

Grass Makes History

Peaks & Prairies GCSA member, Peter Grass, CGCS, hasn't taken the attitude that he has done his part. Nor has he excused himself after years of service on boards, committees, and volunteering in general – both in his profession and his community. Grass's dedication of service has now culminated to serving as the President of GCSAA – a position elected to by his peers at the 2016 Golf Industry Show in San Diego.

Grass made history with this election. Peter Grass, CGCS, is the first nine-hole superintendent to serve as the GCSAA president. It will be an exciting whirlwind for Grass balancing responsibilities between his facility, Hiland Golf Club, Billings, Mont., along with an association active internationally and working everyday as it relates to the mission statement, *"GCSAA is dedicated to serving its members, advancing their profession and enhancing the enjoyment, growth and vitality of the game of golf."*

Engaged leaders manage to make it all happen – somehow... somehow. It is often the experiences along the way that offers the value to share with others.

We are proud Pete Grass is our guy. We benefit year after year



from his participation and his insight. And we are thankful he cares as much today about his profession and his associations as he ever has.

Pete & Charlene Grass

PPGCSA Events:
Scholarship/Education Golf Challenge
Montana and Wyoming Courses TBA
PPGCSA Fall Meeting & Trade Show
October 25-27, 2016, Billings, Mont.

WSGA Grant Supports Continuing Education

We appreciate the long-term relationship we share with the Wyoming State Golf Association. As expenses continue to rise, it is, and has always been, the goal of Peaks & Prairies GCSA to offer affordable continuing education. With the assistance of the WSGA, we are able to keep our members up-to-date with practical solutions to the challenges faced on golf courses in the region. The \$1,000 WSGA grant received assists in keeping our registration affordable so all courses may participate, regardless of budget size.

Cool Opportunity for Allied Partners, too

When leaders of the GCSAA chapters, or even unrelated associations across the country gather, conversation often turns to the event participation percentages of the core classification compared to the supportive allied partners. It isn't uncommon for the allied partners to be 40-70% of the attendees. This can be very frustrating for allied partners.

The above is not a problem for Peaks & Prairies GCSA. In fact, we would encourage more allied partners to attend our "Almost" Spring Meeting! With nearly 50 courses in the region represented by nearly 70 turf professionals, we only had about five allied companies in attendance.

The meeting in the spring offers a laid-back approach for our allied partners. You still have a large number of course represented under one roof – and a percentage of these attendees never attend the fall meeting. You don't have to wrangle booth setup or be tied down for a show. You are free to rub elbows, as they say, and just hang out.

As we all know – relationships are so important in any business. The "Almost" Spring Meeting offers an opportunity to begin – or strengthen – a relationship.

We encourage all of our members to take advantage of what each event offers! Each is unique in its own way.



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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

Using Your Available Resources

Dan Rootes

Ponderosa Butte Golf Course, Colstrip, Mont.



On this leap year morning, I sit here wondering what in the world the spring of 2016 has in store for us in the superintendent profession. Temperatures here in Colstrip hit the high 60s and stayed there for at least five days straight. What does this mean? Well, we all are far too familiar with what the early spring means - early golf. And if any of you smaller courses out there are like mine, that can mean many long hard days ahead.

Being from a small community can pose challenges, but trying to run a golf course in one brings up certain challenges that require an imagination to solve. The golfer expectations are the same as anywhere in the world, but the resources we have to draw from are quite different when you're in the middle of nowhere. I relied primarily on high school and college kids for my employees and they rarely could get away from school to come work for me in April. This year, it looks like I will need my employees to start in March. I may have solved this problem a few years ago. I was in the local coffee shop when I looked over at the table of retirees. I know these fellows are in every morning at 7:00 a.m., solving all the world's problems and just enjoying the golden years of their lives. I was desperate for help and on a whim asked if any of them wanted to come out and do a little mowing for me. Surprisingly half of the table jumped at the chance. Three years later I still employ two of those gentlemen on a part-time basis.

