and financial status of the national association. A major topic of conversation was the status of the Rounds for Research fundraising program.

672 rounds of golf were auctioned off in 2015. This fell far short of projections, and the Board felt increased efforts are needed in this area. 80% of the funds go back to the chapters for local research.

The revised Members Standards Classification proposal was discussed at length. The proposed changes to the classification will require future Class A members to acquire a total of 20 points, consisting of a sliding scale of formal education, experience, and educational points. Class A renewal will require a total of five points every five years, consisting of three educational points and two golf-centric service points. This proposal was approved by a majority of the delegates and will be voted on by the membership at the 2016 GIS show in San Diego.

The Board Policy Oversight Task Group (BPOTG), chaired

by Past President Pat Finlen, CGCS gave a report stating that the current GCSAA Board of Directors are conducting themselves with integrity and trust of the association, well within the framework of GCSAA policies.

The Equipment Management Task Group, chaired by John Fuller, updated the delegates on the Equipment Managers Classification. The Equipment Managers dues were waived in 2015 and will be \$95 in 2016. Eight equipment managers certificate classes will be available at GIS in San Diego.

A Town Hall meeting was conducted between the GCSAA Board and the delegates. The major topic of conversation was why Assistant Superintendents are not permitted to run for officer positions at the chapter level. This will be an action item for further review and a possible bylaws change.

The Government Advisory and Advocacy Manager, Chava McKeel, gave an update on the Grass Root Ambassadors program. GCSAA currently has 185 ambassadors, with a goal of 500 by 2020. All members are encouraged to attend National Golf Day in Washington D.C. next spring. The Government Relations Department has added a third member to their team, Bob Helland, a full time lobbyist who is residing in Washington D.C. to increase total advocacy staff to three. The 2015 Government Relations priorities include: issues with the Americans with Disabilities Act, fertilizers, labor and immigration, pesticides, value of golf, and water management.

Mark Johnson, The Associate Director of Environmental Programs, reported that his department is working on the *Drought Management Program Guide*, the *Nutrient Management Program Guide*, and the *Water Management Guide*. All of these guides are planned for completion in 2016, and each of these programs will be part of the national *BMP Planning Guide*.

The Member Engagement Program is concentrating their efforts on the "Member Get A Member Promotion," the "Thank A Golf Course Superintendent Campaign," and the GCSAA Organizational Redesign.

The final segment of the Delegates Meeting were the "Meet The Candidates" presentations. After the candidates' formal presentations, the delegates went into breakout sessions with the candidates to discuss issues with each candidate individually. Peter Grass, CGCS is running for President, and Bill Maynard, CGCS is running for Vice President, both unopposed. Rafael Barajas, CGCS and Darren Davis, CGCS are running for Secretary/Treasurer. GCSANC member Kevin Breene, CGCS; Jeffrey Millies, CGCS; Rory VanPoucke; and John Walker are running for two Director openings. •

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Questions? Contact Mischia Wright, Associate Director, EIFG
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Orinda Country Club

Part 2 - The Restoration

By **TODD ECKENRODE**, *ASGCA*

Our goal in this exciting project at Orinda Country Club was to make all of the holes as good as they could possibly be. Sometimes, this involved restoration, other times renovation.

Restoration sometimes is simply an “unwinding” of ill effects that have accumulated over the years. It doesn’t have to mean a literal recreation of how the course looked at a certain space in time, though it certainly can. Significant tree removals to restore lost views into other holes and the surrounding hills is one such example. Restoring naturalness is another, such as the general cleaning out of a long-used green waste and tree-trimming dump behind the #2 green into a fescue-laden natural valley, removal of cart paths wherever feasible, or re-routing to a less obtrusive location.

Other times, we are intending to be more literal. For holes #8, 11, and 15, we provided the shapers with all information we had on hand, with hopes they would be able to recreate the holes more literally. Of course, a little artistic license was afforded, to make the holes best fit the land and overall design,

but the results are turning out to be remarkably close to past images.

The Team

With construction well underway at Orinda Country Club (OCC), it’s time to introduce the team. Longtime superintendent Bob Lopic and newly arrived Josh Smith are steering the ship at OCC through a complicated time of member play as well as construction. We also brought in the Bay Area’s finest independent shapers to shape all bunkers, new greens, green extensions and surrounds. They are Brett Hochstein from nearby Walnut Creek and George Waters from San Francisco. Both are world-class, and have fulfilled all expectations we had and then some. Building the nuts and bolts of the course is Earth Sculptures, a golf course builder with plenty of experience on classic courses such as Orinda up and down the state.

Continued on page 14



Orinda Country Club 8th Hole in Fall 2015 following renovation

Retired, Students, Associates, Inactive, etc.). The total membership includes 30 Affiliates, 26 Superintendents and 20 Assistant Superintendents with memberships pending renewal. The association added 36 new members since this time last year.

