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You may also find it interesting, "As (Dr. Michio) Kaku explained, the caveman principle says that predictions like the paperless office or that urban populations would disperse with the advent of telework haven't materialized because, despite technological advances, humans are still naturally programmed to like face-to-face interactions and tangible value."(1)

The reasons stated above help to summarize why so many of our members attend the Fall Meeting & Trade Show. Education, interaction and value all experienced at one event.

What will you gain by attending this year? Information will be available concerning:

- 10 considerations when preparing turf for winter
- late season nitrogen programs
- dealing with heat stress (get ready for next year!)
- organizing your equipment manager facility
- managing your fleet when times are tough
- ensuring pesticide record keeping is really being done correctly and where you can – or can't – take shortcuts
- the fundamentals of turf soils and health
- and more, including the valuable opportunity to attend the trade show. Our allied members know their products and are there to assist you. They want to help you provide the best possible conditions. Our allied trade show members support you and your profession – please take advantage of the wisdom on the trade show floor and take the time to visit with them in their booth.

Our allied members know their products and are there to assist you. They want to help you provide the best possible conditions. Our allied trade show members support you and your profession – please take advantage of the wisdom on the trade show floor and take the time to visit with them in their booth.

Brian Horgan, Ph.D., participated in Whitefish at the "Almost" Spring Meeting in 2011, and we have since been looking
 continued page 17

PPGCSA Events:

PPGCSA Fall Meeting & Trade Show

October 28-30, 2014, Billings, Mont.

PPGCSA "Almost" Spring Meeting

March 30 & 31, 2015, Jackson Hole, Wyo.

Stay on the San Antonio River Walk

Enjoy all of the "perks" when staying at the Peaks & Prairies GCSA (and neighboring chapters) room block at the Drury Plaza. Located on the San Antonio, Texas, River Walk, you are in the midst of all the great things the River Walk offers. With only a four-block stroll to the convention center, GCSAA bus service will *not* be available. The 2015 GIS is February 21-26.

Formerly the Alamo Bank, Drury Plaza was renovated to maintain its historical character. The lobby features 50-foot ceilings, stained glass windows, and even a rooftop pool on the property. All rooms include microwaves and refrigerators, and free wireless throughout the property.

You can also enjoy two complimentary meals a day! Enjoy a free breakfast that includes hot items such as biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs and sausage. From 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. each day, enjoy three beverage tickets for beer, wine, mixed drinks, or soda, as well as what you could enjoy as a snack or a meal – a variety of hot food that changes daily.

GIS conference properties are running from \$149 - \$225 a night. We have selected The Drury Plaza, with all the extras, for \$162 a night. Make your reservations now.

Buckhorn Saloon and Museum

The 2015 Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room is going to be at a special location in San Antonio, Wednesday, February 25, 2015 - at the Buckhorn Saloon and Museum! This is a highly popular venue in San Antonio and thanks to one superintendent's family connection, we will be the coolest kids in town!

"The Buckhorn Saloon is where it all began—where history was made and legend lives. It is where Teddy Roosevelt recruited Rough Riders and Pancho Villa is rumored to have planned the Mexican Revolution. Many of the original furnishings still grace today's Buckhorn Saloon, including the back-bar which was hand-crafted of marble and cherry wood."

Delicious complimentary food will be offered during the evening, as always! Our usual event budget is not large enough to cover beverages at this venue. The event will be a cash bar at this venue in 2015 (depending on sponsorship participation).



Peaks & Prairies Golf Course Superintendents Association

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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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*“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.

In a recent issue of Superintendent Magazine, editor Larry Aylward wrote an insightful column about the hackneyed concept of Sustainability. A word you hear tossed around like yesterday's newspaper, it held about the same importance in my vocabulary, until now. As described by Larry, something that is sustainable combines components that are environmental, economic and social. His example follows that application of a wetting agent increases the efficiency of water use. It reduces labor to hand water localized dry spot (economic), saves water (environmental), and, due to responsible water management, it enhances the image of the course (social). Over time, the benefits and cost savings from using the product more than pay for the up-front cost, so the use of a wetting agent becomes sustainable.

