Thru the Green

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

August / September 2026

Northern California Chapter GCSAA
GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Ontario Convention Center

Site of the Inaugural Western Golf & Sports Field Summit

October 26-28, 2026

Inside This Issue

- 2026 GCSANC Scholarship Recipients
- New GCSANC Assistant Superintendent Liaison
- Hosting a Successful First Green Field Trip

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2026 SUMMIT

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ON THE COVER

Ontario Convention Center, site of the Western Golf & Sports Field Summit

NORCALENDAR

October 26-28 (Monday-Wednesday)
Western Golf & Sports Field Summit
Ontario Convention Center - Ontario, CA

November 16 (Monday)
GCSANC Annual Meeting
Green Hills Country Club - Millbrae, CA

December 5 (Saturday)
Holiday Meeting
Westin Verasa Napa - Napa, CA

THRU THE GREEN

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President's Message

By **TIM POWERS**, *Poplar Creek Golf Course*

My volunteer experience goes way back to 1989 when I got my first superintendent job. I went back to my old club, Country Club of Fairfield, to cut tees and approaches for the Metropolitan Open, which is a very well-regarded event in the New York area. The course looked like velvet as the sun was setting. That is a view we usually don't get to see. Ted Maddocks was surprised when I asked if he needed help in course prep, but gladly accepted. It is a super Seth Raynor design built in 1914.

I then helped Joe Alonzi at Westchester Country Club with the Buick Classic a couple of times. My next opportunity was in 1999 at Pinehurst for the US Open hosted by Paul Jett. I was amazed to meet other volunteers, including people from Pebble Beach, Augusta, and St. Andrews. That showed me what it takes to put on these events and get things done in a short period of time. I was filling tee divots with the guys from Augusta, and that was the beginning of a long friendship. I have now volunteered at 15 Masters and played it 9 times, and they keep inviting me back.

Volunteers get to do all sorts of jobs according to their experience. You never know who you will be working next to - from a young assistant to retired guys who want to be part of the event. Architects frequently are there, as are some college professors and researchers. And the equipment manufacturers often send some of their people to help with maintenance and on the course. It gives them the opportunity to talk to end users in the field.

A newbie was doing his first Masters in 2025, and he asked, "What do I do?" I said to talk to everybody because there are a ton of really smart people with tons of experience. They are willing to share information and love bouncing ideas off others to come up with solutions.

Every event is different because some clubs don't host many high-end tournaments. The regular staff are always welcoming because they know we are there to help them show off their course to the world. I have cut fairways on some of the nicest golf courses in the world. I have sent some of my staff to volunteer at local events to meet people, get experience, and see another golf course. They always come back with a slightly different attitude and want to improve our facility.

It was really special to be at Cypress Point Club in September to work the Walker Cup. Jeff (Markow) and his staff had done a tremendous job getting the course ready for amateur teams from the USA and Great Britain/Ireland. These players are the stars of tomorrow. It was an amazing group of volunteers who showed up to support Jeff after his 32+ years in Monterey. They represented a who's who of clubs.

Always ask to volunteer because you will be a better team member after you see what it takes to get a course ready. The USGA usually helps with accommodations at their events, and sponsors always give out some super swag for you to bring home. It is a conversation starter when you show up wearing a shirt from a major tournament. It also helps to have volunteer experience on the resume because it shows a committee what you are about.

I have now been at 26 majors and over 90 events. I have also done the American Century Celebrity tournament at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course in Lake Tahoe. This is the only event I do where I am a walking scorer. I have scored for over 110 different people from various sports and backgrounds. Brad (Wunderlich) and his staff have done an outstanding job improving playing conditions over the years. They even hosted an NHL outdoor hockey game a few years ago on the 18th fairway.

Every golf tournament needs help, so don't be afraid to ask. It is great for building a network and making connections. You never know how that can help you down the road.

In case you haven't heard, Pebble Beach will be hosting the 2027 US Open next June. Hope to see you there.

Have a great day and keep it in the short grass!

Tim Powers

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Executive Director's Report

By **MARC CONNERLY**, *GCSANC*

One of the greatest strengths of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California (GCSANC) is the willingness of our members, clubs, and industry partners to step forward when there is an opportunity to support our profession. This year's **GCSAA Rounds4Research program** provided another outstanding example.

I am proud to report that **GCSANC raised more than $18,000 through Rounds4Research**, an exceptional result that demonstrates the generosity and commitment of the Northern California golf community.

To put that accomplishment into perspective, approximately $35,000 was raised throughout California by all participating chapters combined. That means GCSANC was responsible for more than half of all Rounds4Research dollars raised in California.

Our success also stood out on a national level. **GCSANC finished among the top 10 GCSAA chapters in the country in total dollars raised through Rounds4Research.** That is an accomplishment our entire association can take pride in.

Rounds4Research works because golf facilities generously donate rounds of golf that can then be auctioned to golfers around the country. The program brings together golf course superintendents, facilities, golfers, and industry supporters around a common goal: investing in research and resources that ultimately benefit golf course management and the game of golf.