Finally, one of the important initiatives of GCSANC in 2015 was the formation of the Northern California Golf Industry Water Conservation Coalition, comprised of more than 20 industry representatives from our organization, as well as GCSAA, USGA, CGCOA, and Northern California PGA. One of the primary tasks undertaken by the coalition this year was the development of a water survey that was circulated to GCSANC members, and provided to California GCSA for distribution to the state's other GCSA chapters.

A total of 42 GCSANC members responded to the survey, more than 83% of whom are 18 hole facilities. Close to 60% use ET to schedule irrigation, 67% use moisture meters on their course, and 74% have plans to upgrade all or a portion of their irrigation system in the coming year.

While only 26% of respondents have had an audit by a certified irrigation auditor, 83% have an established drought contingency plan and 62% made an effort to reduce turf prior to 2013.

Over 94% indicated that they use wetting agents, 77% maintain fairways while reducing water to roughs, 66% have reduced irrigated turf, more than 54% are working more closely with their water district, 77% have increased hand-watering, 60% are using growth regulators, 34% have switched to drought-tolerant turf, and 11%

have reduced or eliminated overseeding.

Thank you to those who took the time to complete the survey.

On another note, we are eagerly seeking candidates for this year's GCSANC awards. The Board of Directors reached the decision to present the Superintendent of the Year Award, the George Santana Distinguished Service Award, and the Bert Graves Affiliate Merit Award. The decision was made to skip the Excellence in Turfgrass Awards this year due to the variance in water restrictions throughout our region, and the resulting difficulty in comparing courses subject to 40% water restrictions to courses with 8% water restrictions. The Board will re-evaluate presenting the Excellence in Turfgrass Awards next year.

To nominate a candidate for this year's awards, please go to the following link: [2015 GCSANC Awards](#).

On behalf of the entire GCSANC Board of Directors and staff, I wish you a very happy and safe holiday season!

Regards,

Jim

Jim Abate
President, GCSANC



Around we go...

Attendees enjoyed several informative presentations at the 2015 Institute at Fountaingrove Golf & Athletic Club





Superintendent Profile: Fernando Villagran-Costello

Golf Course Superintendent at The Links at Bodega Harbour

By **TIM SEDGLEY**, CGCS, *Poplar Creek Golf Course*

Fernando Villagran grew up in Salta, Argentina. Salta is an agricultural city 1,000 miles North of Buenos Aires. Fernando's father, Pedro, was a tobacco grower on an 80 acre farm and his mother, Rosa Argentina, was a school teacher. Fernando is the third of 5 brothers. He enjoyed playing rugby and soccer (football to the rest of the world) as a youth. Fernando also enjoyed riding horses in Salta. His sports career ended later in youth when he injured both of his knees.

Fernando's first exposure to golf was playing at a local nine hole course with his father, not knowing that golf would be his career later in life. Fernando obtained a five year BS degree in Agricultural Engineering in 1998 from National Northeast University. For a couple of years after college, Fernando grew tobacco, soybeans, and corn in the Salta area. He also volunteered, helping out at his childhood local nine hole golf course advising them of beneficial agronomy practices. Fernando was in correspondence with Daniel Ramos, a fellow Argentinian and owner of DHR Construction and Larson Golf Inc. Daniel Ramos convinced Fernando to pack his bags, head for the U.S. and join him in the golf course construction field, where Fernando worked for almost ten years. Fernando's wife, Maria Eugenia, joined him in his American adventure a year later. Fernando started out as a construction laborer and soon worked his way up to equipment operator supervisor and project manager.



Fernando was on a business call visiting Rodney Muller at Tilden Park in 2009 when Rodney asked if Fernando was inquiring about his Assistant Superintendent's opening, of which Fernando was not aware. Rodney convinced Fernando to accept the position and he was off and running in the golf course management business. Rodney was not able to keep the talented Fernando very long; six months later he landed the Superintendent's job at The Links at Bodega Harbour, where he has been entrenched to this day.

Fernando enjoys agronomy and networking with fellow Superintendents, and is currently a director of the GCSANC, where he serves on the Membership and Research committees.

Fernando and Maria have two children. David, their twelve-year old son, is active in school and basketball, and Martina, their eleven-year old daughter, plays golf, basketball, and is interested in getting into volleyball.

Fernando's favorite hobbies, other than spending time with his family, are watching sports (especially the European Soccer Leagues) and playing golf. He soon hopes to play a complete 18 holes round of golf with his entire family. Fernando's dream golf foursome is Gary Player, Roberto De Vincenzo, and Argentinian Pope Francis. Fernando is very proud and blessed to be a Golf Course Superintendent living in this great country with his beloved family. •





An Interview With Tim Youngberg

Golf Course Superintendent, Mira Vista Golf & Country Club

By **SEAN TULLY**, *Meadow Club*

Editor's note: As our drought continues into a possible fifth year, we are all looking for some solutions to reduce water use at our given courses. There are some courses that have already acted preemptively and others that are forced to react to the ongoing drought and water reductions being imposed on them by their water agency. I have been following closely as some courses have converted their fairways to Bermuda grass. The work done by Superintendent Roger Robarge at The Valley Club in Southern California highlights this idea, and he has seen a water use reduction in the 30% range.