Many of you roll your eyes because you've been operating sustainably for years, but calling it logical instead. It started me wondering if the events and offerings of Peaks & Prairies are sustainable...er, logical. In early August, I attended a fantastic scholarship tournament event at Riverton Country Club. Thank you, Chris Thomas, for hosting a group of nearly 100 superintendents, assistants and allied partners. The golf course was fantastic, the weather beautiful and everyone had a genuinely good time. For me, it was a great little breather from the mid-summer grind. The event added over \$2,700 to the Peaks & Prairies budget, which not only funds scholarships, but directly helps keep dues and continuing education event costs low. So at the end of the day - economic? Check. Social? Check. Environmental? Yeah, I think there were probably some conversations about that, so...check.

You won't want to miss the next two sustainable events. On August 26, the Montana Scholarship tournament will be at Glacier View Golf Club, West Glacier, Mont. It will be a great chance to play golf in one of the most beautiful parts of our region at its peak summer condition.

As you wind down the season, save the date for the annual Fall Meeting & Trade Show in Billings. Starting October 28, bring your GM, assistants or friends. The agenda is stacked with agronomy, facility maintenance, record keeping and more.

As always, the Board of Directors is looking for ways to better serve the membership and increase our sustainability. Don't hesitate to contact me or the other board members with ideas or feedback to help your association.

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.

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.

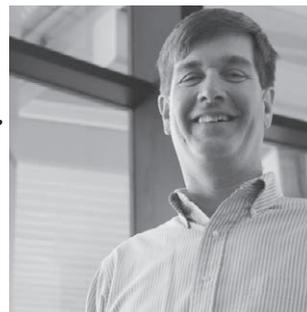
We would like to offer our thanks to our assistant liaison, Cole Clark, who accepted a superintendent position at the Stillwater Golf Course.

Peaks & Prairies GCSA

Extension/Resource Service

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Grass Notes

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



If you don't know where you have been, it is hard to know where you should go." "To move forward, you must look back." Those are statements that I believe to be true in both your personal life and with an association such as GCSAA.

I was at home in my "office", an unoccupied bedroom now that we are almost empty nesters, trying to think of a topic and surprise Lori by having this article in a week ahead of deadline (which would send her into shock). I have several "piles" in my office, sometimes neatly organized and, as Charlene will attest, usually scattered around, but on top of one of them was a press release about the reorganization of the World Golf Hall of Fame (WGHF) selection process, which triggered the idea for

what I am writing. One of the things your GCSAA Board has been doing for several years now has been to nominate Col. John Morley for the WGHF, obviously unsuccessfully so far, but we will not give up trying.

It is ok to admit to saying, "Who is that?" I did not know much about him before I became part of his nomination process, either. What is the tie between him, GCSAA and knowing where you should go? The reason for the nomination in our minds is that Col. John Morley was the driving force and first president of what we know of today as GCSAA. His vision is still true in today's world and the principles he spoke about when founding our association still fit into what we do every day, whether as members, staff or the golfing public.

In 1923, John Morley saw a need for greenskeepers in the local area, like himself, to gather, share ideas and generally support each other. He formed the Cleveland District Greenskeepers Association and was elected their president. Others in the region heard of how well it was working, so in 1924/25 he traveled and helped establish similar associations in New England, Ontario, Michigan and Philadelphia. These were the beginnings of chapters, but he also saw the need for different regions to gather together and do the same things - share ideas and support each other - on a larger scale. On Sept 13, 1926, at the Sylvania Golf Club in Toledo, Ohio, the first meeting of what

continued page 6



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Grass Notes continued from page 6

is now GCSAA, the National Association of Greenskeepers of America (NAGA), took place with 31 people in attendance. He was elected president of this group and in his speech he said to always follow these basic principles:

- The Association was to be founded on justice, brotherhood and generous benevolence
- Greenskeeping was to be seen as an art and science and not a labor job

