

THRU THE GREEN

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

January / February 2025

Northern California Chapter
GCSAA
GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

*Carmel Valley Ranch
Former home of Steve Carlton
50-year GCSANC member, featured in this issue*

Inside this Issue:

- President's Profile
- Naumann's Nor Cal News
- Assistant Profile: Tyler Jackson

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- Renovation and Turf Conversion Tour at Bayonet and Black Horse
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For any questions contact
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NORCALENDAR

Monday-Tuesday
February 24-25
Assistant Superintendent Boot Camp
Bayonet and Black Horse

ON THE COVER
17th Green Carmel Valley Ranch

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In response to member requests, we are now pleased to offer full-color, printed copies of Thru The Green for \$40 per issue.

To order a copy, to be shipped to you via mail, submit your name, address and payment information to mconnerly@connerlyandassociates.com.

To pay by check, send payment and contact information to:

GCSANC
2235 Park Towne Cir., 2nd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95825.



President's Message

By **JOE BUDINICH**, *Peninsula Golf and Country Club*

Happy New Year!

Unlike the past couple of years, the rain has been non-existent this month and, unfortunately, our hand-watering hoses have been put back to work to water local dry spots around the golf course. I know how annoying rain can be and having to explain to the members why golf carts must be restricted to the cart paths, but at least the rain allows us to step away from the normal maintenance tasks and take much needed time off. Let's just pray that the rain returns shortly and lasts into the springtime to save us all some water.

With a new year comes new goals for all of us. Two of the goals I would like to make for our association is to get every member involved this year and to support "Rounds4Research." To do this, we made a change this past year by listing all of our events at the end of every GCSANC email that is sent out. This will allow all of us to mark these events on our calendars so that we can plan to break away for some much-needed time away from the office throughout the year. Some of the first events we have this year are the Assistant Superintendent Boot Camp and Affiliates Breakfast. The boot camp has an incredible lineup of speakers, and I know that your assistants will come back raving about their experience from this event. In the second quarter, we will have the 18th Annual Clifford & Myrtle Wagoner Scholarship & Research Tournament on May 20th at Blackhawk Country Club, which is always a favorite for all of us. Lastly, our USGA will be hosted sometime in the early summer months. Please make arrangements to attend these events and show your support of the association.

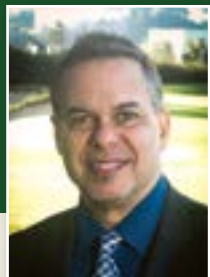
As some of you already know, "Rounds4Research" is an auction that is held annually in the spring by the GCSAA. Eighty percent of the funds raised come back to our association and are used to support turf research done at UC Riverside and Oregon State University. I know for many of us, our clubs do not support having outside guests or do not want to lose out on a green fee. Don't worry about this hurdle; you can list whatever restrictions necessary in your donations. I know for myself that I plan on donating a foursome on one of our closed Mondays. I believe we all could do this, if not more!!

I hope that everyone has a great start to the year, and I hope to see you all soon at one of our events!

Sincerely,

Joe Budinich

Joe Budinich
Peninsula Golf and Country Club



Executive Director's Report

By MARC CONNERLY, GCSANC

2025 figures to be a very busy event year for GCSANC. On top of the full complement of events in a typical year, this year is our turn in the rotation to host the Tri-Chapter meeting, which brings together superintendents from the Sierra Nevada, Central California and Northern California GCSAA chapters for a day of education and golf. The event will be held in August, and we are close to finalizing a venue at one of the many spectacular clubs in our region.

Prior to the Tri-Chapter, there will be a number of opportunities in which to engage, including the Assistant Superintendent Boot Camp on February 24 and 25 at Bayonet & Black Horse, and the USGA meeting, which we expect to announce soon for a date in April.

Our Affiliates Breakfast is also slated for April, and those details will soon be available as well.

The 18th Annual Clifford & Myrtle Wagoner Scholarship & Research Tournament is scheduled for Tuesday, May 20, at Blackhawk Country Club, and we are cautiously optimistic that holding the event on a Tuesday will provide a boost to attendance.