I initially spoke with Luis Ballesteros, Superintendent at Moraga Golf Club, about his work introducing Bermuda grass on his tees and sprigging some fairways. He mentioned that Tim Youngberg, Superintendent at Mira Vista Country Club in El Cerrito, had just finished sprigging all of his fairways and that I should talk to him.

The following stems from our phone conversation and emails to cover some of the basic ideas surrounding the conversion of the fairways at Mira Vista to Bermuda grass.

Thank you,
Tim!

Why did you decide to sprig with Bermuda grass? Many different factors; drought, mandatory reduction from EBMUD @ 40%; and the cost to replace our aging irrigation system was too high.

What restrictions were you under in 2015? Currently, 40% reduction based on our 2013 usage. We began reducing our consumption in 2010 when I arrived at Mira Vista.

What grasses did you go with? Santa Ana hybrid Bermuda; I'm close with Marc Logan, and he has had success with it in the past and suggested we try it at Mira Vista (Santa Ana is the same grass used at The Valley Club, developed at UC Riverside).

Did you have test plots or did you do your own research on property that led to starting the Bermuda conversion? A few members of my Board of Directors and Greens Committee traveled to Turlock Country Club to play a round of golf. Turlock had done the same process a few years prior. Some of our Board members also visited the driving range at Chuck Corica in Alameda, where the grass is being utilized as well.

How did you introduce the Bermuda? Sod, sprigs? Interplanting machine.



Looking back towards the tee on the 10th hole at Mira Vista

How did the membership respond to your efforts? The response was very positive from my membership. From our first meeting detailing my plan to a few members, to review from the Greens Committee and Board of Directors, to the actual funding and implementation, the process was a little over 30 days. Not too many projects get approved through country clubs that fast!

How did the work impact play on the course? We did close each hole for about two days; about one day for the machine to work safely, and another day for our crew to cleanup, fertilize and water. We have 27 acres of fairways, and it took 11 days to finish the project.

How much did your communication help? Constant updates through my blog, emails and through committee meetings helped keep all stakeholders informed.

Continued on page 13

Can you communicate too much or never enough?

Never enough.

Describe the process that you used to make sure you had good results? The process involves interplanting the Bermuda grass through a machine that essentially opens up the ground and drops in Bermuda sprigs. Water and fertilizer are essential to keeping the newly-installed plant happy. The process will take 2-3 years before it is fully established and becomes the dominant species in our fairways.

How much did it cost? \$132,000, plus in-house labor, water and fertilizer.

What did you learn? Patience; this process takes time; it's not an overnight fix - nothing is.

Would you recommend this to others? Absolutely; the cost of water isn't going down anytime soon and golf courses need to adapt and be more sustainable for their future.



Machine used to place sprigs on the fairways at Mira Vista

For additional information on the Bermuda grass conversion, visit Tim's blog showing the work done by him and his staff at Mira Vista: <http://mvgreens.tumblr.com>. •

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The Start

Initial holes closed for work were holes #16-18. It was at this point that the overall style and character of the bunkering was solidified, reflecting the flashed bunker faces, use of bays, fingers and rolls and wavy character to the sand lines as referenced in the past issue from the 1931 Golfdom image for hole #8. For Holes #16 and #17, specific design changes to these holes included repositioned bunkering, green extension and restorations, and altered approaches. For #16, we raised the left side of the approach to allow better run-up options over the new left bunker that is offset 15 yards or so from the green. For #17, we shifted the cart path as far right as possible, and raised the right approach to flow off the hill and allow balls to bound in from the right side.

Hole #18 largely focused on a rebuilt green and introduction of bunkering for added interest. The previous green was simply too steep for normal play and had very few hole locations as such. Simply lessening the slope would have created an artificial looking platform, and poor tie-ins on the front and back to achieve this. Due to the steep overall elevation change, and to achieve the “tie-in’s” we wanted, much of the slope is

