

# THE PERFECT LIE

## Riverton Country Club Hosts August Event

The Wyoming Scholarship/Education Golf Tournament will be held August 5, 2014, at the Riverton Country Club. We appreciate the invite of host superintendent, Chris Thomas, CGCS,



to play one of our favorite Wyoming courses. Lunch will be served at 11:00 a.m., followed by golf. The format will be a Two-Person Scramble this year. Bring multiple teams from your course

or your facility. Proceeds from the event benefit the continuing education and scholarship programs of the association.

Registration forms will be available late June.

We are seeking hole sponsors for both the Wyoming and Montana events. For Wyoming, please contact Chris Thomas, CGCS, (307) 840-1301. Remember, you do not have to be a Peaks & Prairies member to play - everyone is welcome!

## Spread the Word!

Bidding soon begins for the Rounds 4 Research program June 9-22 and August 1-10, 2014. The 2013 event generated funds for our PPGCSA programs and for the EIFG, and we are hoping to grow the participation in 2014. But to do so, we need your help. Encourage your pro shop to help you spread the word. **Without golfers to bid, the program will not succeed.** Download the flyer to post at your course or business from the News Tab of [www.ppgcsa.org](http://www.ppgcsa.org) (same flyer shown on page 11)

### PPGCSA Events:

#### Scholarship/Education Golf Events

August 5 (Riverton CC) August 26 (Glacier View)

#### PPGCSA Fall Meeting & Trade Show

October 28-30, 2014, Billings, Mont.

## Montana Event Offers a True Park Setting

Glacier Park... late August... golf. What a perfect combination for the Montana Scholarship/Education golf event. Host superintendent, Tom Bengston, invites you to enjoy Glacier View Golf Course, West Glacier, on August 26, 2014, to support the scholarship and continuing education programs of the Peaks & Prairies GCSA. Bengston is a member who travels the distance to participate regularly at our events and we appreciate the opportunity to come to him.



If you would like to be a hole sponsor, please contact either Tom Bengston (406) 314-5619, or Les Parks (406) 250-2901.

## Opportunity for Assistant Superintendents

Are you an assistant member interested in serving as the assistant superintendent liaison to the Peaks & Prairies GCSA Board of Directors? This position is important to the board as it offers a perspective of an assistant superintendent.

We ask the assistant superintendent liaison to attend the two board meetings each year that are held in conjunction with the Fall Meeting and the "Almost" Spring Meeting, as well as correspond via email during board discussion throughout the year. We also encourage you to keep in touch with your fellow assistant members so you may offer their voice during board discussion.

Please contact Lori, or Dan Tolson by September 25 to submit your name for consideration or for more information about the position. The position will be appointed at the board meeting held in conjunction with the Fall Meeting & Trade Show.

We would like to offer our thanks to our assistant liaison, Cole Clark, who accepted a superintendent position at the Stillwater Golf Course.

*Hole sponsorships and display options are available at our Scholarship/Education Golf Events.*

May 2014

Volume 38 - Number 2



## Peaks & Prairies Golf Course Superintendents Association

### OFFICERS

President: **Dan Tolson**, 3 Creek Ranch, Jackson, Wyo., 307/ 734-0385 (S) or 307/ 413-3627 (C) dtolson@3creekranch-jh.com

Vice President: **Joe Fernau, CGCS** Casper (Wyo.) Golf Club, 307/235-8419 (S) or 307/ 277-0129 (C) jfernau@cityof-casperwy.com

Secretary/Treasurer: **Dan Rootes** Ponderosa Butte Golf Course, Colstrip, Mont. 406/ 748-3326(S) or 406/ 749-3045 (C) dlrootes@hotmail.com

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Past President: **Mike Wilcynski**, The Reserve at Moonlight Basin, Big Sky, Mont. 406/ 993-6031 (S) mwilcynski@moonlightbasin.com

### COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Education: Dan Rootes

Finance: Dan Rootes

Membership: Joe Fernau, CGCS

Nominating: Mike Wilcynski

Scholarship: Dan Tolson

**Allied Member Liaison:** Jason Aerni (Simplot Partners)

**Assistant Superintendent Liaison:** Cole Clark, Stillwater G.C.

**THE PERFECT LIE** is published quarterly by Peaks & Prairies GCSA, and is edited by Lori Russell. Our newsletter is not copyrighted, but we would appreciate credit being given when original material is reprinted. Advertising and article deadlines are the 10th of February, April, July, and October.

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*“Peaks & Prairies Golf Course Superintendents Association is dedicated to furthering the education of our members for the betterment of golf and its environment.”*

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# President's Message

Dan Tolson

3 Creek Ranch Golf Course, Jackson, Wyo.

A crisp spring morning dawns on the golf course. Meadowlarks are singing again, sun breaks through to burn off the frost, and fresh snow in the mountains looks so close you could reach out and touch it. Grass is turning green but isn't yet begging to be mowed. Time to put away the plows and winter equipment. Shoot! The trailers are in the way and the backhoe has a dead battery. What? The storm last night knocked a cottonwood over onto on a satellite box!?! ...radio crackles, "Uhhh, should we keep working on bunkers? The ground is still frozen and it looks like it's about to start snowing again."