For GCSANC, the results are also a reflection of the quality of the facilities throughout Northern California. The opportunity to play some of our region's most desirable golf courses creates tremendous interest among bidders and helps maximize the value of each donation.

The following course donations generated the most revenue in the Rounds4Research auction:

- **Mayacama Golf Club**
- **Spyglass Hill Golf Course**
- **Lake Merced Golf Club**
- **Orinda Country Club**
- **Peninsula Golf and Country Club**
- **Los Altos Golf and Country Club**
- **Claremont Country Club**
- **Palo Alto Hills Golf & Country Club**

We extend our sincere appreciation to these clubs and to all of the facilities that participated in the program. Every donated round helps strengthen Rounds4Research and demonstrates our region's commitment to supporting the future of the golf course management profession.

I also want to offer a special thank you to **Jeff Jensen and Steven Spatafore** for their assistance and dedication to this year's effort. Programs like Rounds4Research do not achieve this level of success without people working behind the scenes — communicating with facilities, encouraging participation, coordinating donations, and helping make sure Northern California is well represented. Jeff and Steven played an important role in helping GCSANC achieve this outstanding result.

Marc Connerly

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Western Golf & Sports Field Summit:

An Educational Opportunity Worth the Trip

As golf course superintendents, we understand that our profession never stands still. New technologies emerge, regulations change, water becomes more precious, labor challenges evolve, expectations increase, and the science behind growing and maintaining exceptional turf continues to advance. Staying ahead requires us to keep learning – and just as importantly, to keep learning from one another.

That is why we encourage GCSANC members to take a close look at the Western Golf & Sports Field Summit, taking place October 26-28, 2026, at the Ontario Convention Center in Ontario, California. The Summit is bringing together golf course and sports field professionals from throughout the western United States for three days of education, networking, exhibits, and industry connection. The current program includes more than 90 educational sessions and more than 80 exhibitors, giving attendees an opportunity to build an agenda around subjects that matter most to them.

Agronomy You Can Bring Home

Several nationally-recognized turfgrass researchers will be presenting subjects that should immediately catch the attention of superintendents.

Fred Yelverton, Ph.D.
North Carolina State University

Poa Control – examining the factors contributing to Poa annua infestations, management strategies, herbicide programs, and resistance prevention.

Zac Reicher, Ph.D.
Envu Green Solutions Team

Understanding Root Pathogens – covering pathogenic nematodes, Pythium species and ectotrophic fungi, along with monitoring, soil temperature, and preventive treatment timing.

Pawel Petelewicz, Ph.D.
University of Florida

Surgical Precision: Redefining Herbicide Applications Through AI-Guided Targeted Spraying – exploring how artificial intelligence and targeted spray technologies may allow for more precise weed management.

Water, Irrigation, and the Future

No subject is likely to become more important to California golf than water. Craig E. Zellers, President of Golf Irrigation Consultants, will present *Smart Water, Smart Turf: Irrigation Technology and Water Trends in the Southwest*. The session will explore two-way control systems, HDPE pipe, drone technology, modern irrigation design, GPS applications, irrigation renovation planning and project costs, as well as water trends, regulations, turf rebate programs and changing expectations for commercial water users.

Josh Tapp of GCSAA will present *Best Management Practices (BMP) Facility Adoption*, and Michael Lee, Senior Manager of Government Affairs for GCSAA, will provide an update on legislative and regulatory developments affecting golf.

Technology is Moving onto the Golf Course

In addition to Dr. Petelewicz's session on AI-guided spraying, Brad Jakubowski of Penn State University will present *Effective Meteorology and Weather App Overview for Turfgrass Managers*, focusing on the practical use of weather data and commonly available applications to improve everyday turf management decisions.

The Superintendent's Job is Bigger Than Agronomy

The Modern Superintendent: Balancing Agronomy, Economics, Regulations and Expectations will be moderated by GCSAA's Jeff Jensen, with panelists Jon Christenson, Patrick Parkins, and Elliot Weber. Other highlights include Shawn Emerson's session on *Building a Personal Brand That Creates Team Success*, Heather Schapals' session on *Equipment Performance Planning*, and Andy Magnasco's session on *Beyond the Turf: Superintendent "Extracurricular" Activities*.

Learning from the West

One of the things you will find especially appealing about the Western Golf & Sports Field Summit is its regional focus. While Northern California has its own unique growing conditions and challenges, many of the issues we face are shared by our counterparts in Southern California, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, and throughout the western states.

Bringing people from across the West together gives us an opportunity to compare approaches, learn what is working elsewhere, and establish relationships with professionals we might not otherwise meet.

The Summit trade show will feature more than 80 exhibitors showcasing equipment, technology, products, and services for golf courses and sports fields. Sometimes the most useful education happens during an informal conversation – whether it is with another superintendent, a researcher, a manufacturer or someone who has already tackled the same problem you are facing.

Join Us in Ontario!

GCSANC members are encouraged to review the educational program and consider making the trip to Ontario, California, October 26-28, 2026. Whether your current priority is Poa control, water conservation, irrigation renovation, root disease, equipment management, staffing, regulations, leadership or emerging technology, there should be plenty on the program to make the trip worthwhile.