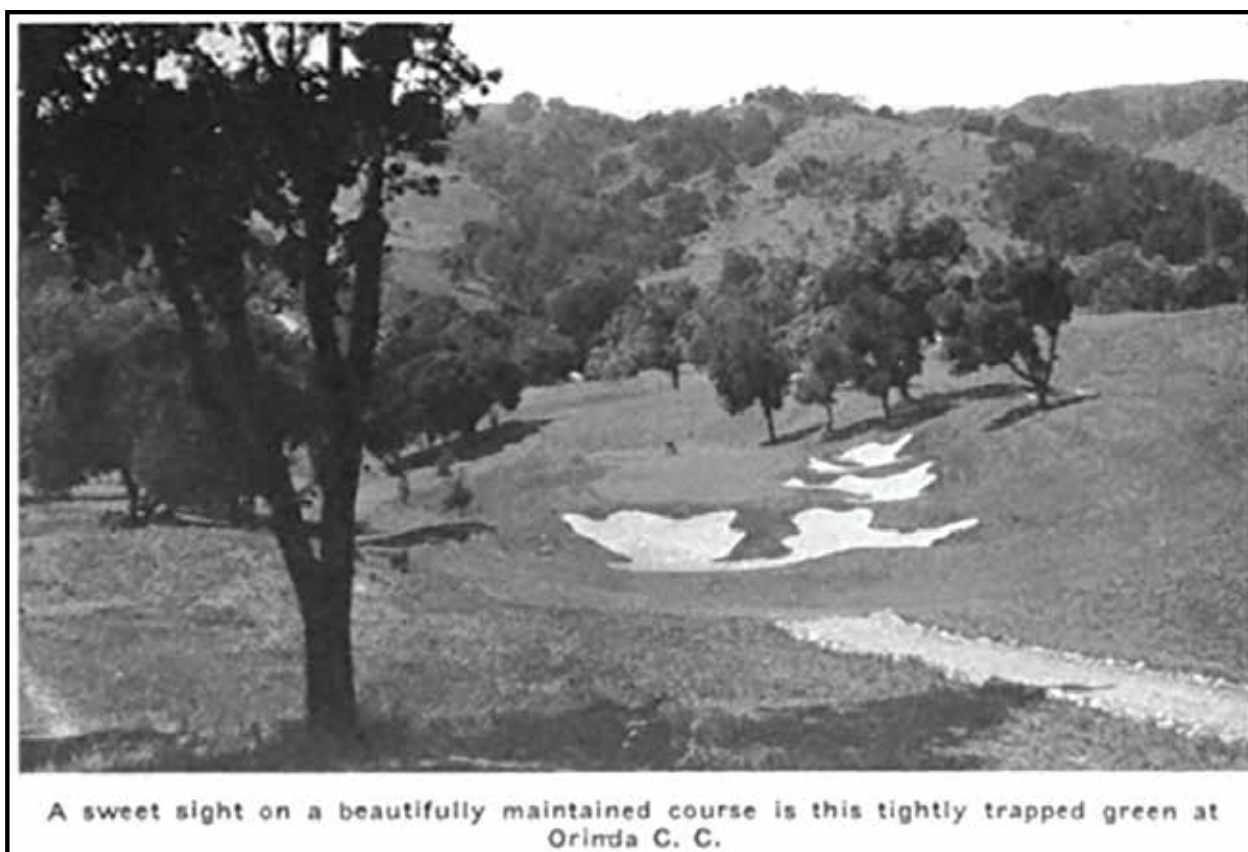
incorporated into sections of the green itself, in the form of a flashed back edge, and transition slopes on the interior. The new green design is certainly a wild ride, but in this sense matches the overall feel of the hole with its incredible topography and transition from valley to ridge top and everything in between.

A new bunker on the left edge is dramatic and deep certainly, but serves to save any shot heading left from certain peril and keep the golfer in the game. A new bunker set into a hillock in the center of the hole creates an interesting offset and makes anyone considering going for the green in two shots to give pause and try to use the right side slopes to their advantage.

The Fun Stuff

But let’s get to one of the true feature holes at Orinda, namely the drop-shot 8th. This hole had been altered or deteriorated over the years, and was begging for restoration as much as possible.

The 8th was amazingly similar in its general presentation to the original design, with a perched green, bunkers set into the hill on the right, and a large fronting bunker, but the details



Orinda Country Club 8th Hole in 1931

had really deteriorated over the years into a poor representation of itself. The green had shrunk and years of top-dressing on its already crowned setting had made it largely unplayable. The bunkers had been simplified and the top edges built up with excess sand splash to such an extent that playability was severely compromised. Three redwoods had been symmetrically planted behind the green many years before, obscuring views and taking away an important feeling of danger to the shot by providing a backdrop. A cart path had been added in the bottom swale section, where many balls ended up with just the slightest of pulled shot. And at some point, a left and back bunker had been added that were not in the original design. Basically, it was time to wipe the slate clean, and restore this beautiful hole to its former glory.