Looking ahead to later in the year, we plan to continue our successful collaboration with the California Golf Course Owners Association (CGCOA) and the Northern California Sports Field Management Association (NCSFMA) in October. On the heels of two successful Electric Equipment Expos, this year we are planning an Emerging Technology Expo, featuring drones, soil sensors, autonomous mowers, GPS sprayers, and other technological advances in turf maintenance.

Our Annual Meeting will be held at Peninsula Golf & Country Club in November (date TBD) and, following rave reviews from those who attended our recent Holiday Meeting at the Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa, we are in the process of finalizing a contract to return to that beautiful venue in December of this year.

On a final note, please check out Joe Budinich's President's Message and his bio for insights into our 2025 GCSANC President.

I hope to see you at one of the many GCSANC events in 2025!

Marc Connerly

GCSANC wants YOUR submissions to Thru the Green!

Several themes are planned for Thru the Green in 2025, and we are looking for member input on the following ...

- Industry news
- Articles
- Photos of golf course dogs/pets
- Photos of wildlife on the course

In addition, we'd like to know what you find most challenging as a golf course superintendent or assistant superintendent, and what you do to stay ahead of stress.

Please send submissions to:
Tracy Williams at
tracy@connerlyandassociates.com.

Submissions will be featured at the discretion of GCSANC.

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The GCSANC Welcomes New Board President, Joe Budinich

The GCSANC welcomes new Board president, Joe Budinich, whose term took effect on January 1, 2025. The following is a snapshot of Joe as he leads the association into a new year.

WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?

Maple Valley, Washington.

WAS GOLF A BIG PART OF YOUR LIFE GROWING UP?

From a young age, I had a golf club in my hand. This was mostly because my father was a teaching professional at a local golf club and loved bringing his kids to work with him. I could hit as many golf balls as I wanted to, but what I loved to do the most was picking range and helping keep the crates full of golf balls.

WHEN DID YOU MAKE THE DECISION TO GO INTO TURF MAINTENANCE AND WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR EDUCATION?

When I was 17 years old, my father helped me get a job on the maintenance crew at the golf course near my high school. There, I learned how to do all the job assignments, and I quickly fell in love with working outside. I continued working at this golf course my senior year of high school and also for a couple years after as I attended the local community college. Once I obtained my Associate degree in Business, I realized that my calling was not wearing a suit and tie, but instead to be a golf course superintendent, and I applied to Washington State University to get my Turf Management degree.

HOW HAS BEING A SUPERINTENDENT DIFFERED FROM YOUR VISION OF THE JOB PRIOR TO STARTING YOUR CAREER?

No one ever told me when I started out that you wear about 10 different hats on a daily basis, and everyone looks to you to solve every issue... I quickly felt the weight of this responsibility and learned to embrace it.

WHO WERE THE PRIMARY INFLUENCERS IN YOUR CAREER?

I have a lot of people to thank for where I am in my career. My father gave me the love of the game of golf and taught me to take pride in having the best-looking lawn in the neighborhood. Then, there was the first superintendent (Clint Goold) I worked for that showed me how to maintain a golf course and pushed me to make this my career. Lastly, I can't thank my predecessor, Scott Stambaugh, enough for teaching me how to maintain a golf course at a high-end level and be successful managing 26 employees.

TELL US A BIT ABOUT HOW YOU GOT INTO BOARD SERVICE AND WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO DO SO?

I have always loved to give back to the industry and have realized that the more I invest into it, the more I get out of it. This goes back to when I was Vice President of the Turf Club in college, to now, serving my sixth year on the GCSANC Board.

WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES FOR GCSANC IN 2025?

With the association being in a strong financial position, I want to do my best as your President to bring more value to its members. I believe we can do that through continuing the internship housing program to attract turf students from across the country to come out to California for a summer. I believe that these interns will eventually lead to becoming Assistant Superintendents in our area. I feel this has been a great first step, but I believe we can enhance this effort by potentially funding and sending members of our own crews who are interested in becoming Assistant Superintendents to the Green Start Academy. The lack of

Continued

Assistant Superintendent candidates in our area isn't going away and we must start thinking outside the box to fix this problem. Please reach out to me or one of our Board members if you have any ideas on how the association can help with this.