We hope to see a strong contingent of GCSANC members in Ontario this October.

See you at the Summit!

REGISTER NOW ▶

www.westerngolfandsportsfieldsummit.com

From the Field

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

I hope this finds everyone doing well and getting ready for the fall golf season. It has been great to see GCSANC benefiting from GCSAA programs, and thank you to Marc Connerly and the Board of Directors for supporting us and participating in our efforts.

Final Rounds4Research totals have been finalized, and GCSANC received a check for $18,725 - ranking tenth among GCSAA's 99 affiliated chapters. That is a great accomplishment; thank you to all the superintendents and facilities who donated this year. With the number and quality of courses in Northern California, the chapter has a great opportunity to continue to grow the program in 2027. More details on next year's auction will be available in the late fall.

GCSANC recently received a GCSAA Chapter Education Grant presented in partnership with ClubProcure. The grant helps to fund continuing education at the chapter level, and 24 GCSAA-affiliated chapters received grants this year. Marc and the board will determine how to best use the funds to increase educational opportunities for members.

GCSANC board member and Baylands Golf Links superintendent Patrick Tuttle was selected to participate in the inaugural class of the GCSAA Advance Leadership Program presented in partnership with Jacobsen Ltd. Advance was designed for GCSAA Class B members with less than five years of superintendent experience. The program combines virtual learning with in-person experiences at GCSAA headquarters and the annual GCSAA Conference and Trade Show. Participants learn practical management through education sessions to prepare to become leaders who excel at course operations and contribute to the long-term sustainability and advancement of the game and industry.

Congratulations to Patrick for being selected to the inaugural class. It is great to see younger superintendents with an interest in expanding their horizons while also serving the golf industry.

Lastly, GCSAA will open registration for the 2027 Conference and Show and Golf Championships on September 22. The event will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, on January 18-21 with the Golf Championships taking place January 16-18 down the road in Biloxi, Mississippi. More information is available on the website at www.gcsaaconference.com. We look forward to seeing everyone in the Big Easy next January.

Thank you for your continued support of GCSAA, and I look forward to seeing many of you at some of the upcoming chapter events as well as the Western Golf & Sports Field Summit in October. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at jjensen@gcsaa.org.

Jeff Jensen

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Tartan Corner

By **HUNKI YUN**, *Executive Director, American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA)*

One of the biggest developments in golf over the past 10 years has been the growth in opportunities to "play golf" away from the golf course. Whether it's visiting an entertainment-oriented facility such as TopGolf or playing in a simulator, customers don't have to go to a traditional golf course to hit a ball and derive many of the distinct experiences that make golf such a unique game.

The rise of this sector has brought to the fore a significant oversight in U.S. intellectual property protections. There are two types of intellectual property that apply to golf facilities: trademarks and copyrights. (Patents potentially could apply as well, but are less common for facility managers.)

The trademark protects the name and brand of a golf course. The U.S. Copyright Act protects many types of works—books, songs, even buildings—from being copied freely. However, golf courses—which share many similar qualities as buildings—are not explicitly protected under this statute.

As an example of how trademark and copyright relate to golf courses, I took my family to a Korn Ferry Tour event earlier this year. We visited the area with family activities, and a local entertainment company had set up a simulator and was inviting spectators to compete in a game. Everyone received five shots at a closest-to-the-pin contest on a hole with an island green that looked exactly like the 17th hole at TPC Sawgrass, which hosts the Players Championship every year.

While the hole was clearly a copy of one of the most famous holes in golf, the name of the course in the display was something generic—definitely not TPC Sawgrass. That was because the name is protected by trademark law, which means it cannot be used without permission of the owner. However, the design of the course (the copyright) is not protected, so it can be copied freely.

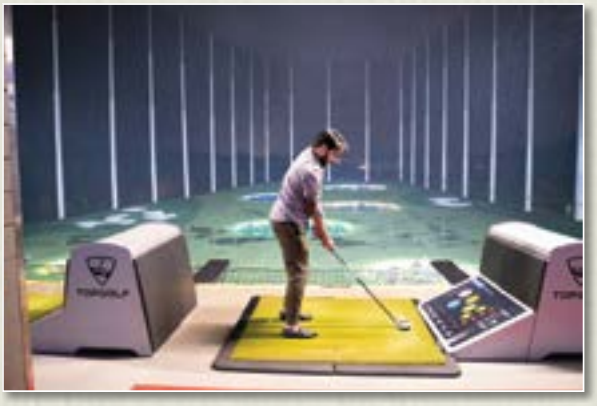
ASGCA strongly believes this is a significant oversight. Golf course designs are original creations that offer challenging, engaging experiences that provide significant value to the golfers who play these courses.

Every golf course is a unique asset, comprised of physical forms that are meant to be traversed, challenged, or even avoided by golfers during a round of golf. These forms test golfers' skills and provide enjoyable experiences in the process. As a result, no two courses and no two rounds of golf are ever identical.

The intellectual property of the course design that allows these distinctive experiences should be protected. So ASGCA is working with our allied associations to rectify this omission with the BIRDIE (Bolstering Intellectual Rights against Digital Infringement Enhancement) Act.