We've all been there. Despite all its beauty, spring turf management in the mountain west can be stressful. Whether you're close to peaks or out in the prairie training new employees, implementing all those winter ideas, dialing in equipment and second-guessing the meteorologist are challenges we all face. With all there is to do in the spring, it is easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of just "doing," and lose sight of your most important goals for the season.

As the whirlwind picks up and we get close to summer, I'm trying to slow down and maintain focus on our goals - on the golf course and with Peaks & Prairies, both. After our Strategic Planning Meeting last fall, the board evaluated the association and focused on some areas of improvement. Some of the goals we set were improvement of our communications through technology, increasing attendance at events, and investigating the feasibility of a fall conference, joining forces with other regional associations.

I am happy to report that our new website is almost complete and is looking fantastic. It will have many new beneficial tools including a directory, archived Perfect Lie issues, streamlined want ads and a better interface for the events calendar. Instructions when, and how, to register for the new site will be announced via email.

Please "follow" our dynamic and active Facebook page. You can find it by searching Peaks & Prairies Golf Course Superintendents Association. Likely you will find a picture of yourself there and it offers a great forum to connect with your far-away peers throughout the year. We can also be found on Twitter @PeaksGCSA

The Almost Spring Meeting in Missoula received the highest attendance since 2008. Thank you to all who attended and enjoyed excellent seminars on the latest Poa management, technology and more. Expect to receive a call from a board member to inform you on our upcoming summer events, including a scholarship/education tournament at Riverton Country Club on August 5. A Montana course and date will be announced.

The board is making good headway organizing a "Northwest Chapters Fall Meeting and Trade Show" in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, in 2017. It will be an exciting event with new opportunities, and, if it works, it could become an event every 5-7 years. More to come on that in a future issue. Until then, don't let the whirlwind blow away your most important goals. Stay focused and best of luck this summer.

**Remember: The auction dates for 2014 Rounds4Research coincide with the U.S. Open (June 9-22) and the PGA Championship (Aug. 1-10).**

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## An Allied Member Profile



# Affordable Turf & Specialty Tire

Tim Stack

Diverse is a word that comes to mind when thinking about tires in the golf course industry. As equipment becomes more specialized for golf courses, the tires that are on the machines do, also. There are different tire sizes and treads for the rough, fairways, tee boxes, greens and common areas, not to mention the tractors, trenchers, trailers and skid steers that find their way into the maintenance yard.

Everyone knows what it is like to have a tire malfunction while working on

the course, only to find out there is no spare at the maintenance shed. With the variety of tires needed to keep a spare for every piece of equipment being used, having a spare on hand for each application can be costly. With the multitude of tires that are in everyday use at a typical golf course, we come to the conclusion that having a reliable supplier of specialty tires plays an integral part in your golf operations.

An in-depth knowledge of the names of the tire treads, special sizing and applications unique to the golf industry is what puts Affordable Turf & Specialty Tire in the "specialty" category. The relationships we have developed over the years with suppliers gives us the ability to stock and market these "specialty" tires at very competitive prices.

Affordable Turf & Specialty Tire is a division of S & S Tire Co. (AZ), which was founded in 1976. We operate three retail stores, an ecommerce website and

Affordable Turf & Specialty Tire, which markets tires to the golf course and landscaping industry.

From the beginning, golf courses were a target market. The company was near all of the Del Webb courses in Sun City and Sun City West, Arizona, and we focused on that business. In time, the company expanded to all of the Phoenix metro area and we are the largest supplier of tires to golf courses in that market.

We also market tires to golf courses in Tucson, Palm Springs, Northern California, New Mexico, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Colorado. Nationwide, we do business with more than 400 golf courses.

We offer competitive pricing, liberal freight programs, thirty day billing and a large inventory. Most orders are shipped in 24 hours.

We carry tires manufactured by Carlisle, Greenball, Achieva, Deestone, BKT, Galaxy, Titan and Amerityre solid tires. We often have specials from manufacturers because they know we move product.

We are an affiliate member of the Peaks & Prairies GCSA, Golf Course Superintendents of America and most regional GCSA groups. We are active in supporting these organizations. We are looking forward to attending this year's Peaks & Prairies GCSA Fall Meeting and Trade Show in Billings, Mont.