The first step was removal of the redwoods. The effect was instant, with many members in awe of the beautiful vista behind and new feeling of drama and judgment this added to the drop-shot. Brett undertook the green next, bringing it down slightly to enlarge to previous dimensions approximately, and reducing

the slopes in the green itself ever so slightly as well. George jumped into the right bunkers, with the 1931 image in hand, replicating the bunkers to the style and details. Then Brett finished off the front bunker to complete the feature shaping. A sand cap was installed to the left and behind the green, and chipping area contours established. The cart path was shifted out of this area to an area up the hill and out of play, and was removed from behind the green entirely. Fescues have recently been seeded as the immediate backdrop to the green, and the view to the oaks and natural hills beyond is now clear and unimpeded. The restoration of this feature hole at Orinda is now complete and growing in nicely. Golfers will now enjoy an incredibly beautiful, dramatic, and sporty hole unlike any other, and hopefully feel as if they've taken a step back in time.

Part III in future issue....Construction complete on the reborn Orinda CC. •



Orinda Country Club 8th Hole prior to renovation

Winter Applications of Plant Growth Regulators Improve Annual Bluegrass Seedhead Suppression

By **ADAM VAN DYKE**, CPAG, MS, Professional Turfgrass Solutions, LLC

The use of chemical plant growth regulators (PGRs) in spring is common on golf courses where annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) inflorescences (flowers/seedheads) are undesirable. Seedheads negatively impact surface uniformity and playability while lowering turf quality. The plant also uses a lot of energy to produce seedheads – at the expense of leaf and root development during spring. Suppressing annual bluegrass seedheads with PGRs may also improve the turf's ability to tolerate summer stresses.

Mefluidide (Embark® T&O and 2S formulations) and ethephon (Proxy®) have long been the industry standards used to suppress seedheads on golf turf – with a plethora of spring programs involving these products used on the course. Ethephon is primarily used on shorter cut greens, whereas mefluidide is typically used on higher cut tees, fairways, and even roughs. Some superintendents use mefluidide on greens, but although Embark® T&O does not exclude use on greens as does Embark® 2S, the T&O product also does not provide any use instructions for putting greens.

Ethephon products will be the standard seedhead suppressor moving forward because mefluidide is no longer being manufactured. The most common ethephon program for seedhead suppression is Proxy® at 5 fl. oz. per 1000 sq. ft. mixed with Primo Maxx® at 0.125 – 0.25 fl. oz. per 1000 sq. ft. to improve efficacy and safety. A sequential application (or two) is necessary for the best results, with the interval usually ranging from 2 to 4 weeks between applications.

Spring seedhead programs with ethephon (and even mefluidide) can be successful, but those with experience know the effectiveness varies from good to marginal suppression – to outright failure in some years. The variability is mostly from the timing of the first PGR application. The seedhead suppressors don't work if the inflorescence is fully developed or has already emerged. Many entwined factors of spring weather (vernization and photoperiod), *Poa* biotype, and plant growth stage, make the success of seedhead programs unpredictable.

The time to begin sprays varies across regions, and is typically initiated by an arbitrary calendar date, a phenological indicator, or degree-day models. Although these methods can increase success, they don't always work. In northern regions (like Utah) with a distinct winter/spring transition period, typical seedhead applications start in March or April. However, some *Poa* biotypes have already set seed, suggesting inflorescences are initiating earlier – possibly during winter under the snow.

Dr. Shawn Askew at Virginia Tech noticed this phenomenon years ago, and began evaluating late fall (Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.) and early-spring (Jan., Feb., March) applications of ethephon to suppress these “rouge” seedheads. What he found was better suppression in spring when these early applications were followed by the typical spring program, compared to just the spring program.

We collaborated to bring this concept to the northern regions, where these applications can be thought of as pre-snow fall and post-snow melt, respectively. Thus, the pre-snow application is “late fall” or “close to snow cover”, and the post-snow application is any opportunity of snow melt in winter (Jan. or Feb.), or after complete melt in March.

Some winter ethephon and mefluidide programs have been evaluated over the past two winters in Utah on annual bluegrass/creeping bentgrass greens with impressive results. Mefluidide treatments were included because at the time it was still available. With mefluidide products being discontinued, programs that utilize Embark® will not be explored further. However, the results are still worthwhile as some of you still have some units of mefluidide that will be used for a few more years. Normal spring timing Proxy+Primo applications were initiated at 350 growing degree days using the base 32 F° model and suppressed 40-50% of seedheads. Not bad, but most would hope for better suppression.

Improvements were achieved with winter applications of Embark® formulations (T&O at 10 fl. oz./A; 2S at 1 fl. oz./A) followed by the normal spring Proxy+Primo program that suppressed 60-80% of seedheads. The best suppression has come from winter ethephon applications (Proxy®, Ethephon 2SL®, Oskie®) followed by the normal spring program that has suppressed greater than 90% of seedheads for eight weeks.

The winter applications of ethephon products have been very safe and have not caused crown rising or scalping injury in spring. Surprisingly, turf quality, visual color, and leaf chlorophyll enhancements have also been observed and measured in spring from the winter applications of ethephon, but not from mefluidide.