This is an issue that potentially touches everyone who owns or manages a golf facility. The golf course is the unique asset that draws customers to the property. The inability to protect this asset can have an adverse effect on the facility, especially if the copy is rendered poorly and provides a negative experience for anyone playing the digital version. This hurts the brand and reputation of the original course and everyone associated with it.

We have a long way to go to turn the BIRDIE Act into legislation, but we will continue to work with the industry in pursuit of recognition of golf course design as protected intellectual property under copyright law.



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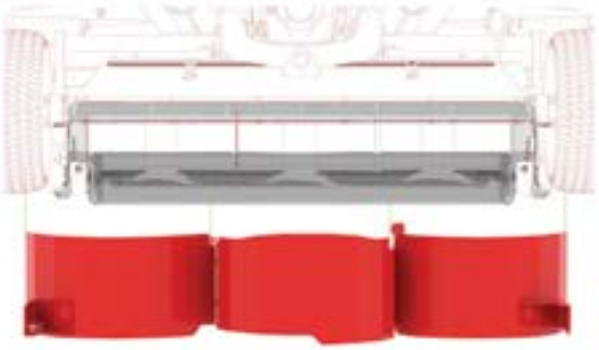

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From the Capitol

By **CRAIG KESSLER**, *Executive Director, California Alliance for Golf (CAG)*

ckessler@scga.org / www.calgolf.org

Lead time is the bane of every writer. It's the gap between a story's filing deadline and publication. And as the filing deadline for this edition of "From the Capitol" is literally a handful of days before the end of the 2026 session, while it is possible to write which of the bills the California golf community has been sponsoring, supporting, opposing, or watching have been forwarded to the Governor, it is not possible to know the fate of all of them. And even for those bills that have been forwarded to the Governor, it is not yet possible to share which of them have been signed into law and which have been vetoed.

And given that so many of the bills dealing with water, artificial intelligence, and data centers that we have been watching are nearing the stroke of midnight while still under hot and heavy consideration, I am going to hold discussion of those bills until the next column. Even a couple of them that have made it over to the Executive branch are subjects of serious veto talk. Indeed, one of them, a bill that would require data centers to report their water consumption, is identical to a bill that Governor Newsom vetoed last year.

But I will share in this column the status of the bill the California Alliance for Golf (CAG) sponsored in the 2026 session, a bill (AB 1954) authored by Assemblymember Chris Ward (D-San Diego) that would put firmly into California law a prohibition on any person or operator of a third-party golf reservation service platform from listing, advertising, promoting, selling, or transferring a golf course reservation for a golf course owned by a local agency without the written agreement of the course operator.

Per the non-partisan Legislative Analyst's description of what the bill would do and how it would do it:

> **"AB 1954 would establish that the unauthorized resale or brokering of reservations at municipally owned golf courses constitutes an unlawful business practice enforceable under California's existing consumer protection laws. As a result, businesses that facilitate or profit from unauthorized reservation brokering could be subject to the remedies available under the UCL, including injunctive relief, restitution, and civil penalties in actions brought by authorized public prosecutors. The bill does not prohibit municipally owned golf courses from contracting with authorized reservation vendors or technology providers. Rather, it seeks to prohibit the unauthorized commercial resale of tee times made available through public reservation systems."**

AB 1954 now goes to the Governor for signature or veto. The Governor has until September 30 to sign or veto all bills that are sent to that Office by the end of session. While we have no reason to believe that the Governor will do anything other than sign the bill, we will certainly communicate with the Office to determine if there is any issue or problem we may have overlooked.

For those who may have thought that reservation policies such as non-refundable deposits and no-show penalties solved much of the problem that exploded in the Los Angeles and San Diego regions in 2024, I cite the wisdom contained in the City of Los Angeles' formal AB 1954 support letter and a recent article in the National Golf Course Owners Association's (NGCOA) "Golf Business Weekly," a story I am informed will run as well in NGCOA's next quarterly magazine. First, the "wise" words in Los Angeles' AB 1954 support letter:

> **"In April 2024, we implemented a non-refundable green fee deposit requirement at the time of booking. Fully funded by our golf patrons and designed to discourage speculative reservations, this measure has restored a measure of integrity and equitable access to our**

Continued on page 17

reservation system. However, relying solely on internal administrative measures to counter those seeking to profit from Los Angeles' commitment to affordable, accessible public recreation is not a sustainable solution. Without stronger legal protections, these efforts remain vulnerable."

"Not a sustainable solution" – governments understand that they are always at a disadvantage when trying to stay ahead of those that are technologically adept. Not to mention that, according to that recent article in "NGCOA's Golf Business Weekly" entitled, "Who's Listing Your Tee Times," there are scores of examples of third parties operating without contractual agreements, using course names, logos, and photographs without licenses, advertising stale prices, and re-selling on secondary markets. As stated in the story:

"The bottom line: the technology itself isn't the problem. The problem is when it happens without your knowledge or consent, such as displaying filled tee times, incorrect rates, and using your brand assets without permission. A formal relationship — even an informal but documented one — turns the same technology from a liability into a legitimate sales channel." [NGCOA Golf Business Weekly; Who's Listing Your Tee Times – a Member Guide to Online Tee Time Agents, August 14, 2026]

And that is what AB 1954 aims to offer California's operators of publicly-owned golf courses, roughly one-quarter of the golf facilities in the state, – a tool to compel the "relationship" that can turn a "liability into a legitimate sales channel." And a tool to protect municipalities' ability to offer their parkland golf properties at price points consistent with their missions to provide active recreational opportunities to their residents on affordable/accessible bases.