- Only those qualified should care for greens
- He wished to cement the greenkeepers of the US and Canada into one organization
- He promoted the exchange of information between greenkeepers, the need for a national magazine and annual conference
- He wanted NAGA to provide financial benefit to the families of members who died or were disabled

Since then, there have been two mainstays of the association - an annual meeting with education and a trade show, and a magazine. In 1927, the first NAGA Conference was held in Chicago and has taken place every year since, surviving the great depression (despite the Cleveland bank closing, losing all funds), World War II, and, even more recently, Hurricane Katrina and the 2008-09 recession. The magazine started as "The National Greenskeeper" and has changed names a few times, becoming the current "Golf Course Management" in 1979.

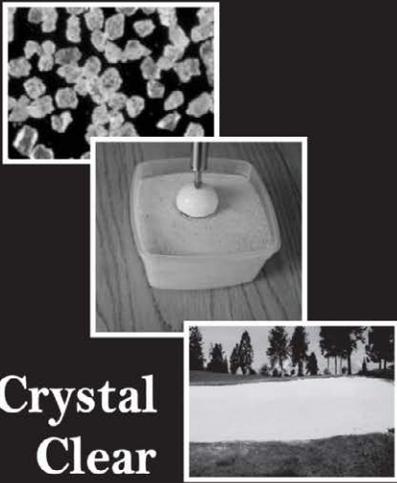
Mr. Morley served as President from 1926-32, stepping down due to poor health and other duties. He received the title of Colonel from Kentucky Governor Flem Sampson at the 4th Annual Convention & Golf Show of Greenskeepers in Louisville, KY.

As GCSAA Past President Sean Hoolehan, CGCS, described, "If Old Tom Morris is the godfather of greenskeeping, then Col. John Morley is the godfather of American greenskeeping." He was given GCSAA's Old Tom Morris award in 2009, the first person not living to receive it, overdue, but better late than never.

My point in this history lesson is to show that, at least for me, and I believe my fellow directors, the principles that Col. Morley spoke about 90 years ago still hold true today. GCSAA still promotes justice for the golf industry and those who work in it, brother and sisterhood and generous benevolence to its members and their families. We provide education and

help promote turfgrass management as both art and science. We provide classifications and designations, which carry educational and service requirements to achieve. We work very closely with the Canadian GSA and the Ontario GCSA (one of the founding groups) is still one of our 98 affiliated chapters. Our magazine and annual conference are still going strong, serving the needs of our members and the industry.

Hopefully, Col. Morley would be proud of where his "vision" has gone, and that someday his efforts to protect and promote the "keepers of the greens" will be recognized in the World Golf Hall of Fame. There would be no WGHF without the efforts of the men and women who have followed Col. Morley and that vision, which has provided the playing surfaces for them. PS: Speaking of Golf Course Management magazine, I found most of my historical information about Col. Morley from a December 2008 article by Seth Jones.



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Update: Fertilizer Pricing

Jason Aerni, Simplot Partners

Turf market fertilizer pricing is driven by supply and demand in the Ag markets. Currently, we are seeing an upward bias on nitrogen and potash pricing that will slightly increase pricing in the turf market this fall and possibly into spring, 2015.

Below are some comments from Wayne Welter, our market analyst at Simplot.

The potash markets in North America remain strong after retailers burned through inventories to meet a robust spring planting season. North American producers are reporting thin inventories and have little available product to offer through Q3. With current prices firm, many in the industry believe fall prices will appreciate another \$10-20

that once chose a volume over price strategy, is reporting an 8% cut to production rates in an effort to support prices. Strong international demand, combined with a cut in production rates from the world's largest producer, point to firm potash pricing through the fall.

"This will not get any better in the near future, so planning well ahead..."

As a side note for the turf industry, sulfate of potash has been in very short supply and is difficult for distributors to stock at historical inventory levels. This will not get any better in the near future, so planning well ahead for 2015 needs is prudent.