Another resource that I have begun using more over the years are the social networks. Not like the youth of today are doing, but a more adult way of using things. Being 120 miles away from the nearest place that sells an underground irrigation valve can be challenging when you have the one valve that will not open after isolating a section of the course for a geyser repair (discovered during the 5 a.m. walk thru). Talking the board into having such items on hand failed at the last three

board meetings, so I'm figuring out how to get water back on to half my greens. In comes the wonderful world of Facebook. Between my profile and my crews', we can reach thousands of people with a request for pickup in Billings. In a matter of minutes I usually have responses from dozens of people willing to help out the local golf course. I haven't figured out how to take it a step further and include installation in the offer, but they are more than happy to deliver parts in our time of need.

One thing we all have in common, as far as resources, are the people in our organization. Some of the best education I have received has been in the hallways and around the break tables at the spring and fall meetings. Whether it is talking to Dane about politicians or Sean about his latest adventure across the pond, the people in PPGCSA are some of the greatest resources in our industry. The next time you are at a meeting, don't just sit in the back of the room. Take advantage of your colleagues. There is a mountain of information surrounding you. It is only a question away. I have learned over the past ten years in this industry that all superintendents love to teach. Most of them don't realize they are doing it, but they love to teach young people the way of the industry. Nobody likes to see anyone fail. That is the beauty of our profession; it is like one team out there. So please get out and network and take advantage of the free resources all around you.

In closing, I would like to congratulate Pete Grass CGCS, Hilands Golf Club. Pete was recently elected President of GCSAA at the national conference in San Diego. He is a hard working superintendent that will not only serve GCSAA well, but will represent Peaks & Prairies GCSA honorably. Pete is yet another resource that we in the great northwest have at our finger tips.

Peaks & Prairies GCSA Extension/Resource Service

**Specify you are a Peaks & Prairies GCSA member*

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Each fall we all have checklists to prepare our turf for the winter. We all know the better we put our course to bed in the fall, the greater our chances of meeting or exceeding our expectations for turf conditions the following season. In our climate, getting through the winter with a minimal amount of damage to the turf is always the best way to ensure success the following season. Our checklists share common items like blowing out the irrigation system and applying snow mold fungicides. Depending on your situation, it may also include various forms of fertilization, spraying colorants or anti-transpirants, erecting snow fences or animal barriers, and applying heavy topdressing or covering greens with some sort of blanket for the winter. The list can go on and on, depending on the specifics of the site. When I arrived at Rock Creek Cattle Company in the fall of 2011, I thought I had a pretty good idea what it was going to take to get the turf through the winter in pristine condition. I was wrong.

One thing that was evident from the day I walked on property was that the local elk population was sizeable and they

Reducing Elk Damage at Rock Creek Cattle Company

Rick Hathaway
Rock Creek Cattle Company
Deerlodge, Mont.

craved our irrigated Kentucky Bluegrass fairways. The powers that be were not interested in installing some sort of electric fence around the property, which I knew had been successful around other courses. The damage to the course was somewhat regarded as the price you have to pay for playing golf in such a beautiful setting. As much as our members and guests thought it was a thrill to see the elk while on property, it certainly takes a toll on your labor resources trying to clean up the droppings, replace divots, and repair hoof marks on the greens every day before play. It took at least two staff members - per day - doing

nothing but repairing elk damage, all day long.

I started experimenting with some repellents that fall. They were geared more towards the landscape industry to keep deer, elk, rabbits, etc from browsing on landscape ornamentals and not designed so much for large acreage applications like golf course fairways.

We could see no definitive benefit to any of the repellents we tried that fall; they all had some sort of mostly disagreeable odor, and to get any real benefit they were not going to be cost effective. We did find one repellent based on dried pig's blood that seemed to show promise, but the subsequent increase in mountain lion sightings was not a side effect we were willing to accept.