It should be noted that the rates of mefluidide tested in Utah were purposely made at well below label rates due to the potential for more injury from this compound. These rates have been very safe, but again work with mefluidide at the winter timing concept is likely done for now.

Continued on page 17



Winter applications of ethephon (left photo) to putting green turf significantly reduced annual bluegrass seedheads in spring over normal spring programs (right photo) without causing injury.

Overall, there have not been any “statistical” differences for seedhead suppression between the pre-snow and post-snow applications of ethephon, but the pre-snow timing has been slightly better and more consistent thus far. If you had to choose between one timing I would suggest trying a pre-snow application in November or December in regions with a similar climate to northern Utah (Salt Lake). Suppression is even better if you can make both the pre-snow and post-snow applications before you initiate your spring program. The post-snow timing should be made at least one month before your typical spring programs begins.

With the success of these winter PGR applications in Utah, there have been questions about possibly combining ethephon at the pre-snow timing with fungicides for snow mold protection on greens – as the timing of these applications usually coincides. There are some treatments on the ground in Salt Lake (4,500 ft. elevation) and Park City (7,000 ft. elevation) to address the safety of such mixtures. Compatibility of ethephon with Instrata® or Interface® did not appear to be a problem, and treatments in Park City will also address any issues with ethephon and frost at higher elevations. Work on fairways with early ethephon timings has also begun in Utah and Virginia this winter.

Other safeners (similar to Primo Maxx®), pigments, plant health promoters (such as Signature®, Fiata®, Civitas®, Actigaurd®), and different PGR chemistries (such as Musketeer® and Trimmit®) are also being looked at as tank mix partners with ethephon at these early timings. Our goal is to find tank mixes that improve turf safety and enhance seedhead suppression.

The winter, or early, application concept of seedhead suppressor PGRs is gaining popularity and so far seems to be very positive. Perhaps these early applications can bring flexibility to initiating your spring seedhead program, while at the same time boosting the effectiveness. Give the idea some consideration and we encourage you to experiment at your course as you should see some of the best seedhead suppression you have ever achieved. Keep us updated on your progress. •

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Northwood Golf Course: Ed Bale, Golf Course Superintendent

By **SEAN TULLY**, *Meadow Club*



View of the 1st green from the fairway

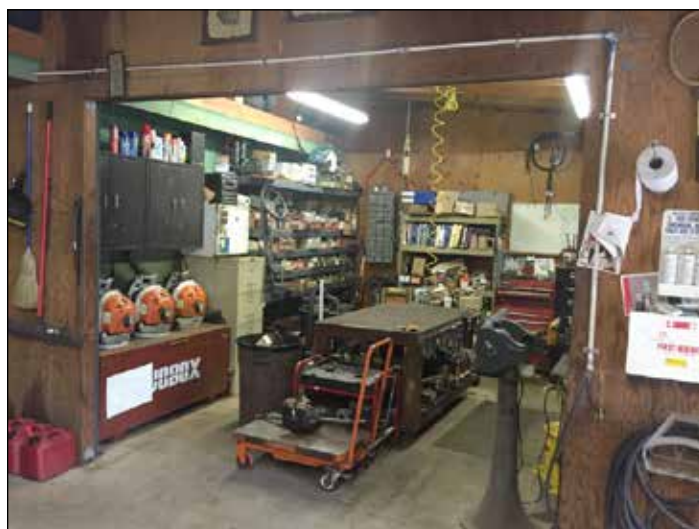
If there is one Mackenzie designed course in Northern California that escapes a lot of attention it would be the Northwood Golf Club in Monte Rio, just 30 minutes Northwest of Santa Rosa. MacKenzie partnered with Robert Hunter to design the course that opened in July of 1929. Since then there have been two constants: tree growth and the threat of flooding from the Russian River. A close third would be Ed Bale, Golf Course Superintendent at Northwood since 1980. Starting in 1960, Ed's family built a summer home in the area, and he would spend the majority of his summers and weekends there. Next March, Ed will have spent the last 36 years as the Superintendent at Northwood.

Northwood is the type of course that needs to be seen to understand its setting in and amongst a grove of redwoods. From a golfer's standpoint, it puts the golfer on task to hit the shots needed to avoid the trees, or more importantly, a recovery shot. From the Superintendent's view, the redwoods impact the course by blocking sunlight, making it hard to provide quality playing conditions. For example, a number of holes on the property will not see any sunlight from November to early March! Ed works hard to have a good stand of grass going into the winter, then hanging on to what he has for the next five months.

From an irrigation standpoint, the course uses reclaimed water and utilizes a block system comprised of only 17 stations to irrigate the entire golf course. Eight stations alone are used to water the fairways. Ed has some old Toro 630 heads that allow him to have more control in areas that become wet by turning off the sprinkler at the head.