Currently, urea is experiencing a

as global markets favor the sell side. In international news Uralkali, the firm

price surge as rice application and corn top-dress consume available supply as importers contend with the reality that the immediate import pipeline is currently thin. The wounds inflicted by a late spring "logistics bottleneck" are fresh in supplier's minds and many are trying to avoid a repeat this fall, looking at securing tons early. If you can wait to buy, you will likely be rewarded with lower prices, but the caveat is the discounted product will most likely be in the form of Chinese urea. If you can get a quality guarantee and are comfortable with Chinese origin product, there will be cheaper urea on the horizon.

Although urea pricing stabilized this past spring, we should expect some increases moving forward which will affect blends, as well as the many urea based slow-release products in the turf market.



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2014 Elections!

Sean Sullivan, CGCS, The Briarwood, Billing, Mont., has been nominated to serve as president of the Peaks & Prairies GCSA for the next presidential term, to be voted on at the upcoming Fall Meeting. Sullivan is a former president and was asked if he would be willing to come back into the position when Joe Fernau, CGCS, declined the office of president, due to retirement in his future. We have such a great group of board members, we preferred not to hurry them through positions – including skipping serving in the various officer roles.

Board of Director Candidates

We are fortunate to have a strong list of candidates nominated for the board of directors. All candidates would serve the association and profession well.

Three director positions are available. Mike Wilcynski, Nominating Committee Chairman, offers the following slate for your consideration. We thank the following director candidates; we are always fortunate to have such a worthy slate of volunteers willing to serve.

Wade Altschwager, Anaconda Hills Golf Course, Great Falls, Mont. (incumbent)

Danny Renz, Douglas Community Golf Course, Douglas, Wyo. (incumbent)

Cole Clark, Stillwater Golf Club, Columbus, Mont.

Rick Hathaway, Rock Creek Cattle Company, Deer Lodge, Mont.

Officers candidates:

President: Sean Sullivan, CGCS, The Briarwood, Billings, Mont.

Vice President: Dan Rootes, Ponderosa Butte Golf Course, Colstrip, Mont.

Secretary/ Treasurer: Jason Busch, The Powder Horn, Sheridan, Wyo.

Welcome to our new members!

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TWENTY NEW GREENS AT VALLEY VIEW GOLF CLUB

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



In September 2013, Gary Colstad, superintendent, and Dave Barklow, assistant superintendent, undertook sodding of 20 greens, collars and approaches at Valley View Golf Club in Bozeman, MT. I caught up with Gary and Dave to discuss the project and the outcome. I thank them for their time and for sharing their experiences. Gary Colstad, superintendent at Valley View Golf Club, can be reached at garycolstad@questoffice.net and Dave Barklow, assistant superintendent at Valley View Golf Club, can be reached at davebarklow@yahoo.com for more information.

Start off by describing the project.

Twenty greens, collars and approaches were resurfaced at Valley View, starting September 9, 2013, and ending about October 4, 2013. Nathan Cox of Desert Green Turf, Moses Lake, Wash., supplied the sod, some equipment and some labor and Kip Kalbrener of Ridgetop,

Inc., a golf course renovation and landscape construction company in Gig Harbor, WA, provided the rest of the equipment and labor. Nathan and Kip have worked on many projects together and their combined expertise and resources made our project go smoothly.

Bob Lee referred us to Nathan Cox. We took a trip to meet with Nathan and look at his sod. After meeting with Nathan, we worked out the specifics of the contract and agreed on a start date. Nathan, Kip and their staff would strip off the old sod, prepare the soil for seeding and install the new sod.

What was the process to remove the old turf and install the new sod?

The old sod was stripped off to a depth of 1 inch using a big roll sod cutter. We disposed of the old sod on the golf course by building mounds at four continued page 12



Winterkill of annual bluegrass greens at Valley View Golf Club, which was the reason for resurfacing all the greens.

Bacterial Etiolation in Our Region?