The process of putting the course to bed in the fall of 2011 went about as well as I could have expected. In the spring of 2012, we had almost no snow mold or desiccation damage. What we did have was turf loss in the "bird bath depressions" on the fairways that held puddles over the winter, thousands upon thousands of dead spots from elk urine, and many more irregular areas where turf had been browsed right down to the crown by the elk over the winter. The herd that hung out on the golf course all winter was about 800 head. It turns out the elk will dig through the snow to get to the succulent turf underneath, chewing it right down to the crown. All of that browsing and hanging out on the turf the entire winter leads to literally tons of droppings, which needs to be cleaned up the following spring, as well as dealing with those dead urination spots.

Fortunately, all of the elk damage was nothing out of the ordinary for the membership, so it really wasn't much of an issue except for me. After cleaning up all of the droppings first

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Elk Damage continued from page 4

thing in the spring, along with our fairway aerification cleanup and seeding, by the member-guest event in July the urine spots had mostly recovered. However, mid June we ended up sodding about 10,000 square feet of damage in the low-lying “bird baths” that hadn’t healed.

Late summer of 2012, the elk returned once the forage in the high country started drying up. I really didn’t have much of a plan to deal with them, maybe just a few more experiments with repellants and hope for the best. One thing we were trying to improve for the

winter of 2012-13 was to reduce damage from water puddling in the fairways. In the fall we started prescriptively topdressing any nuisance depressions and around the drain nodes in the fairways.

That fall, Tim Kassler, assistant superintendent, mentioned that the elk activity seemed to be either reduced or spottier on one of our most notorious fairways. Since he was doing most of the topdressing that fall. He put the correlation together between where he had topdressed and the reduced elk activity. He started zeroing in on this hypothesis though the remainder of the fall, and, by the end of October, he was sure that the

correlation existed. Going into that winter, just after we made our snow mold application, we decided to do some larger scale test plots with hope the sand would continue to deter the elk throughout the winter. The rate we used was around 10 yards of sand per acre.

The snow melted that spring... and we had success!!! A picture is worth a thousand words, and as you can see in the picture above there is a significant discrepancy between the turf quality on the left and right halves of that fairway. It worked even better than anticipated; the turf on the right was browsed right