Some of the state's largest municipal governments, including the three largest in the Cities of Los Angeles and San Diego and the County of Los Angeles, and some of the organizations that represent municipal governments and special districts in the state (e.g., League of Cities, California State Association of Counties, California Special Districts Association), filed formal letters of support for AB 1954, which should tell you that the bill solves what for them and one-quarter of the state's golf stock is a major problem.

If the golf course superintendents reading this take away from this that advocacy is not just about swatting down troublesome bills and regulations; it's not just about dealing with water, pesticides, and the other issues closest to the hearts (and jobs) of golf course superintendents; it's also about using the law to solve problems - in this case a problem that was the subject of some media explosions in 2024 – then they will have learned the first of two valuable lessons.

If the golf course superintendents reading this understand that by virtue of successfully navigating the labyrinth that is the California legislative process, the California Alliance for Golf (CAG) has matured to the point of being an organization positioned to parlay the respect it acquired thereby into additional acts of proactive problem solving in future years, then they will have learned that second valuable lesson. And with it perhaps a commitment to do what they can do at their courses, in their communities, and in their GCSAA Chapters to further the cause of the industry that earns their livings by attending a local legislative town hall, attending a local chamber of commerce meeting, attending a local planning commission, attending a local city council meeting, or becoming one of the game's Ambassadors in the GCSAA's Ambassador Program.

Craig

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2026 GCSANC Scholarship Recipients

CordeValle, May 12, 2026

This year's Clifford and Myrtle Wagoner Scholarship & Research Meeting, held May 12th at CordeValle, allowed GCSANC to award $13,800 in intern housing assistance, $6,000 in turf scholarships, and $7,500 in legacy scholarships.

The three Turf Scholarships were awarded to the following individuals:

COLIN BASTIS

COLIN BASTIS is pursuing a degree in Agricultural Business at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, with a planned graduation date of June, 2027. He has worked at Menlo Country Club in Woodside as a groundskeeper, and Stanford Golf Course in Santa Clara County as an intern.

"I've grown up around golf courses all my life, but it was never really something I took as a serious career path until I found myself actually working on one. I've always preferred working outside with my hands to working in an office, and golf courses provide a unique, manicured beauty that appeals to my attention to detail. From there, I also grew to love (or at least appreciate) the unpredictability that comes with the job and the never-ending challenge of maintaining optimal conditions for members against the spontaneity of Mother Nature."

JACKSON YAMAMOTO

JACKSON YAMAMOTO graduated in 2023 with a degree in Business Marketing from Northern Arizona University and is now enrolled in a two-year advanced Turf Management program. He has worked as a greenkeeper at Forest Highlands Golf Club in Flagstaff, Arizona, and as an Assistant-in-Training at La Rinconada Country Club in Los Gatos, California.

"My father taught me the game of golf as a young child and I played the game on and off sparingly my whole life. I really found a deep personal love of the game when I was in college, as I was looking for a hobby to get outside more and spend time with friends. A friend suggested a summer job as a greenkeeper, and I just fell in love, taking some level of responsibility for taking care of such a property that many would come to enjoy, and make similar memories playing the game I love with their friends and family."

JACOB FONG

JACOB FONG graduated in 2020 with a degree in Business Administration from the University of California, Riverside. He has worked as golf course mechanic/greenskeeper at Redwood Canyon Golf Course in Castro Valley, and as an Assistant-in-Training at The Olympic Club in San Francisco.

"Golf course management was not initially a career I had planned to pursue, but my first job at Redwood Canyon Golf Course introduced me to the industry and quickly changed my perspective. I became drawn to the combination of hands-on work, problem-solving, and the science behind turfgrass management. As I gained experience, I developed a strong interest in the agronomic side of the profession, including plant health, irrigation management, and environmental stewardship. The opportunity to work outdoors while maintaining high-performance playing conditions made this career path both challenging and rewarding."

Continued on page 21

The following are the five Legacy Scholarship recipients:

ISABELLA MARTY

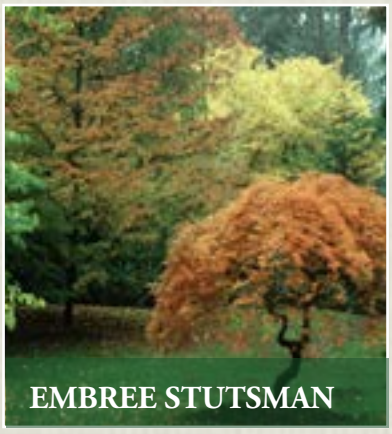
ISABELLA MARTY attends Texas Christian University and is pursuing a degree in Political Science. She plans to continue on to law school to become an attorney, as she enjoys helping others and advocating for them through persuasive reasoning.