*Our contact information is:  
Affordable Turf & Specialty Tire  
866-485-0089, [www.Affordable-online.com](http://www.Affordable-online.com).*

*Joe Landis 623.258.8277  
[Joe.landis@sstireaz.com](mailto:Joe.landis@sstireaz.com)*

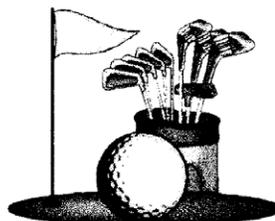


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# Grass Notes

## Pete Grass, CGCS, Hilands Golf Club, Billings, Mont.



Comedian Bill Engval, who closed out the recent 2014 Golf Industry Show in Orlando, has a tag line for the end of a joke; it is, "Here's your sign." For me, my sign was through a poll I took during my presentation at our recent Peaks & Prairies GCSA "Almost" Spring meeting in Missoula. I felt great after my first question - which asked how many of the attendees had heard of the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG). About 95% of the room raised their hand and I was thinking "great." My follow up question was, "Do you understand what it is and does for the golf industry?" Much to my disappointment, only four of the nearly 70 people raised their hand. My "sign," as a trustee of the EIFG, is that we have some education to do. The following is an introduction to the EIFG and what it does.

In 1955, the GCSAA Scholarship and Research Fund was established as a 501(c)3 charitable entity which allowed donations to be tax deductible. Eventually, the name changed to The GCSAA Foundation and served the membership and industry well for many years. If you have been in the "business" for a while, you may remember and may have supported the "Investing in the Beauty of Golf" campaign during the late 1990s, which raised over \$5 million dollars for The Foundation. Donations large and small came from individuals, chapters, golf facilities and industry partners.

Following this successful campaign, a study was conducted over a year and a half that analyzed the needs of golf and the strategic focus of The GCSAA Foundation. Ultimately, it was determined the organization should focus more on the environment. As a result, the board of trustees approved a name change in 2003, which is known to this day as the Environmental Institute for Golf. The approved mission was to "strengthen the compatibility of the game of golf with our natural environment."

The reshaping positioned the EIFG to broaden its scope under the environmental stewardship initiative, and build on existing education and research, adding information collection and a communication component to increase the reach and

impact on golf and the environment.

In addition to the significant changes mentioned, professional golfer and entrepreneur, Greg Norman, agreed to serve on the EIFG's board of trustees and to head its newly created advisory council. The advisory council broadened the EIFG's ability to enhance the awareness and understanding of golf and the environment to a broader audience. The goal was to expand the discussion beyond those in golf course management.

The Board of Trustees, with representation from GCSAA Officers, was primarily made up of golf industry leaders from throughout the golf world - architects, builders, club manufacturers and allied associations. These representatives donated their time and resources to help the EIFG raise funds per the mission of the organization.

And, that model worked extremely well until the recession hit in 2008. Philanthropic organizations all over the world experienced significant negative financial impact and the EIFG was no exception. As with many things during that period, changes became necessary to hold the core programs and resources of GCSAA and the EIFG together. The EIFG weathered through and many long-term supporters remained steadfast. But, support and understanding by the GCSAA membership was lagging.

In 2011, the EIFG's Board of Trustees was restructured to create a stronger connection to GCSAA and its members. The leadership now represents the officers of GCSAA, plus one additional GCSAA director, and three representatives from the golf industry. The current EIFG Board of Trustees are Keith Ihms, president; John O'Keefe, vice president; myself, Peter Grass, secretary/treasurer; Bill Maynard, director; Rand Jerris, senior managing director of the USGA; Cal Roth, senior vice president of agronomy with the PGA TOUR; and Darren Redetzke, vice president of commercial business with The Toro Company.

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## Grass Notes continued from page 6

The EIFG also updated its mission statement, which now focuses on, "Sustainability through research, awareness, education, programs and scholarships for the benefit of golf course management professionals, golf facilities and the game."

### Research

The EIFG funds a wide variety of applied research initiatives that assist the efforts of golf course superintendents in operating their courses with greater sustainability and efficiency.

### Education

Funding continuing education is vital in keeping golf course superintendents and their team current on the latest trends in the industry.

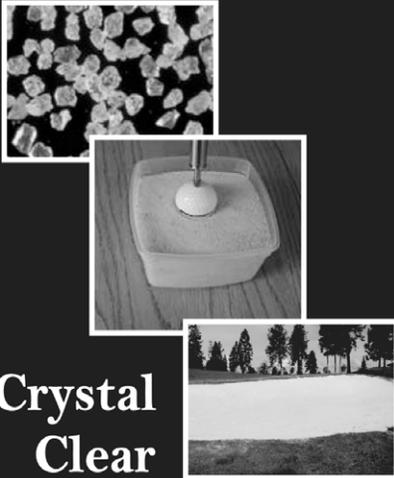
### Advocacy

With regulatory and legislative pressures increasing, it is vital to spread the word about golf's important contributions to our environment and society.