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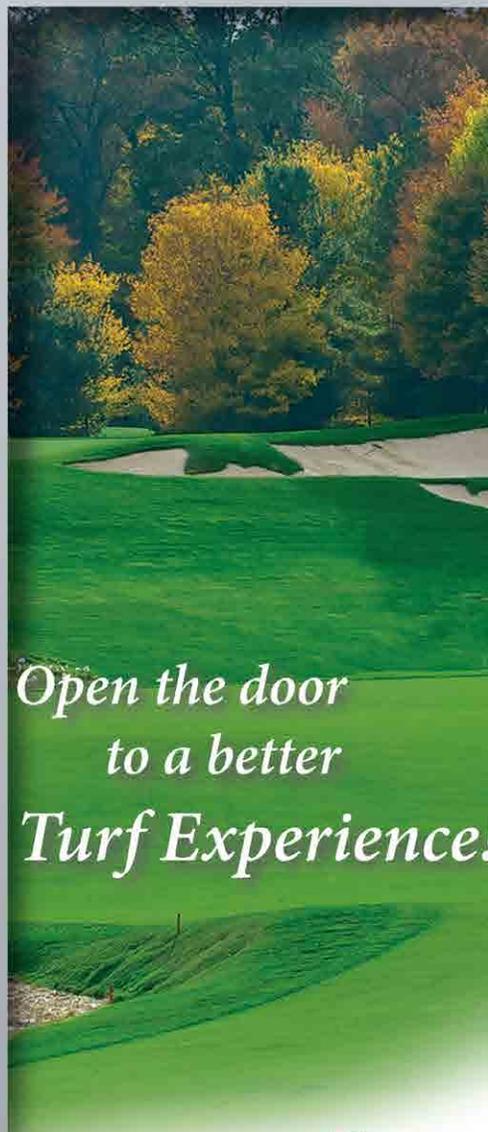
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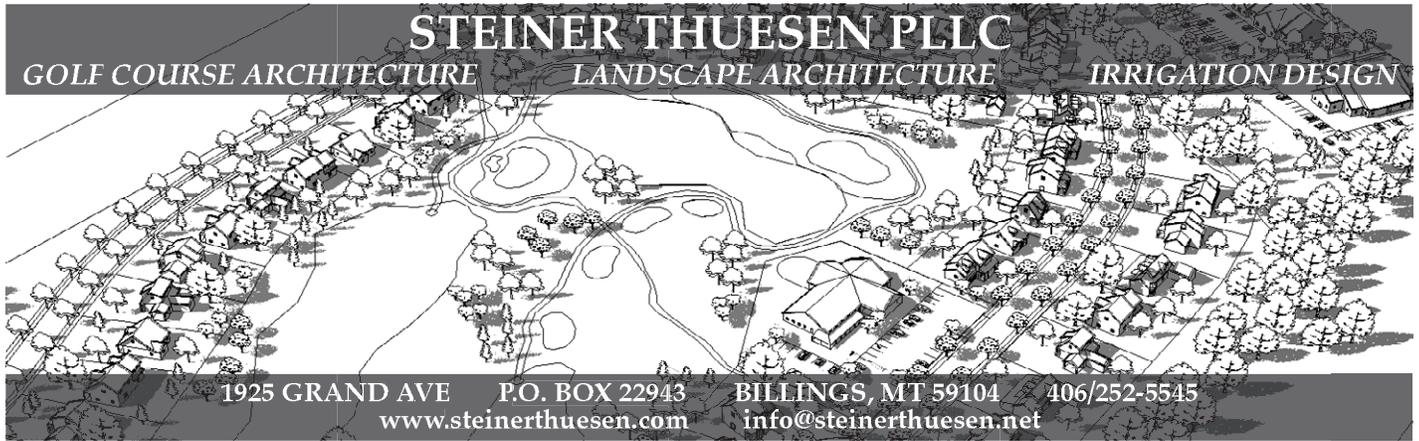
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Elk Damage continued from page 6

down to the crown and while the elk spent time browsing, they also did their business that goes along with it. There is a great deal of droppings and urine spots on the right side of the fairway. I'd say on the left side this activity was reduced by 90%. What a difference as the turf started waking up in the spring! The left side of the fairway was pristine by the first of May and the right side took until well into June to catch up in terms of color, density, and uniformity.

There was no doubt we were on to something. We wanted to expand the program wall to wall the following winter. We know it would take us the better part of a month to get that much sand on the golf course, so we started the first week in October and continued through the first week in November. During that stretch we also had the benefit of reduced the elk activity during the month of October - while we were still open - thereby reducing the amount of manpower it took to clean up the course for play every day.

The results in the spring of 2014 were not as dramatic wall to wall as we'd hoped from our trials the previous year. While we were in much better shape overall, it was obvious the areas

that received topdressing first (early October) were not as protected as those receiving treatment just before the snow flew in November. We thought the sand must have worked too far down in the canopy to be as effective while we were still irrigating and having traffic over the course.

Heading into the 2014-15 winter, we continued to think about how improve our results. We hypothesized that the reason the topdressing procedure had any affect at all was because the elk didn't like chewing on grit. If you were an elk, chewing on grit continuously would lead to your teeth wearing down prematurely. Once you wear your teeth away, you're a dead elk. At least that's my theory; it's sort of wired into their brain to avoid grit. So, if we needed to cover the golf course with gritty material as late in the season as possible, our topdressing equipment and the logistics of hauling the material over the 300-acre footprint of the golf course limited us.