CADELL MOULTON

CADELL MOULTON will attend Menlo College beginning this fall and will major in Sports Management and Business. In particular, he is interested in front-office operations, athletic administration, player training/kinesiology or sports marketing.

KENDRA ORTEGA

KENDRA ORTEGA attends California State University at Fullerton and majors in Biology. She enjoys taking care of others, and her ultimate goal is to go to medical school and become a plastic surgeon.



EMBREE STUTSMAN

EMBREE STUTSMAN is pursuing a degree in Business Administration at Doane University. He has worked two different greenkeeping positions, which have provided him with effective communication and basic skills to navigate the workplace.

KAYLA STUTSMAN

KAYLA STUTSMAN is pursuing a degree in Music Education, after which she hopes to combine her passions of music, teaching, and helping others.

Congratulations to all of the GCSANC 2026 scholarship recipients!

Hosting & Harnessing the Help of Others

The Synergistic Drive Toward A Successful First Green Field Trip

By **BLAKE HERTZOG**, *Superintendent, Monterey Pines Golf Club*

If you're anything like me growing up, at school you were happy for any opportunity to get out of the classroom, whether that meant PE, recess, or the rare class field trip to go see something new. For me, going on field trips was some of the best experiences, whether it was going to the Herr's Potato Chip Factory, the Baltimore Aquarium, or Camp Swatara for an overnight field trip in 5th grade. These were some amazing experiences and memories with friends that I will never forget and that I can now share with my own children.

We, as golf course superintendents, could help create some of these lasting memories and experiences by hosting a First Green Field Trip. GCSAA has been promoting First Green Field Trips for years now, and in 2023 we took the plunge into hosting our own First Green, and we welcomed the 5th grade students from La Mesa Elementary School. We have built a great relationship with two teachers, Ms. Gordo and Ms. Cresap, hosting their 5th grade classes annually since 2023. Each year, the feedback following the event has been the same from students and teachers, saying, "This was the best field trip ever!" "Your team made learning so fun!"

I will tell you that none of that could happen by just my efforts alone. Our team puts in a lot of effort to make this event happen. We take time during the week to make sure we have all of our Cool Tools, and mowing equipment and tractors are moved to field trip locations to be ready for the bus full of students to arrive around 9 a.m. the morning of the event.

Working with the First Green team at GCSAA headquarters has been extremely helpful in getting a plan together for what we would do at each station. They also provide swag bags for each of the students attending, which we give out as students enter the bus. We cannot host this event without the help and support of these friends. Each year, we have made it our goal to have two people together leading each station; this helps in multiple ways for accountability and communication. Having nine stations for each field trip has meant that we need a lot of extra support from other superintendents and assistant superintendents, and we are so grateful that they have come through for us and the kids.

The goal of our field trip is to keep things short, sweet, and to the point during our two- to two-and-a-half-hour field trip. We have had nine stations each year, which only allows for about 10 minutes per station. Just enough time to whet the appetite on a specific topic, keep the attention of the students, and give them an opportunity to ask questions. When I am co-leading the station and run out of things to say, my partner can provide support by sharing other information. After completing about two rounds of groups, we have found that you quickly get into a groove of repeating the same message to each group and give time for any specific questions.

Monterey Pines Golf Maintenance team is super grateful to be able to host these field trips for four consecutive years and to have the support of the GCSAA, our local superintendents, assistants, and vendors.

Please consider supporting another local superintendent in 2027 who's hosting a First Green Field Trip, or take the plunge and host your own trip and ask for as many people to support your efforts; you won't be disappointed! If you're a course that has assistants, send them as well, as it's a great

Continued on page 23

opportunity to grow in public speaking ability and patience in dealing with a group of kids. But please know it is contagious and rewarding to all of us involved in the hosting, but most definitely to the youngsters that get to attend. It quite possibly could become an annual event on your calendars, just like it has ours!

Meet New GCSANC

Assistant Superintendent Liaison Jacob Wehr

Lead Assistant Superintendent, Mayacama Golf Club

Read on for a sneak peek into Jacob's journey into the industry…

BACKGROUND AND CAREER

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in El Dorado Hills, California, a small town about 30 miles east of Sacramento.

What made you decide to pursue a career in golf course maintenance?

Originally, it was my love for the game of golf. I also admire how layered the golf course maintenance industry is. Whether it's practical or technical, there is always something to learn, a skill to develop, or a relationship to build.

What positions have you held in the industry?

My first job in the industry was as a general laborer at Empire Ranch Golf Club. Once I began pursuing a degree in Turfgrass Science and Management, I worked at North Ridge Country Club as an Assistant-in-Training and spray technician. Shortly after completing my degree, I became an Assistant Superintendent at Diablo Country Club. After leaving Diablo, I began my tenure at Mayacama Golf Club.

How long have you been at Mayacama Golf Club?

I have been at Mayacama Golf Club for two years.

THE WORK

What is your favorite aspect of the job?

My favorite aspect of the job is working in a team environment. I really enjoy relationships. We have an awesome team at Mayacama, and I feel lucky to have the opportunity to lead and help make work a rewarding place to be.