Jason Busch at The Power Horn in Sheridan, WY has an unconfirmed case of bacterial etiolation on four greens. In photos of the affected areas sent to the diagnostic lab at Rutgers University, the damage appeared to be caused by bacterial etiolation. Unfortunately, the disease could not be isolated from samples Jason sent to Rutgers because of the age of the samples.

To help his greens recover from the disease, Jason has raised the mowing height and is using solid rollers. In addition, he has skipped mowing on some days and substituted rolling on the days he does not mow. He has also removed plant growth regulators and biostimulants from his management program for the time being.

Jason reports that the greens are recovering from the disease. He has a few thin areas but expects the grass to fully recover as the temperatures cool off later this summer and fall.

If you have questions about bacterial etiolation, contact Jason at jasonb@thepowderhorn.com for more information.

USGA Course Consulting Service

As you begin to prepare your budget for 2015, be sure to include funds for a visit from Larry Gilhuly, Director of the USGA Green Section Northwest Region. Larry is a fantastic resource for golf course management that all superintendents should put to work on their golf course. When Larry visits your golf course, ask him question after question. He can answer them and provide insight

continued page 16



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Twenty New Greens

continued from page 10

or five locations. We tilled the old sod, allowed it to settle, capped it with soil and then sodded over the mounds.

After the sod was stripped off, we topdressed the greens with about 1 inch of sand. The sand was rototilled along with about the top 4 inches of the old putting green profile to create a sod bed. On only one green did we make dramatic changes to the contours. Big roll sod of T-1 creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera* L.) was installed on the greens. For the most part, they went green by green, sodding the green first and then installing Kentucky bluegrass sod on the collar and approach. Once the sod was installed, it was our responsibility to maintain it.

While Nathan and Kip and their staffs were stripping sod, our staff was moving irrigation heads, installing new heads and replacing and upgrading existing irrigation heads around the greens.

Why did you select T-1 for the greens?

Our number one criteria for selecting a creeping bentgrass cultivar was one that would compete aggressively with annual bluegrass (*Poa annua* L.). We also liked the high density, winter hardiness and dark color of T-1.

After the sod was installed how did you care for it?

We watered it carefully to make sure it didn't shrink while not overwatering it. We didn't want it too wet because we started to mow at 0.30 inches 5 days after it was installed. We topdressed the greens with sand several times through the fall to begin to smooth the playing surface.

We also rolled the greens several times in the fall with a 1.5 ton roller to help smooth the greens.

This spring, after removing the snow in early March, we covered the greens until April 17 to encourage growth. The creeping bentgrass grew nicely under the covers but as soon as the covers were removed, the growth slowed drastically due to cool temperatures. We topdressed regularly throughout the spring and needle-tine aerified three times to help smooth the



Nathan Cox stripping sod off a green.

greens and encourage rooting.

The greens were opened for play on April 30 and were in good shape. There were a few seams present on the greens that were sodded last and a few bumpy spots. They were also a little slow because we hadn't been able to lower the mowing height as much as we would have liked due to limited growth in the early spring.

Were there any complications during the grow-in phase?

No real complications, but a couple of things that caught our attention. The first was that, due to our regular, aggressive topdressing to smooth the greens, we ended up dulling the blades on our mowers after mowing just 2 or 3 greens. We spent a lot of time grinding reels and bedknives.

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Kip Kalbrener floating a green to prepare the sodbed.

Twenty New Greens

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There was no way around this, just one of those things that we needed to account for in our daily planning.

The second was resistance from the greens to our aggressive topdressing and verticutting. In an effort to lower the mowing height on the greens, we topdressed and verticut regularly. This was too much for the young creeping bentgrass to handle, so we had to back off on both practices. We will pick up the intensity of both practices this fall and next spring.

The greens drain better and are a little firmer than in the past. We attribute this to stripping off the organic matter and thatch in the top 1 inch of the profile. This has made us alter our irrigation and fertility programs more than we anticipated.

We also have a little work to do to sharpen up the clean-up pass. We have been alternating days of mowing and rolling to help smooth the greens while not causing stress from mowing every day. We're also only mowing the clean-up pass twice a week. The speed has consistently been in the range of 10.5 to 11.0 feet at a mowing height of 0.140 inches with this program.