Another focus for 2025 is starting to look into technology and how it can work for us. As we all know, the two major challenges we have are water and labor. Many of us are using drones, soil sensors, autonomous mowers and range pickers already. This technology is new and is not easy to adapt, but it is the way of the future. How do we get our club executives to adopt it? Is there research at turf universities that could provide data that could show a cost benefit? I believe there are, and we will look into possible research that is worth investing in as an association.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE MEMORY IN GOLF OR A FAVORITE GOLF COURSE?

I have many fond memories from golf, but the most recent that I won't ever forget is holing out from 120 yards on the 9th hole at Cypress Point this past summer.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR HOBBIES AND INTERESTS AWAY FROM THE GOLF COURSE.

Away from the golf course, I like to spend time with my wife and travel. Over the past few years, we have been able to travel to Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Cancun and Hawaii. Outside of that, I enjoy fishing with my brothers and father whenever I get the chance to, and I am an avid sports fan.

ANY PERSONAL GOALS YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE?

Professionally, I would like to obtain the Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) designation in the next few years. Personally, I want to be the best husband and hopefully best father to my future family in the years to come.



From the Field

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

I would like to start this column by thanking all of the GCSANC members who attended the annual GCSAA Conference and Trade Show in San Diego. It has been a pleasure seeing many of you the past few days on the trade show floor as well as at the California Room. We appreciate your continued support of the show and hope you have enjoyed your stay in San Diego. I will provide show updates and numbers in the next edition of the newsletter.

As we move further into 2025, I wanted to make you aware of some updates and GCSAA programs that may be beneficial to you:

- The GCSAA Legacy Awards Competition is now open to applicants. The Legacy Awards competition offers education aid to the children and grandchildren of GCSAA members. Awards of \$1,500 each are funded by Grass Clippings and the GCSAA Foundation. At least one or more of the applicant's parents or grandparents must be an active Class A, B, C, Equipment Manager, A-Retired, B-Retired or AA member of GCSAA for five or more consecutive years. The student must be enrolled full-time at an accredited institution of higher learning or, in the case of high school seniors, must be accepted at such an institution for the next academic year. Graduating high school seniors must include a letter of acceptance with the application. The deadline to apply is April 15 and complete information including the online application form is available at <https://www.gcsaa.org/education/scholarships>.
- Edwin Budding Award Nominations are open through February 17. The Budding Award is given annually to an individual in the turf equipment industry whose actions have gone above and beyond the norm to help shape the turf equipment management industry into what it is today. The contribution must be significant in both substance and duration and result in an actual, measurable accomplishment. Nominations may be submitted at <https://www.gcsaa.org/about-gcsaa/awards/edwin-budding-award>.
- On January 6, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published their Registration Review Interim Decision on chlorothalonil. The changes to use rates were a major concern to the maintenance industry and GCSAA worked with golf course superintendents and turfgrass scientists throughout the country to weigh in on the proposed label changes. More information, including newly-implemented rate use on tees, fairways, and greens is available at <https://www.gcsaa.org/advocacy/advocacy-hub/gcsaa-government-affairs-blog/2025/01/08/epa-publishes-final-chlorothalonil-interim-registration-review-decision>.

Thank you again for your support of GCSAA and the conference and trade show. I look forward to seeing some of you at the upcoming GCSANC Assistant Superintendent Boot Camp as well as the Sierra Pacific Turf Spring Symposium. If you have any questions or needs, please contact me at jjensen@gcsaa.org and follow me on X at [GCSAA_SW](https://twitter.com/GCSAA_SW).

Jeff

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50th Anniversary Longtime GCSANC Member Profile of Stephen Carlton



Retired golf course superintendent Steve Carlton recently celebrated his 50th anniversary as a GCSANC member. We caught up with Steve, who still regularly attends GCSANC and other golf course management-related events, to chat with him about his career and experiences in the industry.

You graduated with a degree in Agronomy. What was your original goal in studying this discipline, and how closely did your career follow the path that you originally expected while in school?

When I studied agronomy, I wanted to be a farmer and, while at UC Davis, I also took all the courses available in horticulture and landscape horticulture. I was fortunate enough to be able to use my education once I started working on golf courses in 1971.