What is your biggest accomplishment or something that stands out during your time at Mayacama?

Last year we had the opportunity to be a part of a practice tee renovation. I need to shout out our crew, Rodrigo, and Marco, here. These guys are impressive to work with. Fifty years in the industry between them, with countless projects under their belts. These guys lead a team that knocked out a professional-level irrigation to install in-house for the new driving range tee. That was a great learning experience for me and an awesome team effort.

What is the biggest lesson you have learned so far in your career?

Dealing with adversity is to be expected and welcomed. Try to look at every challenge as an opportunity to grow and learn. But with that, remember to zoom out as often as possible. Take a deep breath and enjoy the moment.

Continued on page 25

What goals do you have for the next stage of your career?

After becoming a superintendent, my long-term goal is to have the opportunity to be a part of a golf course renovation. Overseeing a successful construction project is the ultimate feather in the turf career cap.

BEYOND THE COURSE

What is something interesting that most people do not know about you?

I am a rock-climbing enthusiast. I enjoy climbing both indoors and outdoors, so if anyone is interested in learning or is a climber themselves, let me know. The same goes for winter in the mountains. Avid snowboarders, hit me up.

What is the greatest piece of advice you have received?

This is great advice for anyone, but especially for assistants just starting out in the industry. A former mentor told me my first year on a golf course, "If you want to learn, you need to listen more than you speak." There was a hint of sarcasm behind it, but it is true. Speaking has a value as an exercise in repeating what we already know, but listening drives learning.

GCSANC Intern Spotlight

My Time at Cypress Point Club
By Ben Mehrtens

Highlight
Ben Mehrtens

I've really enjoyed my time at Cypress Point. Moving from New Zealand has been a big change, both personally and professionally, but I've enjoyed the challenge and everything that comes with working at such a high standard.

My job involves a variety of tasks, including spraying; maintaining bunkers; mowing greens, tees and fairways; and helping with irrigation work around the course. Every day is different, which keeps the work interesting and gives me the chance to keep learning.

I take pride in helping to keep the course in great condition for members and guests. Working alongside a great team has helped me build my skills and gain valuable experience in all areas of golf course maintenance.

I'm grateful for everything I've learned so far and look forward to continuing to grow during my time at Cypress Point.

My Internship Experience at Pebble Beach Golf Links
By Troy Sabott

Highlight
Troy Sabott

Three months ago, I began my golf maintenance internship at Pebble Beach Golf Links. Having only been in the industry two years with my only experience being at a smaller private country club, the Pebble Beach maintenance facility and daily operations had me blown away. Even better than the maintenance facility was the golf course itself. So many unique holes, and countless breathtaking views, while also maintaining pristine condition despite the 24/7 traffic on the course is truly remarkable.

Having the opportunity to spend six months maintaining Pebble Beach is unbelievable. A year ago, I never would have imagined living on one of the capitals of the golf world, and also having the opportunity to be a part of and learn from a company that's consistently leading the way in public golf. On top of that, being able to apply what I've learned at Rutgers this past fall and develop as a turf manager at the best in the world is something I'm truly thankful for. The 4am wakeups and presunset bed time is definitely a price to be paid, however, well worth the satisfaction in the work I'm doing on a property with as much history and scenic views as Pebble Beach.

The weather on the peninsula has been different from anywhere that I've ever been. Having only been here for three months I can't speak on the weather for the whole year, but I can say that it has remained completely random. Throughout the day I consistently take on and off four layers of clothing at any time of the day. During the spring it could rain at any point, and disappear just as quickly as it would come. Then in early May it stopped raining and hasn't been back except for some light sprinkles in the early morning fog that followed the spring rain. Drive 30 minutes in any direction and it's a different world, but in Monterey it remains cool, temperate, and perfect for world class golf courses.

Living on the Monterey Peninsula has allowed me to experience some of the world's best golf courses, build a network in a landmark location, all while also making life long memories at these historic places. In my first half of my time at Pebble Beach, I've already learned and experienced more than I could have imagined and with three months left on my internship, I'm excited to continue learning the industry and taking in all I can at the Historic Pebble Beach.

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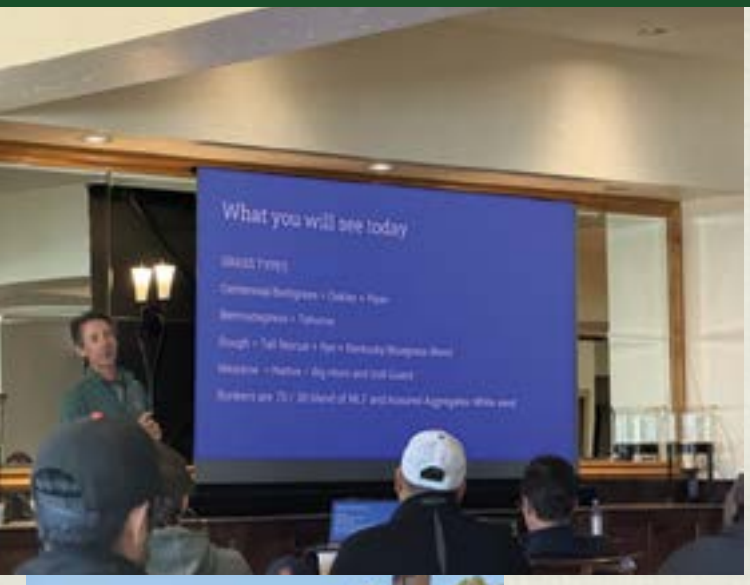
2026 GCSANC Field Day