### Scholarships/Grants

Scholarships have been a part of the organization since its inception in 1955. From scholarships for children/grandchildren of GCSAA members and those who are pursuing their own turfgrass degrees, to superintendents seeking professional and leadership development, the EIFG offers a variety of opportunities. In order to fund these areas of focus mentioned above, the EIFG seeks donations from as little as \$5 to major gifts from individuals and industry partners who wish to support programs at a much higher level. The EIFG recently received a gift of \$1 million from the retired CEO of The Toro Co., Ken Melrose, to support the continuing education of GCSAA members.

The part that most GCSAA members do not realize is that the areas of focus mentioned above are part of the GCSAA budget and its programs. These are funded through the block grants that the EIFG provides through its fundraising efforts. In 2014, block grants to GCSAA are projected at \$710,000. An additional \$243,000 funds scholarship and grant efforts which remain within the EIFG budget. To be blunt, without these block grants, the value and services that



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GCSAA provides to its members and the golf industry as a whole would be greatly reduced.

We all benefit from the EIFG's efforts and I ask that you please consider making a donation to the EIFG. This can be done through a variety of ways. The simplest is contributing through your GCSAA membership renewal. If you donate \$100 or more in a year, you will be recognized as part of the Golden Tee Club, something I have personally done since 2001. Last year, the EIFG estab-

lished a Golf Facility Membership for \$250, which provides that facility a plaque to display, recognizing their participation and support of the golf industry. Peaks & Prairies, as a chapter, makes an annual donation along with many other chapters.

The key point is that all donations have a direct impact on the positive things that GCSAA and the golf industry can do for the game itself, the environment of the facilities it is played on and the people who manage those facilities -- you and me. In my opinion, the members of GCSAA who do not already donate need to support the EIFG in some way. Even \$5 can make a difference. More involvement by the membership will allow us to seek support outside of our normal industry partners and show them that our members are doing their part and ask them to help, also.

### We asked via a survey on line why you love or hate Poa...

*I like it stays green in the winter.*

It grows!

*I hate that golfers talk about all the time and love that they have no idea what it is.*

I don't mind poa being on the green as long as I can time proxy application correctly to prevent seed head formation. However I don't like how it is more susceptible to winter kill.

*It is not love, but Poa annua is green, does relatively well in this area, and it regenerates quickly.*

The difficulty in getting rid of it.

*IT DOES NOT STAND THE COLD as well as penncross bent. That is on my course.*

It is a good friend. It comes and visits every year.

*Hate bumpy PM greens during growing season.*

I have managed Poa for 18 years in the hot humid summers of southeast Missouri and 16 years in the Rockies of Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming. The simple truth is the desired grass, bentgrass doesn't hold up in stress conditions and Poa fills in. If we could completely control Poa, we would still have to seed bent when we lose it. In an area where bentgrass is never under stress then obviously a Poa free environment would be ideal.



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# How to Make the Most of Chapter Meetings

**Brian Cloud,  
GCSAA Field Staff  
South Central Regional  
Representative**

Seems like an easy deal: sign up, show up, hang out, tee it up and head home. But if that is your game plan for attending your local GCSAA-affiliated chapter event, you are really missing out on great opportunities to broaden your horizons. Think about it, a full day to interact with your peers in a relaxed atmosphere that typically includes a great educational program, a nice meal and an opportunity to experience golf at one of the finest facilities in your area. You can probably increase your value to your employer more in a single day than you can in months by making the most of your opportunity.

Following are a list of what to do, and what not to do to maximize your chapter meeting experience. The most common

*One of the most common outcomes in the strategic plans in which I have participated is the need to improve attendance at chapter events. I would like to share this article that was written by my good friend and fellow field staff representative, Brian Cloud. Brian is from the South Central Region and resides in the Dallas Fort Worth area. He has stated the “dos and don’ts” of attending meetings and has made it about as simple as can be. This has to be one of the quickest and easiest articles I have written, but I feel compelled to share this with you because it is done so well. Please take some time to sit down and read Brian’s article and see how you may apply some of this wisdom to your local chapter event.*

*Sincerely, David Phipps, GCSAA Field Staff Northwest Regional Representative*



Brian Cloud & Dave Phipps

reasons chapter members say they don’t attend meetings are cost, travel distance, and time away from the job. This article addresses some of these concerns and offers tips to reduce these hurdles, whether you are a superintendent, assistant, affiliate

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Each year, the Environmental Institute for Golf raises funds for turfgrass research by auctioning off rounds of golf. The program uses the donations to provide support for agronomic studies, awareness, scholarships and other education programs. To learn how you can bid on a round, visit [rounds4research.com](http://rounds4research.com).



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- Exchange City Golf Course
- Yellowstone Country Club
- Hilands Golf Club
- Meadow Lake Golf Resort
- Antelope Hills Golf Club
- Cottonwood Hills Golf Course
- Canyon River Golf Club
- Laurel Golf Club



**Auction Dates:**  
June 9-22, 2014  
August 1-10, 2-14

[rounds4research.com](http://rounds4research.com)



## Make the Most

continued from page 10

member or any other member who wants to attend meetings and make the most of your time, effort and money.