Northwood Golf Course By The Numbers

Greens	40,000 ft
Tees	25,000 ft
Fairways and Roughs	37 acres
Bunkers	10
Staff	
Full-time	4
Part-time	3



View of shop area at Northwood

Greens are mowed with walking greens mowers. The fairways are mowed with a pull behind 5 gang mower. During the summer, Ed uses 11-blade reels, and for the winter months he uses 7-blade reels. Roughs are mowed with National mowers and a John Deere 7400. During the winter months, Ed will primarily use his fleet (four) of National mowers to keep the course in shape, and is always looking for parts to keep his aging fleet in service. Tees and approaches are mowed with the John Deere 2500.

If you find yourself looking for a lot of fun and challenging golf in a one-of-a-kind setting, then Northwood Golf Club should be on your short list. Be sure to make time for a visit with Ed to make your trip complete, and also take a look at some of the photos of the course on their website (<http://www.northwoodgolf.com/>) to get a feel for how special the property really is! •

2015 GCSANC Holiday Meeting a Huge Success

Nearly 100 GCSANC members and guests gathered on Friday, December 4 for a day of golf at Del Monte Golf Course followed by an evening of celebration at the Hyatt Regency Monterey.

Thanks to the generous support of Pacific Material Resources, we were happy to offer childcare at this year's party. We also appreciate our 2015 Drinks Sponsor, Frontier Golf, as well as Major Sponsors Jacobsen and EZ Go, and Minor Sponsors Smithco, Turfco, DHR Construction, TurfStar, Ewing Irrigation, Russ Mitchell Associates, Kaminski Golf Construction, Par Consultants, Bryant Gordon Golf, Terry Grasso, and Zellers-Plageman. Sierra Pacific Turf Supply and Martin's Irrigation Supply generously donated the wine.

Attendees enjoyed a delicious entrée combination of chicken and beef, an excellent dessert offering, and complimentary drinks. Santa also paid a visit, generously providing gifts to the women in attendance, and attendees enjoyed a lively dance floor after dinner. The association also paid tribute to Del Monte Golf Course Superintendent Mike Phillips, who has hosted the Holiday golf outing for several years, and will be retiring soon.

Thank you to all who joined us; if you didn't make it this year, we hope you will make a commitment to attend in 2016! •

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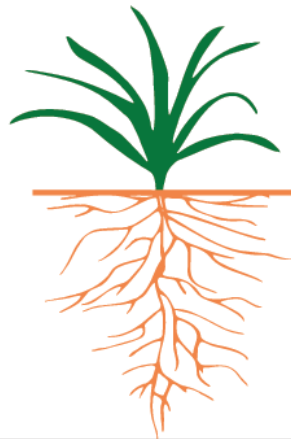




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Help GCSANC Through Rounds 4 Research

Through the Rounds 4 Research program, the Environmental Institute for Golf and GCSAA help raise funds for critical turfgrass research. However, due to very few donated rounds from our membership, in 2015 GCSANC secured less than \$200 of the \$112,500 raised from donated rounds.

We want to turn that around next year by strongly encouraging GCSANC members to donate a foursome to the 2016 Rounds 4 Research auction, which will be open from April 1 through April 10.

To help support turfgrass research in our region, please donate a round of golf at your course by going to <http://www.rounds4research.com/donate-a-round/> and providing your donation details.

GCSANC, GCSAA and the Environmental Institute for Golf greatly appreciate your support! •

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Out of Bounds

By **SEAN TULLY**, *Meadow Club*

Podcasts have taken a firm place on my phone! I have a short list of my favorite podcasts for which I eagerly await new episodes. If you have been following this section of the newsletter, you will recognize the two podcasts, as I draw from them regularly. You don't need an iPhone to access these wonderful podcasts and many others, as most all podcasts have a website where you can find the podcasts along with some additional information that adds to the stories told.

Enjoy!



The Best Beer in the World — As our season starts to wind down a little bit, and as we all watch closely for the start of the much publicized El Nino, I can't think of a better podcast from which to draw than this 99% Invisible story about beer! Not your regular store-bought bottle or can, but a Trappist brewed beer that is considered to be one of the best beers year in and year out. Quite the story!

<http://99percentinvisible.org/episode/episode-55-the-best-beer-in-the-world/>



What They Saw — The view of war for so long had been from the ground. In the Civil War, balloons were flown over some battlefields, offering a view and placing them in perilous danger. They saw war from a new vantage point that, like aerial photography used in the first World War, helped to change the way war was fought. We can only wonder what it must have been like to see war from that perspective.