Given that you have lived and worked throughout California, Guam and Asia, what was your favorite place to live, and why?

My favorite place to live was Carmel, California. Beautiful climate, scenery and setting on Carmel Bay, with many friendly and wonderful people.

What were some of the most significant differences between working in the golf course maintenance and management industry in the US versus Asia?

As Bill Bengeyfield told me (when he was a USGA agronomist), the principles of growing quality turf are the same no matter where the golf course is located. The biggest differences between the US and Asia are cultural and, if you understand and respect the local culture, the people were always great to work with. In Asia, they knew that the owner of the golf course was paying me a lot of money to try to educate and help them. The golf course crews were always a pleasure to work with and I developed friendships that have lasted for more than 30 years.

Over the course of 36+ years, you have worked on more than 15 golf courses. What are some of your proudest accomplishments from that diversity of experience?

Building Guam International Country Club was a great experience working through the planning, design, financing, construction, logistics and maintenance challenges of building a golf course out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. I am also proud to say that every golf course I worked on was better off after I left than before I started working there.



Steve with golf maintenance crew at Pei Tou Kuo Hua Golf and Country Club in Taiwan

Having worked in so many disciplines on numerous golf courses, from planning, design and finance to construction, maintenance and management, which aspects have you found most satisfying?

The most satisfying part of my career was working with all those wonderful people. At least four of my assistants went on to be very successful golf course superintendents, which made me very proud.

What was/were the biggest challenge(s) throughout your career?

Being fired from one of my previous employers for being gay. I could write a book.

As a recognized innovator and leader in environmentally responsible golf course management, you have likely seen many changes in golf course maintenance over the years. Where do you see the industry heading?

When I started working on golf courses, we were still using lead, arsenic and mercury pesticides. You need to see what new technologies can be used to improve your skills. I began using a microscope to diagnose plant pathogenic diseases and started using an Apple IIe computer in 1980 at San Jose Country Club. If there are new technologies at your disposal, look at which ones you can adapt to make your job easier and/or allow you to provide better turf conditions for your golfers.

What advice would you give someone entering the golf course maintenance industry?

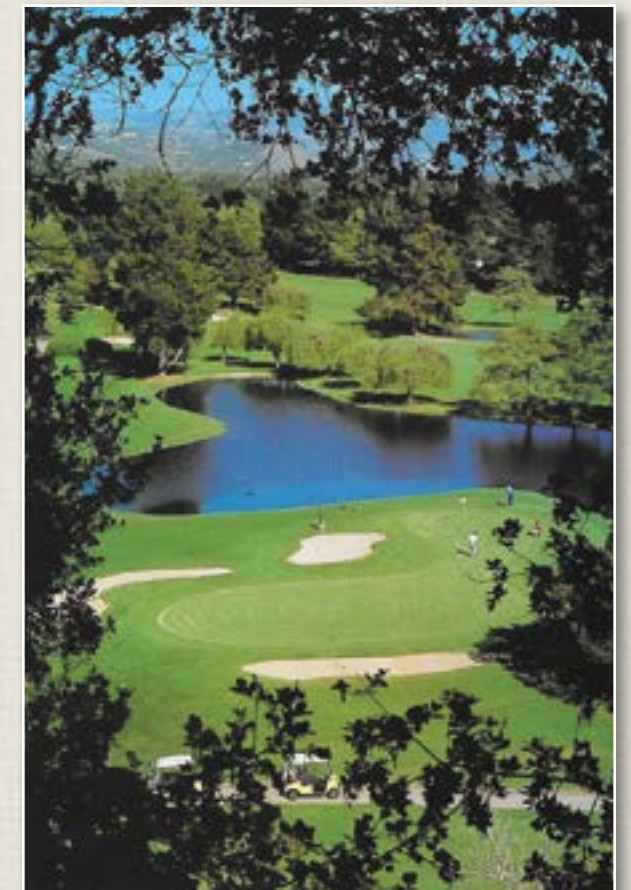
In the past when someone came to me for advice about becoming a golf course superintendent, I always said, "Are you crazy?! You need some professional mental health advice." Then I would let them know that I was always available if they ever needed help or advice.