**Do: Register early.** Your board of directors and chapter executive work very hard to make sure all of the details for each meeting are organized and first-class. Knowing how many people are going to attend is always a mystery and makes arranging menus, room setup and golf format a challenge. When you see a meeting announcement you know you want to attend, sign up early. Don't put that meeting announcement in a pile on your desk or in a folder in your email. If something comes up and you have to cancel your registration, it is no big deal. Just let chapter leaders know as soon as you can.

**Don't: Wait until the last minute to cancel your registration.** If something comes up and you have to cancel your registration, let chapter leaders know as soon as you can. A last-minute cancellation can really throw a wrench into best laid plans. If you have ever had to rearrange a four-person handicapped scramble tournament at the last minute with four last-minute cancellations, two no-shows and three new players, you'll know exactly why this is important. It's the nature of the industry to have last-minute things come up, so sometimes it's impossible to avoid, but please be courteous to your chapter leaders who are working hard to make the events run smoothly.

**Do: Support your organization.** Part of your association's commitment to providing great education and member services depends on good meeting attendance. At most courses, the financial liability and risk for securing a meeting site are significant. Your attendance and registration fees help cover the costs of speakers, refreshments and more. The better the attendance, the more easily your association can provide exceptional member services and programs. Many members find a way for at least one person from their operation to attend each event. Chapters benefit greatly when courses and companies adopt that goal.

**Do: Bring a guest to a meeting.** Most chapter meetings have room for members to bring guests. That is a great opportunity to demonstrate the professional nature of your group and to show

a general manager, golf professional, or club official how important it is to attend meetings. Meetings are also a great incentive or reward for assistants or crew members for a job well done. This can be a great way to do some team-building in a productive way. Don't forget non-members. Inviting them as guests is a great way to show them the benefits of belonging to the association and helping your chapter grow. Make sure to check with your chapter for their guest policy ahead of time.

**Do: Invite a fellow member to a meeting.** Pick up the phone, send a text or email and invite a fellow member to a meeting. Think what it would mean to a new member to be personally invited to be a part of the group. And it doesn't have to be a newcomer; some members just get out of the habit of attending meetings and an invitation to attend may be just the nudge needed to get them back in the swing of things. Most members work within a few miles of several other courses or members, while some meetings could be more than 100 miles round trip, depending on your location. Sharing a ride is a great way to reduce expenses and spend extra time with your local peers. For vendors, inviting customers (or potential customers) to meetings is a great way to show your appreciation for their business and build relationships. Inviting a member and offering to cover his or her entry fee is as good or better an investment of your company's money than taking someone to lunch or the ballgame, and it's a much more productive and industry-related method.

**Do: Prepare to be gone for the day.** Anyone can always come up with a hundred reasons why they can't be away from the job for even a day. But the truth is most operations can survive just fine even with the superintendent gone, provided everyone is prepared. Make sure the right people at your course know where you are going and exactly what is expected to be accomplished while you are gone. Plan for these days well in advance and things will go smoothly. You will only be a phone call away, and most issues can wait until you return the next day.

**Do: Arrive early.** Some of the best opportunities to meet people and network come before the actual agenda starts, when the crowd is smaller and people are relaxed. Usually, meetings are packed with activity, and it helps when everyone arrives a little early so everyone can get registered and the event can start on time. Make sure you have clear directions, especially in an

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## Make the Most

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area that is not familiar. And, if you haven't noticed, traffic is more unpredictable than Mother Nature, so plan ahead.

**Don't: Skip the education and lunch.** Most chapters offer members the option to participate in only the education and meeting portion. It is a great option if it is not possible to be away from the course all day or other commitments prevent you from playing golf into the afternoon. However, if you skip the education and only make the golf, you are definitely missing the best opportunity to gain important knowledge from the program. If the education doesn't pertain to your current situation, it is very likely that it may someday.

**Do: Meet new people.** Just look around and you are sure to find someone new to introduce yourself to at a meeting. Most people gravitate to those they already know, but everyone benefits from meeting new members in this setting. Set a goal for each meeting to shake three to five new hands. It is always amusing to hear longtime members say they don't recognize all the new people. Well, there is an easy remedy for that. Golf tends to mix members up so you will always meet someone new or get to know others better. Make sure you take the time during your round to really get to know your playing partners.

**Don't: Worry about your golf game.** There are many really good golfers in golf course management. But the majority of members are just out for a good time and have a golf game that leaves a lot to be desired. Most members have a handicap closer to 18 than single digits. So, don't worry about your ability or how you stack up with the rest of the group. Most golf formats take handicap into consideration, so you won't be at a disadvantage if breaking 90 for you is rarer than a Tiger Woods 3 putt. All members of all abilities are welcome and encouraged to participate in all golf events. Besides, if your score is high enough, you will probably get the ultimate compliment about your golf game — "You're working too hard."