Why did you decide to sod the greens?

The old greens were at least 90% annual bluegrass and they suffered from winter injury every year. In 2011, almost all the greens were killed during the winter and, in 2012, there was a large loss of turf on the greens. Our springs are so cold,

recovery was very slow. It took until mid-to-late June or early July to have acceptable putting surfaces.

After every year of the annual bluegrass dying, it seemed that the annual bluegrass that took its place was a little less desirable for a green. We were going in the wrong direction, that's for sure.



Dave Barklow rolling the 9th green the same day the sod was installed.

How did you sell the idea to the club leaders and members?

We sold the general manager first. We focused on the benefits of creeping bentgrass and the future of the club. We also showed him a YouTube video of a similar project that took place in British Columbia.

The GM got on board with the project and was very supportive. The board of directors was also solidly behind the idea. Next, we wrote a letter to the members outlining what we

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Twenty New Greens

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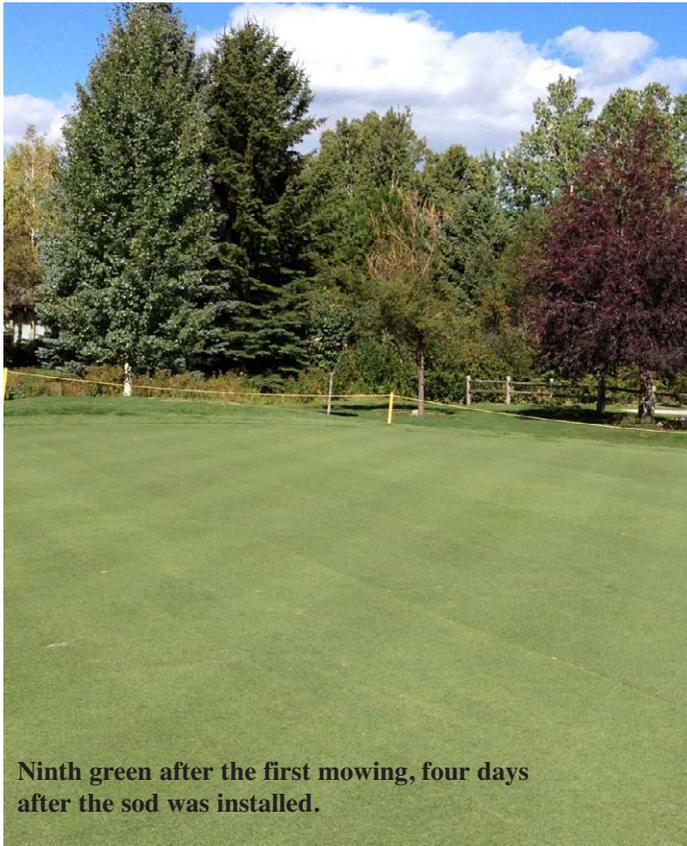
wanted to do and focused on the benefits of the project.

A special meeting was held regarding the project and to vote on an assessment to do the project. There were only about five questions regarding the project and over 98% of the members voted for the project and associated assessment.

The project, which was very affordable, was funded by a small member assessment and our capital improvement fund.

What has been the reaction of the members to the new greens?

It has been overwhelmingly positive. The members are very proud of the new greens and the golf course.



Ninth green after the first mowing, four days after the sod was installed.





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What is your reaction to the new greens?

We are both pleased with the outcome of the project. It's pretty nice not dealing with annual bluegrass infested greens.

What are you doing to keep annual bluegrass out of the greens?

Bensumec (bensulide) was applied in the spring to prevent annual bluegrass seed from germinating. We are considering applying Bensumec this fall to prevent annual bluegrass from germinating.

Annual bluegrass plants were removed by hand from the greens and we sprayed Embark (mefluidide) on fairways to reduce seed head production and potential contamination of the greens.

We are investigating the use of postemergent herbicides to selectively remove annual bluegrass.