We wondered if pulling plugs would bring enough grit to the surface to have the same effect as topdressing. I remembered a conversation maybe 15 years ago with Mike Saffel, while he was at The Powder Horn. He would aerify his golf course last thing in the fall and leave the plugs on the surface to

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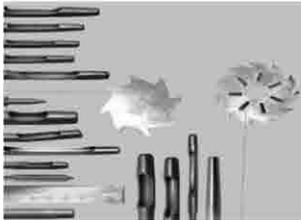
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the first of July. The rest of the fairway (and attached 11th fairway) was in fantastic shape by the middle of May, after we picked up the plugs and mowed them a couple of times.

So, given our trial and error over the last four years, here's where we are at today in terms of our fall checklist for deterring elk browsing at Rock Creek. We start lightly topdressing the fairways wall to wall at the end of August when

Elk Damage continued from page 8

deteriorate over the winter, leading to an easier cleanup in the spring. Made sense to me, although I'd never actually tried it. In conjunction with our topdressing, I thought I would give this a try over the winter of 2014-15.

Again, success!!! The photograph above shows our 10th fairway. The start of the fairway (in the foreground) is relatively exposed, so I had reservations about aerifying it so late in the season, fearing desiccation. I decided to leave that area, along with a couple others, un-aerified going into winter. That spring I'd say that desiccation really wasn't an issue, but all of the elk browsing certainly was! That area didn't heal completely until

the elk pressure starts to pick up. This is very light, about five yards per acre, and we basically topdress the entire course until mid-October. Topdressing does a good job of keeping the elk browsing on the turf to a minimum through the late part of the golf season. Starting around October 15, we topdress the entire golf course a little heavier, one last time. We apply our fall fungicide (we use PCNB) starting about October 28 and immediately behind that application we have two fairway aerifiers pulling plugs on about a 2x4 spacing, at least three-inches deep, to pull up as much soil as we can and we leave it on the surface. That was our procedure this past fall and I'm looking forward to seeing if it all comes together this spring.



Is becoming a Grassroots Ambassador on your to-do list for 2016?

Most of you are in the middle of spring preparation for the 2016 season, and I find that this is also prime time to reflect on your personal growth and the goals that you may have set for the year.

Whether setting goals with my crew or setting goals with my supervisor, I have always utilized goals to help fulfill my

responsibilities – and even guide my career. I would like to take this opportunity to perhaps suggest a goal or two that might allow you to grow professionally.

Undoubtedly, you have heard of the GCSAA Grassroots Ambassador Program. You may have even toyed with the notion of becoming an Ambassador but felt that it would be too much of an undertaking. I want to encourage you to take a second look.

The goal of the Grassroots Ambassador program is simple. By the end of the day, GCSAA would like to make sure that each member of congress knows our industry's position on a particular issue across all fifty states. This will be accomplished by matching a GCSAA member with each member of congress, as well as each state senator. GCSAA will support the Grassroots Ambassadors through training and regular communi-

cation and offers the opportunity to attend the Grassroots Ambassadors

boot camp at the GIS. As an ambassador you will not only be that person that conveys our position, but you will also serve as the go-to person for that congressman or congresswoman when they have a particular question regarding our industry. In a nutshell, you are simply developing a relationship with that person or their staff member and you do that by just telling your story.

The Northwest has been a hotbed for activists that are trying to take pesticides off the market. Cities such as Durango, Boulder, Portland, Seattle, Spokane, and Eugene are just some that are constantly under pressure to outlaw the use of pesticides. If you are a pesticide user in these areas, you are commonly viewed as the enemy.

I know I'm preaching to the choir but we need to tell our story as to why golf courses are safe for the environment; explain how when used properly, and by the label, pesticides are safe to use. Ken Gorzycki, CGCS of Horseshoe Bay Resort in Texas said it best, "If we are not at the table then we are going to be on the menu."

If you would like to serve as a Grassroots Ambassador, please contact me at dhipps@gcsaa.org or contact Kaelyn Seymour directly at kseymour@gcsaa.org. Also, Ambassadors receive .25 service points per year for completing their 2 member touches per year, and .50 education point per year for completing 50% of the events on the engagement calendar.