**Do: Share with your peers.** Please come to the meetings ready to share your troubles, your successes and even your failures. Chapter members have always been supportive of each other, are always ready to share information and are prepared to extend a helping hand. Nine times out of 10, you will find someone who has faced the same issues you are battling and is willing to share their experience. Participate in meetings by asking questions or providing insight. Chapters have a priceless database of a massive amount of information that is very useful, if everyone is willing to participate by contributing.

**Don't: Only talk about business.** Believe it or not, there is  
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## Make the Most

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more to life than the weather, growing grass and golfers who are driving you crazy. Get to know some of your fellow members on a different level by talking about their families, hobbies, sports or anything other than golf and growing grass. You'll find out that they are a pretty interesting bunch, and it helps to find common ground with your peers.

**Do: Welcome affiliate members who participate.** Affiliate members make up about half of most chapters' total membership and contribute very generously with their membership, participation at meetings, and sponsorships. Affiliates are a very valuable component to the success of chapters and deserve the right to participate. Just like superintendents, they have a job to do, and building relationships with their customers is a very important part of their jobs. So, don't be offended if an affiliate member introduces themselves and leaves you with a business card. Associations recognize the value of all of their members, and all members should share in that spirit.

**Don't: Hesitate to pat the host superintendent on the back.** Hosting a meeting is a very stressful endeavor, and superintendents should be praised for inviting their peers to inspect their work with a fine tooth comb. A thoughtful comment or compliment to the host can go a long way to relieve that stress. Not everyone works with the same budget or under the same circumstances, so it helps to let the host know that you recognize

the job being done with the resources available.

**Do: Enjoy yourself in a responsible manner.** You are representing your place of employment, your association, and your profession when you are in public at chapter functions. Your reputation depends on the way you dress, your language, and above all, your actions. Superintendents are now considered a leading professional in the golf industry and should be aware of that when visiting host clubs. Don't you want the host club personnel and members to have a great impression of your group?

**Do: Follow up.** With email and text messaging, it couldn't take a whole minute to write a quick thank you to the host superintendent or a greeting to playing partners or someone new you met. If you have more time, pick up the phone or leave a message. Those kinds of efforts are really appreciated by the recipient and will help you build that all-important network that will benefit you and your career in the future.

**Do: Let your supervisor know about the event.** Make a habit of letting your supervisor know what type of education was presented, what you learned from playing the course, who you met, etc. He or she is probably the person writing the checks to pay for the meeting, so you want to make sure that person knows the facility is getting its money's worth and your attendance at future meetings is a value. It can be as simple as a quick conversation over a cup of coffee or a written report, depending on your situation. Keeping your supervisor informed will help justify the costs associated with meeting attendance.

**Do: Provide feedback to your chapter.** Your chapter leaders are always working to make your meetings enjoyable and productive. In order to accomplish this, feedback from the membership is necessary and important. Take the time to let them know what you enjoyed or appreciated, and also let them know if you have any suggestions or constructive criticism about how the meetings can be made better.

Hopefully, these suggestions will give you a few things to think about when it comes to chapter meeting attendance. So, make plans today to attend an upcoming event and make the most of your experience.

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# Siting your Bird Boxes

David Phipps  
GCSAA NW Field Staff

A great way for golf courses to get started promoting wildlife habitat on a golf course is to construct and place nesting boxes. But, did you know that by placing a box in the wrong place could attract marauding species such as European Starlings and House Sparrows? If left unchecked, the result can be a proliferation of these species and a reduction in the birds that actually need the boxes for nesting.



The most common nest boxes I have seen in the NW Region are tailored for Western and Mountain Bluebirds. Historically, Bluebirds have been threatened by the removal of their natural habitat such as dead trees. Groups across the country have been successful in building bluebird nesting boxes to a certain specification and monitoring their progress. One such

group in the Willamette Valley is called the Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project (PBRP). I became familiar with them while working for Russell Vandehey, CGCS at The Oregon Golf Club in West Linn, Oregon. As his assistant, I took it upon myself to discover why we had over 20 bird boxes on the property, yet bluebirds inhabited none. I acquainted myself with the PBRP and soon learned it's all about location.

Bluebirds are particular about choosing a nest box or a tree cavity to feed their young. If bluebirds are seen in the area during nesting season (April through August), chances are good that if you put up a nesting box, they will use it. It's all about the available food in the area with which to feed their young, as well as how much competition exists for nesting sites. Often conflicts over nest boxes will result in the loss of eggs and young, as well as the killing of the adults. The most likely culprit will be House Sparrows. This species doesn't normally require cavities to nest, but if given the opportunity they will take a nesting box over anything else. If nest boxes are placed in an area where House Sparrows are present, it will present an immediate danger to the survival of the bluebirds and their young. House Sparrows can have up to three broods of young, thus increasing the pressure on the bluebird population. This is why bluebirds are not commonly seen in urban settings. The sparrow competition is just too great. If you have a large population of House Sparrows, then I would strongly suggest not putting up any boxes until the population has subsided. Please refer to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's website, NestWatch for further resources in dealing with non-native species.