July 27, 2026

La Rinconada Country Club | Los Gatos, CA

Thank you to all 72 participants of the 2026 GCSANC Field Day! Project architect **Todd Eckenrode**, golf course superintendent **Kevin Breen**, and irrigation consultant **Chris Mitchell** gave an insider's view on the planning, design, and implementation of the **La Rinconada Country Club** renovation. Attendees also had the opportunity to tour the course to see the progress first-hand.

Photo Recap



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Naumann's NorCal News

Thank you to Don Naumann, President of Sierra Pacific Turf Supply, Superintendent of Blackberry Farm Golf Course, and Owner of Canyon Lakes Golf Course and Brewery, for keeping us updated on turf professional staffing changes throughout California.

Blake Swint is leaving Rossmoor Golf Clubs in Walnut Creek after 22 years as Superintendent there. He has been a superintendent for more than 40 years, with stops at Sequoyah Country Club and The Club at Castlewood. For most people, that would be enough, and now would be a good time to retire. Not Blake. He is the new Superintendent/ Director of Agronomy at Turlock Golf and Country Club…

Replacing Blake at Rossmoor is **Jim McKenna**. Jim has been the Superintendent at Tilden Park Golf Course until his move to Rossmoor. Jim's replacement has yet to be named.

Dan Catterson has been promoted within the Troon Golf organization and is now a Regional Superintendent for the West Coast. One of his responsibilities will be Marin Country Club, where he is departing as Superintendent. Replacing Dan is **Jeremy Nicholas**, who was Assistant Superintendent at Richmond Golf Club prior to moving across the bay.

Tyler Marcotte is the new Director of Agronomy at Silverado Resort in Napa. Tyler was the Superintendent at The Brambles.

Silverado Resort, Napa, CA

Rossmoor Golf Clubs, Walnut Creek, CA

Also moving to Silverado Resort is **Trenton Hoover** as Superintendent of the North Course. He was the Assistant Superintendent at Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club in Menlo Park.

Jeremy Sanchez left Silverado Country Club and is now the new Superintendent at El Macero Country Club. He is replacing **Ryan McNair**, who left Northern California to be the new Director of Agronomy/ Superintendent at The Santaluz Club in San Diego.

The new Director of Agronomy at Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club is **Phil Desbrow**, who was the Superintendent at Lakewood Country Club in Rockville, Maryland. Phil is replacing **Chad Twaddle**.

Conner Jefferies is the new Superintendent at Petaluma Country Club. Conner was one of the assistants at Marin Country Club.

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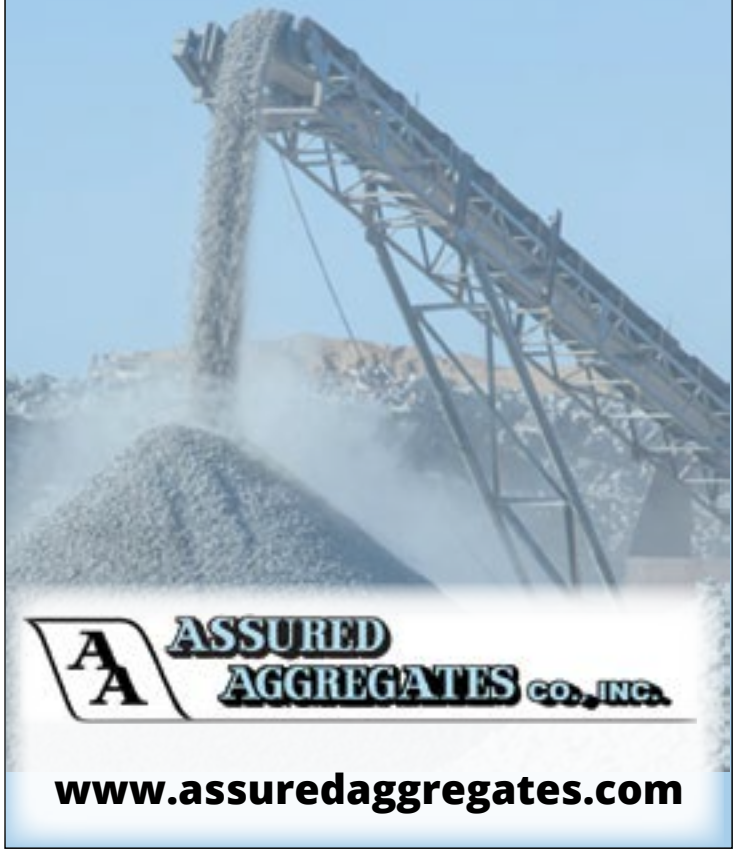

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