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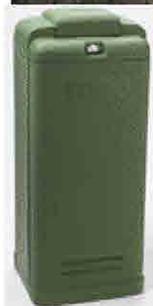
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SPRING HAS SPRUNG

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

Judging by my conversations with those attending the “Almost” Spring Meeting in Helena,

and what I see in Billings, spring is upon us - and happening fast. Many superintendents have already fired up their irrigations systems and have put them to good use. And a few have even mowed greens once.

These are all good actions to take. With the warm weather of spring upon us, superintendents need to take action based on the weather and not the calendar. An extremely dry winter, at least in eastern Montana, means it is time to irrigate. There are a couple of other early spring actions that might need to take place earlier than you normally would.

Annual Bluegrass Seedhead Control

Many superintendents use ethephon (Proxy, Ethephon 2SL, other trade names) to control annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) seedheads on putting greens. Air temperature drives the development of annual bluegrass seedheads. The higher the temperatures, the faster annual bluegrass seedheads develop and become noticeable on putting greens. With warmer than normal winter and spring temperatures, annual bluegrass seedhead development is ahead of normal.

For an application of ethephon to be successful, it must be applied before annual bluegrass seedheads have emerged. Hopefully you have adjusted your ethephon application schedule to account for the much higher than normal winter and spring temperatures. In fact, by the time you read this article, I would expect that many of you have already made your second or third ethephon application this spring.

If you do see a few annual bluegrass seedheads on your greens, by all means go ahead and make an application of ethephon. You will not control those seedheads visible at the time of application but you will prevent many unseen annual bluegrass seedheads from developing. The control won't be 100%, but it will be better than if you didn't make the application at all.

If you ever wonder how effective an application of ethephon is, cover a 4'x 4' portion of the back of two or three greens with a piece of plywood before spraying. Mark the putting green turf at the corners of the covered area with a dot of turf marking paint. Observe the untreated areas throughout spring to determine the effectiveness of seedhead control.

Annual bluegrass seedhead development is initiated in the fall, triggered by shorter days and declining temperatures. Inconsistent annual bluegrass seedhead control with spring

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ethephon applications lead Shawn Askew, Ph.D., Virginia Tech, to investigate fall applications of ethephon to control annual bluegrass seedheads the following spring. His research shows great promise and I think a late fall application of ethephon will become standard practice. For more on Shawn Askew, Ph.D.'s research watch the video at:
http://oak.ppws.vt.edu/~s.../Seedhead_Suppression_Long_720.mp4

Topdressing Putting Greens

Consistent, frequent topdressing of putting greens throughout the growing season is the single most important cultural practice to provide healthy, high performing putting greens. Do everything in your power to develop and follow a consistent, frequent topdressing program with a proper sand on your greens and you will have fewer problems both short and long term. Listening to Bud White, Bud White Golf Solutions, at the "Almost" Spring Meeting and watching his slides have only confirmed the importance of a sound topdressing program.

With warmer winter and spring temperatures the grass should start to grow earlier than usual. This means your topdressing program should start earlier than usual as well. Do not let a thatch layer develop this spring by the growing turf before you apply your first application of topdressing. Light topdressing applications applied weekly during periods of peak growth have worked well for superintendents.

Fairy Ring Control

Mike Fidanza, Ph.D., Penn State University – Berks Campus, spoke about fairy ring control at the Almost Spring Meeting in Helena. Mike has conducted numerous research projects on fairy ring. A few of the highlights from Mike's presentation were:

- There are more than 60 species of basidiomycete fungi that have been identified causing fairy rings.
- The large number of fungal species that cause fairy ring make it difficult to obtain consistent fungicidal control within a golf course and from one golf course to the next golf course.
- Fairy rings can be active anytime of the year. Symptoms are most common in the summer when it is hot and dry.
- The fungal mycelia that cause fairy ring make the soil hydrophobic and that is why symptoms are most pronounced when it is hot and dry.