The location of your nesting box can dictate the type of

bird that will use it. If you want to attract Tree Swallows, place boxes near a pond. If you want to attract House Wrens, Chickadees or Nuthatches, you can place boxes near heavy brush and undergrowth. Bluebirds prefer to hunt from a perch and like semi-open grassland. Fence lines or vineyards make excellent perching sites. If perching sites are not in the area, a simple T-shaped perching stick can be mounted on the back of the nesting box. Lawns make great areas for bluebird to hunt; this is why golf courses can be such desired locations. Since birds will be feeding their young during nesting times, all pesticide use should be curtailed around areas where they will be gathering their insects.

Be sure to leave your boxes up year around. Pairs will often scout for nesting sites in the fall and come back in the spring. They may also utilize the box to roost during the winter months. It is also important to clean out the boxes after each season. Boxes are designed to have a cavity and if nests are built upon older nests the eggs and the young are close to the opening and can become vulnerable to predation. If your boxes remain empty for two years in a single location, move them around to another spot, perhaps further away from traffic or just turn the direction of the opening. Always be sure the opening is facing away from the prevailing wind; generally toward the east is a good rule of thumb.

Remember that providing nesting boxes isn't a one-time effort. You need to monitor them on a regular basis. If you find it hard to get around to the boxes, perhaps you can designate someone on your staff, or a volunteer, to make a round once a month or so. It's important to be sure wasps or mice aren't taking up residence. Check around your local areas for bluebird conservation groups. The PBRP will actually come out and band your young before they fledge so the population can be monitored. This also provides a wonderful opportunity to network with conservation leaders.

Invite a local school or a scout troop to participate by helping to construct your boxes and take part in siting them. This could be a great learning module to complement your First Green Program. Providing nesting boxes can be a rewarding endeavor and open the door to many opportunities. Now go out there and help those birds proliferate!

*Russell Vandehey, CGCS, inspects a successful nesting box*



# SUMMER PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

**Clark Throssell, Ph.D.,  
Turfgrass R&D, Inc., Billings, Mont.**

If you are keeping score, you know I missed the mark with the title of my last article when I advised you to put your snow shovels away and to start thinking about turf. Here it is the middle of May and my snow shovel is still handy and ready for action. I do know summer is coming; I'm just not sure when, so in that spirit I will discuss a few summer problems and solutions for you to consider.

## Canada thistle

Is Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) a problem on your golf course? If so, you are not alone. Canada thistle is a cool season perennial weed that spreads by an extensive root system (Beck, Ross). Canada thistle roots can grow horizontally 15 feet or more and vertically 6 to 15 feet deep (Beck). It spreads by means of vegetative buds along the root system and over long distances by seed (Beck). It can be found growing in many



environments and on a golf course it is found along stream banks, ditch banks, in native/natural areas and wherever the soil has been disturbed.

An effective strategy to limiting the growth of Canada thistle is to force it to use its stored energy (Beck). Regular mowing, monthly or more frequent, is one practice that will help limit, but maybe not completely control, Canada thistle. In those locations where regular mowing is not possible, herbicides will be necessary to control Canada thistle.

The ideal time to apply herbicides to control Canada thistle is in late spring/ early summer after the first flower buds have formed and before the first flowers open and/or in early fall when there is a period of active regrowth and/or when there is regrowth after mowing (Ross). Regardless of the herbicide used



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to control Canada thistle, more than one application will be needed per year and, if the infestation is extensive, several consecutive years of herbicide applications will be needed.

According to Patton and Weisenberger, the following herbicides will provide excellent control of Canada thistle when properly applied and at the correct time: Millennium Ultra (2,4-D + clopyralid + dicamba), BrushMaster (2,4-D, dichloprop + dicamba), Escalade 2 (2,4-D + fluroxpyr + dicamba, Trimec or Triplet (2,4-D + MCPP + dicamba), 4-Speed (2,4-D + MCPP + dicamba + pyraflufen-ethyl), 2DQ or Momentum or Q or Quincept (2,4-D + quinclorac + dicamba), 4-Speed XT (2,4-D + triclopyr + dicamba + pyraflufen), Speedzone (carfentrazone + 2,4-D + MCPP + dicamba), Lontrel (clopyralid), Trimec Encore (MCPA + MCPP + dicamba), Trimec Plus (MSMA + 2,4-D + MCPP + dicamba), Q4 Plus (quinclorac + sulfentrazone + 2,4-D + dicamba), Surge (sulfentrazone + 2,4-D + MCPP + dicamba), Confront or 2-D (triclopyr + clopyralid) and TZONE (triclopyr + sulfentrazone + 2,4-D + dicamba). Follow all label directions when using any herbicide. There are other herbicides labeled for Canada thistle control in non-turf settings.