If you could apply a one sentence motto to your approach to your career, what would it be?

"The Lord helps them that help themselves," and "Decide what you want out of life and go for it full force with no regrets." I loved my career in the golf industry.



Steve on bulldozer rebuilding the #1 green at San Jose Country Club



17th green at Carmel Valley Ranch

Worker Safety and Health in Wildfire Regions

Link: [Worker Health and Safety in Wildfire Regions \(ca.gov\)](https://www.dir.ca.gov/osh/wildfire/)

In light of the recent devastating fires in Southern California, we are re-publishing the following Cal/OSHA resources addressing protection of employees from wildfire smoke (originally published in *Thru the Green* in April 2022). Please save this information for future reference.

Wildfire smoke and cleanup presents hazards that employers and workers in affected regions must understand. Smoke from wildfires contains chemicals, gases and fine particles that can harm health. Hazards continue even after fires have been extinguished and cleanup work begins. Proper protective equipment and training is required for worker safety in wildfire regions.

Power outages can also present electrical and other hazards for workers. Proper installation and use of generators can prevent electrocution hazards. Workers must also be aware of the potential of electrocution or being injured by moving parts of machinery and other equipment when power is restored. Workers can also face health hazards from power outages in unventilated areas when ventilation systems are not working.

Cal/OSHA has a regulation (section 5141.1) to protect employees exposed to wildfire smoke. The regulation requires the following:

- Identification of harmful exposures
- Communication
- Training and instruction
- Appendix B to Section 5141.1
- Control of harmful exposures
- Specific particulate sampling requirements if an employer opts to monitor employee exposure with a direct reading instrument

Cal/OSHA encourages employers and workers to review the following pages with information and resources on protecting workers exposed to smoke from wildfires and worker safety during cleanup:

1. FAQs about Wildfire Hazards www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/wildfire/wildfire-faq.html
2. Protecting Outdoor Workers Exposed to Smoke from Wildfires www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/wildfire/Worker-Protection-from-Wildfire-Smoke.html
3. Protecting Indoor Workplaces from Wildfire Smoke with Building Ventilation Systems and Other Methods www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/wildfire/Indoor-Protection-from-Wildfire-Smoke.html
4. Worker Safety and Health During Fire Cleanup www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/wildfire/Worker-Health-and-Safety-During-Fire-Cleanup.html
5. Safety and Health of Workers Rebuilding after Wildfires www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/wildfire/Rebuilding-after-Wildfires.html

For more resources, please visit: Worker Health and Safety in Wildfire Regions ([ca.gov](https://www.dir.ca.gov/osh/wildfire/)).



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Don Naumann is President of Sierra Pacific Turf Supply, Superintendent of Blackberry Farm Golf Course, and Owner of Canyon Lakes Golf Course and Brewery. We appreciate Don keeping us updated on golf course happenings throughout California.

Ryan Cole has left the Monterey Peninsula Country Club (MPCC) and is the new Director of Agronomy for the Meadow Club in Fairfax, replacing **Sean Tully**.

Filling Ryan's position at MPCC is **Conner Galea** as Superintendent. He was the first assistant there prior to his promotion.

Mike Steiler left Spring Creek Country Club in Ripon and is the new Superintendent at Green Valley Country Club in Fairfield.

Fred Carlyle has replaced Mike and is the new Superintendent at Spring Creek Country Club.

James Osborne is the new Director of Agronomy at Diablo Country Club. He was formerly at TPC Craig Ranch Golf Course in McKinney, Texas.

Iain Sturge has left Oakhurst Country Club in Clayton. He has moved south and is the new Superintendent at Coto de Caza Golf & Raquet Club near Mission Viejo. Replacing Iain is **Johnny Vaughn**, who was the Assistant Superintendent at Contra Costa Country Club prior to his move across town.

Sean Sherbert is the new Superintendent at Spyglass Hill Golf Course, replacing the retiring **Bob Yeo**. Happy trails to Bob after many years of dedication to the golf course industry!