<http://thememorypalace.us/2011/11/what-they-saw/>


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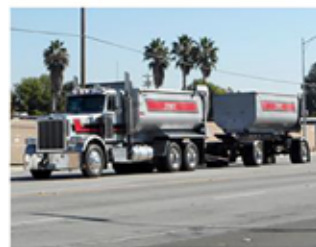

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Life on the Road

By **STEVE BYRNE**, *TMT Enterprises*

Note from the editor: As a Superintendent, I am lucky to have lunch most days at my own club. I couldn't imagine all the driving and hours from home required of our many affiliate members. I initially asked Jeff Roberts of Sierra Pacific Turf Supply to do some write-ups of restaurants that he likes to frequent while on the road. He's tapped out, so I had Steve Byrne from TMT Enterprises offer to give us some of his favorite places to eat. If anyone else is interested in adding some of their favorite places, please reach out to me!

Although most of my traveling through California has been work-related, and let's face it, for purposes of playing golf at some beautiful courses (thank you to all my Superintendent friends who have helped to indulge my 33 year golf addiction), I also have to eat while on the road.

I have been asked to share with our membership a few of my favorite places to eat. This list is comprised of simple eateries that allow me to stay within budget. But, that should not keep you all from enjoying the food (and the golf) that I have been fortunate enough to find along the way.

Filippi's Pizza Grotto, Napa

Filippi's Pizza Grotto in Napa is my favorite pizza in California. This little restaurant on 1st Street in downtown Napa pulls me in for lunch every time I visit this area. The lunch crowd is typically small, so I know that I can get in and out very quickly. But make no mistake, this pizza is worth the wait (if there was one). They are very generous with both cheese and sauce at Filippi's. In my book, those are good things with which to be generous when making good pizza. The crusts are always light and crispy, and definitely take a back seat to the toppings. Try out a personal 10" pizza at Filippi's next time you are in Napa. You will not be disappointed, and I guarantee that you will need to take some home with you.

Smokin' Mo's BBQ, Chico

I love going to Chico for so many reasons, not the least of which is an opportunity to eat at Smokin' Mo's BBQ. Located at 131 Broadway in the heart of Chico, you will find a great, little throwback BBQ joint in a town of hipster-infested, peanut butter on your hamburger, gluten-free garbage (yes, peanut butter on your hamburger at Madison Bear Garden, four blocks away). The pork ribs get the gold star at Mo's, but you better get there early enough, as they sell out every night. If you are not early to the table, try the fried chicken or the beef brisket. Yes, I have had all these entrees. Yes, I go to Chico more than you would think. Yes, it's a fun town to drink with college kids who all wonder why this creepy guy is in their bar. Stop judging me! Anyway, Mo's always has a full array of Sierra Nevada beers on tap, as almost every place in Chico does. I typically like to try whatever is in season, and therefore cheap.

The Tap Room, Pebble Beach

Contrary to popular belief, you can get out of the Tap Room at Pebble Beach without spending too much. I wouldn't stray from the burger menu in order to do this, but why would you? The burgers in the Tap Room are large and delicious! You obviously can't beat the setting, but the thing people forget about is that there is always a chance of running into someone of great renown while at the Tap Room. The last time I was there, I actually had the honor of sitting across the table from the President...of the GCSANC, our very own Jim Abate, who was kind enough to join me for lunch on this perfect afternoon. Regardless of who you break bread with, the Tap Room is kind of a must-do thing.

The Red Onion, El Cerrito

On the fringe of being considered a dump by many sits The Red Onion on San Pablo Avenue in El Cerrito. This great burger place dates back to the late 1950's, with food that tastes like it was cooked with that '50's care. This local treasure is scarcely known outside of the Berkeley area, but one visit will put it on anyone's map. With a very simple menu, The Red Onion has been able to keep loyal customers coming back again and again, despite suffering the tragic loss of its owner in May of 2007. This was definitely my "go-to spot" while working up the hill at Mira Vista. I have many fond memories of meeting friends who may have been working nearby for lunch, each one of them loving the food that the friendly staff would graciously deliver to us. If you ever find yourself in El Cerrito during lunch, visit The Red Onion and see what you've been missing.

No matter where we travel in California, we can find good food. Roadside produce stops, food trucks and the occasional greasy spoon all deliver great food memories. I hope you can check out some of my favorites, and find some of your own along the way. •

Naumann's Notes

By **DON NAUMANN**, *Sierra Pacific Turf Supply*

Armando Sanchez has accepted the Superintendent position at Canyon Lakes Golf Course and Brewery in San Ramon. Armando was the Assistant Super/Mechanic at Sequoyah Country Club in Oakland....Matt Dachowski is the new Superintendent at Lake Merced Golf and Country Club in Daly City. Matt was the Super at Los Angeles Country Club prior to his move North....Mike Scully has moved to the Bay Area from The City of Modesto golf courses, and is the new Super at the Villages Golf and Country Club in San Jose. Both courses are managed by Valley Crest Golf Course Maintenance. •

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