### Turfgrass Ants

It is time to start scouting for ants on your greens and tees. In most cases the ants present on your tees and greens is the turfgrass ant (*Lasius neoniger*) (Koppenhofer). As the weather warms up, ants become more active and begin nesting and creating mounds. The nest consists of a network of underground tunnels and galleries three feet or more below the soil surface

with several openings to the surface (Koppenhofer). Ants feed on eggs, larvae and adults of insects.

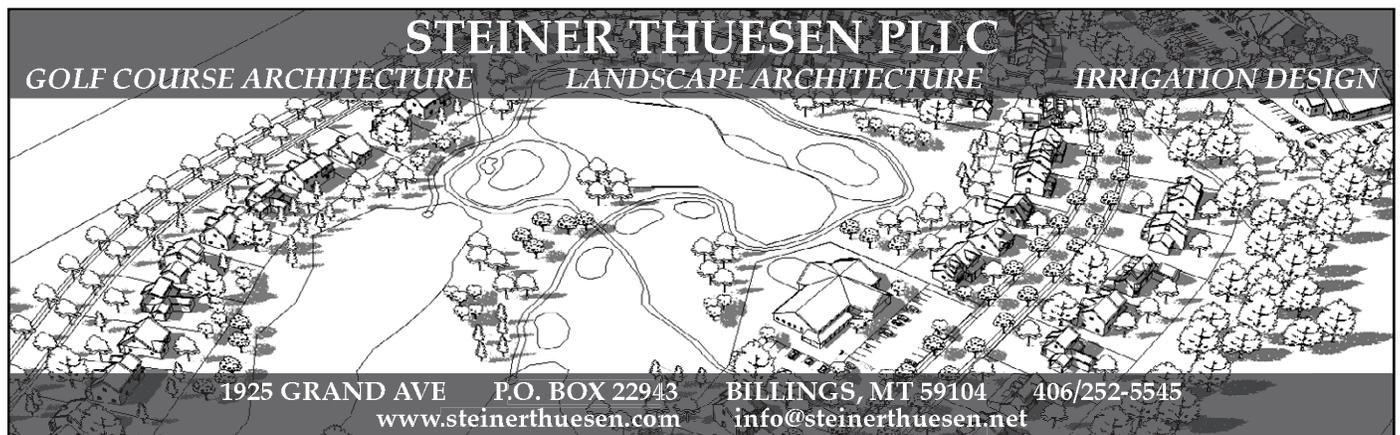
The ideal time to control ants is when you first see the mounds and before the population has a chance to build up. If numerous mounds are present, a broadcast application of an insecticide will work best. Dan Potter, Ph.D. recommends only treating the outer 6 feet of the green, the collar and 2 or 3 feet into the surround (Potter). It is thought that ants are found on the outer edge of the green because this is where insects that are injured or killed by mowing are deposited by the mower and provide an excellent foraging spot for ants.

Ant control with a broadcast insecticide application only controls the worker ants and is effective for about 4 to 6 weeks in spring and 2 to 3 weeks in summer. The ant population quickly recovers after an insecticide application making retreatment throughout the summer necessary in most cases (Koppenhofer). Spot treating with an ant bait is effective if only a few isolated mounds are present. It is not practical to treat numerous mounds with an ant bait.

### Topdressing Greens

I encourage you to topdress greens lightly and frequently, especially in spring and early summer when the grass is growing aggressively. More and more research and observations of excellent putting greens supports the concept of light, frequent topdressing. The benefits of light, frequent topdressing are numerous and were seen again this spring. Greens that were properly topdressed had less winter damage than those where a

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## Solutions

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thatch layer had built up at the surface.

Keeping the crown buried in the topdressing protects the plant from winter desiccation and provides insulation from low temperatures. It also helps prevent an excess of water being retained by a thatch layer.

Figure out a process and acquire the equipment necessary to apply a light topdressing every week or every two weeks. Your fellow Peaks and Prairies members are an excellent resource to help develop an effective process to topdress that can be accomplished quickly and with minimal disruption to golfers. Pick up the phone and call a couple of your colleagues and gain from their experience.

Enjoy the long, warm days of early summer. Play a little golf. The rivers are too high and muddy to fish so take a 9 or 18-hole tour of someone else's course and enjoy the game.

Clark Throssell, Ph.D., is a turfgrass scientist and works with the turfgrass industry on technical and scientific issues. He serves as the technical resource for Peaks and Prairies GCSA members.

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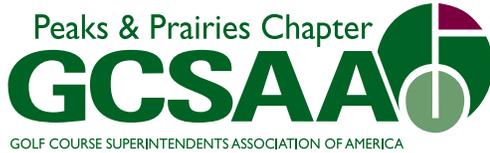
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