Don Naumann



Monterey Peninsula Country Club



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Coto de Caza Golf & Raquet Club

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Assistant Superintendent Profile:

Tyler Jackson

Senior Assistant Superintendent, La Rinconada Country Club



WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO GET INTO GOLF MAINTENANCE?

I moved far from friends for a summer in middle school and had minimal ways to stay busy at the summer's start. I spent an extraordinary amount of time working on our dried-out and weedy lawn of the new house we had moved into. My neighbors didn't know, but I was in full competition mode, doing my best to have the best lawn on the block. Fast forward two years, and I had played my first round of golf. I started at 16 working at Spring Hill Golf Club in Minnesota, and never doubted my career path.

WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT IN THE INDUSTRY?

There are a few decisions I made in my early 20s that have set up much of where I am today. The relationships I have created and maintained after these decisions are what I cherish the most. The people that are a part of my life for better or worse are what I am thankful for most.

WHO WOULD YOU CONSIDER YOUR MOST INFLUENTIAL MENTOR IN THE INDUSTRY?

I have been fortunate to have a few people teach me a number of hard lessons throughout the years. I haven't the heart to call out just one, but a couple at the top of the list would be Thomas Bastis, Mat Dunmyer, and Roger Smidstra.

WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?

West suburbs of Minneapolis, Minnesota. In a town called Plymouth, and at the base of the peninsula of Medicine Lake was where I spent most of my youth. My high school years were spent in North Minneapolis on the parkway of Victory Memorial. A beautiful and happy place to be raised.

YOUR BEST NICKNAMES?

Haha, I am the man of many monikers. Spiderman, TJax, LsJs, Silky, Mayacama Mamba, on and on the list goes, but this is embarrassing enough for now.

IF YOU COULD DRIVE ANY VEHICLE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

1964 Aston Martin DB5.

CURLY FRIES OR REGULAR, AND WHY?

Curly, because I rarely have them, so I cherish them when I do and they are clearly superior.

WHAT IS THE FUNNIEST THING YOU HAVE EVER SEEN ON A GOLF COURSE?

Shayne Schario's golf swing (Assistant Superintendent at Green Hills Country Club). Let him know I said so.

WHAT IS ONE THING THAT MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

Many things, and it's okay if we keep it that way.

WHAT WAS YOUR LOWEST SCORE PLAYING GOLF, AND WHERE?

A 71, at Encinitas Ranch Golf Course. Was three under through 13, lost my nerve and rattled off 3 bogeys. Birdie on 18 to lock in my only red number round to this day.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MANUAL LABOR JOB ON THE GOLF COURSE, AND WHY?

Hand watering; it brings me peace and calm.

GREATEST PIECE OF ADVICE ANYONE HAS GIVEN YOU?

Everything is temporary; pain and joy come and go. One day you will wish you had a chance to do it again, so do it well for now.

IF YOU HAD TO SURVIVE ON A DESERTED ISLAND FOR ONE YEAR, ASIDE FROM FOOD AND WATER, WHAT FIVE (5) ITEMS WOULD YOU BRING WITH YOU TO OCCUPY YOUR TIME?

A book on how to best survive on a deserted island for a year, a soccer ball, an air pump, a hunting knife, and rope.

FAVORITE BEER?

Any beer, anytime will do. Except for sours; it's shocking that those are enjoyed by rational adults.

IF YOU HAD YOUR CHOICE, WHAT WOULD YOU DO IN RETIREMENT?

Mow fairways in the winter and travel elsewhere all summer.

FAVORITE SPORTS TEAMS?

Minnesota sports, unfortunately. Liverpool Football Club as well; a true scouser.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE TYPE OF GRASS TO MANAGE AS A PUTTING SURFACE, AND WHY?

Creeping Bentgrass. It's superior to all else and if I offend Poa annua lovers, so be it.

IF YOU COULD HAVE LUNCH WITH ANYONE, PAST OR PRESENT, WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Man... somebody from antiquity. Marcus Aurelius, or Socrates if Marcus was busy.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE GOLF MAINTENANCE RELATED QUOTE?

I have many; let me check my notes. "You have to kill grass to grow grass..." Members, general managers and bosses don't like that one, but I believe it wholeheartedly.

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