- Thatch accumulation and wet/dry cycles are the two factors most commonly associated with fairy ring.
- Regularly controlling thatch and avoiding wet/dry cycles will help reduce fairy ring. Do not let the soil become extremely dry between irrigations. Allowing the soil to dry to a moderate amount of moisture is fine; letting the soil become excessively dry and then watering favors fairy ring.
- Growing healthy turf is the number one priority when trying to reduce or prevent fairy ring from developing. Anything that favors the growth of the turf will reduce fairy ring. Good soil moisture management is at the top of the list. Avoid letting the soil become extremely dry.
- An ideal control strategy consists of three steps:
 1. Aerify – aerify and then water to wet the soil profile
 2. Apply a wetting agent – ideally apply the wetting agent alone
 3. Apply a fungicide – apply a fungicide the day after the wetting agent application according to label directions and water in the fungicide with approximately 0.1 inches of water before the fungicide dries on the turf canopy.
- Fungicide recommendations for fairy ring control, and for many other turfgrass diseases can be found at:
<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/ppa/ppa1/ppa1.pdf>
- If the fungicide you selected to control fairy ring does not work as well as hoped, try a different active ingredient the next time you apply a fungicide for fairy ring control. Remember, with over 60 species of fungi identified as causing fairy ring it is possible that the fungal species on your fairways was not affected by the active ingredient you tried first.

If you are interested in more information on fairy rings, search for Mike Fidanza and/or fairy rings and you will find much of Mike's research results. Mike also hosts a site on Twitter at #friskyfairyringfriday where superintendents and others can post pictures of fairy rings and commiserate over our shared struggles to manage the problem. Mike welcomes you to join in the fun and hopefully learn a few new things about fairy rings.

Hopefully the wind hasn't got the best of you this spring.

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.

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Mercedes Lamb

It Is Relevant at This Time

by Jason Lamb, Sidney Country Club, Sidney, Mont.

As I sit with the keyboard at my fingertips (a modern version of “pen in hand”), I struggle with my topic. So, as in most cases, I ask the most inner-thought-provoking person I know: my bride. Who else could tell me what I am thinking and feeling? After all, she knows me better than anyone. Her words of wisdom, “What is relevant now?”

That opens a lot of doors, does it not? It could be the political parade that seems to haunt every newspaper headline. However, the upcoming elections may not be appropriate here. Would you like to read how unusually warm/dry winters lead into hot/dry summers? No, that just reminds us of work. Oh, here is a good one: the ever-growing regulations imposed upon those environmentally unfriendly, water-wasting, have-to-be-

polluting, always-green golf courses. No wait, I read in a world-renowned magazine (GCM) that those may not be accurate descriptors of our profession. And so GCSAA has numerous dedicated staff members fighting an uphill battle to educate and clear the good name of the golf industry. Plus, that also may be a reminder of the work that lays buried in the freshly falling snow (which is currently hydrating our dormant turf). I could touch on the insanely relevant topic of our “local boy makes good” on the national scene (i.e., Peter Grass, CGCS, becoming the GCSAA President). By the way, congratulations Pete! You will be awesome, great, groovy, rad, gnarly or whatever word means super impressive and extraordinary. But, even

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that does not strike a chord with my creative consciousness.

Lately, I have been grappling with relevance much closer to home...me, and how I relate to the world around me. I am not sure what triggered this deep and thought-provoking path I am about to take you. Maybe it is the rash of suicides that have plagued our state. Maybe it is the members of my club who recently have undergone serious medical procedures. Maybe it is the thoughts I have every time I leave my grandparents, or even parents, that it could be the last time I see them. But, what most likely has caused this microscope to fall upon my life was my last doctor's visit. He told me I am encroaching upon high

blood pressure. I need to make some lifestyle changes: watch what I eat, cut back on sodium, and exercise. I pleaded with him not to take away my coffee (my mother's milk, my reason for getting up in the morning). He said I could keep the coffee, just not the two pots a day I was drinking.