Anything else you would like to add?

We would encourage fellow superintendents fighting Poa annua to consider resurfacing their greens, if financially possible.

USGA (Throssell) continued from page 10

on the latest management techniques and products. A valuable way to utilize Larry's expertise is to have him audit your turf management programs. He can suggest new ways of implementing some practices, new products that are worth trying and perhaps even ways to save a few dollars.

If you are looking to improve the playing conditions on your golf course in 2015, schedule a visit with Larry Gilhuly in 2015. It will be money well spent. Larry can be reached at lgilhuly@usga.org or 253-858-2266.

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 & Prairies GCSA members. (This article can only be reproduced with written permission of the author).

(left) Jason Busch,, The Powder Horn, Chris Thomas, Riverton Country Club

Our Fantastic Meeting continued from page 1

forward to bringing this great speaker to benefit a larger audience since. Great material, great insight, practical implementation value, and an enjoyable speaker. Horgan, a professor at the University of Minnesota, is the university turfgrass extension specialist, and he travels around the world giving lectures on nutrient fate, fertilizer management, water conservation strategies and general turfgrass management. His research focuses on creating common sense solutions for the practitioner of today and future turfgrass managers.

Skip Heinz has been working in the golf industry for 30+ years. He is a founding member of the International Golf Course Equipment Managers Association, and currently serves as vice president. Heinz also spent time as a golf course superintendent, and has been through several construction projects. In 2002, he made the decision to go back to equipment management, his first true love for the industry. Heinz's most recent stops have included Tiburon Golf Club, Naples, Florida, The Philadelphia Cricket Club, Flourtown, Penn., and Isleworth Golf and Country Club, Windermere, Florida. Heinz currently serves as the equipment and facility manager for Belfair Plantation Golf Club in Bluffton, South Carolina.

Cale Bigelow, Ph.D., has been the Associate Professor of Agronomy, Purdue University, since 2008. In addition to participation in many state and regional turfgrass conferences around the country, he has lectured on turfgrass management in

Japan, Norway and the Czech Republic. Bigelow explains, "The purpose of my research program is to provide practical information that enables turf managers of all abilities to grow the highest quality turf using the fewest management inputs (e.g. mowing, fertilization, irrigation and pesticides). This is being accomplished by emphasizing adapted turfgrass species and cultivar selection, proper establishment methods and employing sound cultural practices with an emphasis on soil fertility and nutrient management related issues."

Also participating will be Kima Caddell to assist with proper pesticide recording keeping, and Dave Phillips will help you to navigate around the GCSAA website!

(1) Excerpt from article by Joe Rominiak's April 4, 2013 Association Now's blog about Dr. Michio Kaku on "How the Future of Associations Rests on the 'Caveman Principle.'"



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A MASTERS PLAN

Jason Lamb
Sidney Country Club, Sidney, Mont.



Wow, is it just me? Did summer fly by this year? For those of us in the northeastern corner of Montana, the spring was very cool and wet. We only had a handful of 90+ days in July. And, before I know it, all of my college and high school crewmembers were leaving for school. But we, like many, will head into fall tasks. Then comes the always present question, what do you do in the winter?

That is an interesting question. I know I always get a little smirk on my face when I hear that question. I could go on to bore those who ask, and you, with the endless tasks we do during the winter to prepare for the following season: unbury the office, equipment maintenance, project planning and snow removal are usual tasks. These are things that must be done, yes, but what do you do personally to prepare for the next year? Anyone who knows me knows I am always willing to give my opinion. And, since this is my article, here are some ways I feel we, as superintendents, assistants and industry members, should spend our winters.

First and foremost, spend time with your family. They suffer during those busy summer months, when you leave before they wake and get home just in time to tuck them into bed. A great reality check is when your four-year old tells you, “You work too much.” So, spend time with them. Build snowmen, go to school events, drop them off at school and pick them up. Take them for frozen yogurt in the dead of winter. In short, reconnect with your family.

Then, work on yourself. Take the time to attend the local PPGCSA meetings. Mingle with your peers; regale them with stories of your triumphs and failures. Attend the GIS when possible. I know this is not in everyone’s budget every year, but it should be. And besides, the first one is free. Turn it into

continued page 20



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you cannot get away for the whole tournament, I would at least try for the practice round and par 3 tournament on Wednesday. These are also the only times you can take a camera onto the course to get pictures.

Now, you may think there is no way you can afford to attend The Masters. It is not as expensive as you may think. Your admit-



Yes, I know this may be attainable only for the Class "A" superintendents. If the personal growth and achievement does not drive you to become a Class "A," The Masters should call you to this level. I have had the privilege to attend twice in the last few years, both times with my PGA Professional and both times Bubba Watson won. The first time, I went Wednesday thru Friday, hopped a plane Saturday and watched Sunday at home. I spent most of that first trip with my jaw dragging on the perfectly manicured grass and my eyes so wide open I may have only blinked twice per day. It is an incredible place. We walked every inch of the course that we were allowed. We spoke with Augusta National members, and maintenance staff and managed to watch a little golf as well, from 30' off the 18th green. Set your chair up on the green when you arrive, wander around watching players and the grass grow. When you return, your stuff will be where you placed it. I am still in awe of how well the tournament is run. They rebuilt a bathroom overnight after a huge tree destroyed it during the practice round. The staff is awesome, polite and a joy to be around. And the bathroom attendants are something you need to experience for yourself.

The second time I went was in 2014, this time Wednesday thru Sunday. Again, it was the same incredible experience. My jaw still drug, but I did manage to blink a few more times. The weekend crowd is a level all unto itself. Smaller player field means bigger cheers and more excitement, mixed with the drama and history of The Masters. It is truly an experience. If

tance into the course is free with your gold card and ID. They even have a special line for us. Hotels in Augusta and immediate surrounding areas may border just beyond insanity, but even a 1.5- hour drive north to say, Columbia, SC, can get you hotel rooms in the \$150 range. You can fly into Columbia for not that much more expense and rent a car for your daily travels. Food at The Masters is very inexpensive: \$1.50 to \$3.00 for sandwiches. You really should try at least 1 pimento cheese sandwich, although I think it is more of a southern thing. Beverages range from \$1.50 to \$4.00, if you choose to partake of the fermented grain. One word of caution to us northern boys: hot humid weather plus too many beers and you may not remember too much of your Masters' experience. Wear comfortable shoes for walking. We averaged between 10 and 15 miles per day, just watching different groups. Lots and lots of sunscreen is also a requirement. Quality sunglasses are also vital because the grass is so green it will



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hurt your eyes. The one huge thing you will not need is your cell phone; they are not allowed at any time. It can be so quiet, you can almost hear the Dogwoods bark.

The people you meet there have interesting stories. Some have been coming to The Masters for more than 50 years. Some travel from all over the world, others have a 15-minute drive. There is plenty of time to converse with them, waiting for groups to come through to the vantage point of your choice. It is amazing whom you will meet at The Masters. I ran into our own Pete Grass (they will let anyone in) not once, but both times I was there. I am pretty sure I saw Dane Gamble in one of the galleries this last year, as well.

In short, I have found The Masters a great way to recharge my batteries and prepare me for the onslaught of challenges that come with our northern summers. I would like to attend as many times as I can during my career. I also hope to add the other PGA Tour events as well. I hope to take my spouse to the US Open in Washington in 2015. But even if seeing a world class golf course and hunting for Annual Bluegrass, which I did find among the immaculately maintained turf, is not what you find rewarding, the point is find something that does recharge you. Our jobs demand a lot of our families and ourselves. Every once in a while, we need to stop, smell the Azaleas and watch someone else's grass grow. And that is my opinion.

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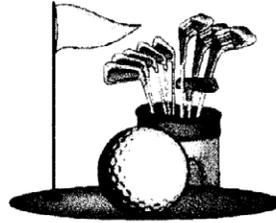


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