Moderation, he said, is the key - everything in moderation. At this point, some of you are thinking. "Borderline high blood pressure ... is that all you got? I have more to worry about than that - pulling off the breathing machine that I use for my sleep apnea, stumbling into the bathroom for the third time in the night, and knocking over the stack of prescription bottles lining the bathroom counter (because I did not want to turn on the bathroom light and wake up my 34-year-old son and family that recently moved into my basement when he was down-

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sized at work). And to that I say, "Yes, it sounds like you have bigger problems. But it is not the actual problems that worry me." It is not the thought of what medical monkey is around the next corner waiting to attack me and steal my banana (or monkey pickle, as my grandpa called them). My worry is what I leave behind that is relevant to me.

My relevance is not the job I love. It is not the golf course that can consume most of my waking hours during the season. It is not the breathtaking scenes that can be had in the early morning hours and late evenings when the colors seem to mix across the sky creating a masterpiece that an artist would envy. That is not what has become increasingly relevant as I journey down my road. My relevance is my family. My wife and kids are my world. They are why I do what I do; they are why I work so hard to provide to meet their needs. That is the thought process of one of the roads I have been down. But now, I am seeing a fork in my road. Maybe the path I have been on is causing some of my health issues. Maybe being at work all the time may not be the best way to provide for my family. Maybe being more present in my family's daily lives is a



a better way of providing what they need. The Siri voice on my internal Google Map may be leading me down a new path, where I find ways to spend more time with my family. Does that mean neglecting my job? Absolutely not. It means organizing and prioritizing my job. It means being more efficient with my time. It means less time with electronics and more time with a ball/glove or tea parties - where the imaginary food fills you up and the gossip with the stuffed bear next to you is so good you just have to another cup. It is being home at night to tuck my kids into bed or read them stories I grew up with, from things called books (not an iPad). It is having meaningful discussion with my spouse - asking how her day was and truly listening, not pretending to listen while wondering if I remembered to lock the pump house door. It is rediscovering small

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Relevant continued from page 18

things about my spouse that have somehow been forgotten. It is taking my family out on the course with dinner and blankets then lying back to look at the stars. It is surprising them by coming home in the middle of the afternoon and not going back for the rest of the day. It is calling my brothers and parents and talking to them, not just about the weather, but actually connecting with them. They probably are struggling with some of

the same things I am. It is a lot of things. These are what I am finding relevant to me.

I will leave one thought for those of you who have managed to wade through all of this emotional babbling that has just consumed your last few minutes. Here it is, and it is a doozy. If you knew you had only one year to live, what meaningful things would you change? I don't mean the crazy bucket list stuff; I mean the things that are relevant to you and those most important to you.

Keep it on Your Calendar - 2017 Combined Event!

Northwest GCSA Chapter Turfgrass Expo 2017

October 16 & 17, 2017 - the Peaks & Prairies GCSA, Inland Empire GCSA and Idaho GCSA will come together for one grand meeting and trade show at the Coeur d'Alene Resort, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

This event will be held in place of our usually Fall Meeting & Trade Show - for this one year. In addition to can't miss education opportunity, there will be a friendly golf event between chapters.



Turf Tips from Whitetail

Rick Mooney

Whitetail Golf Club, McCall, Idaho

December 2015, Grass Clippings

Winter has arrived here in the West Central Mountains.

We've received eight inches of snow and hope it will stick

around to keep the ground insulated from freezing. We had a great season in 2015, in large part because we weren't growing in or sodding new turf in the spring, like we have done in recent years.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain to my fellow members some of the unique practices we use here at Whitetail. While on the topic of potentially having to grow in new grass due to ice damage, I would like to share a couple things we've done in the past to help manipulate Mother Nature's grasp. I had our mechanics turn our John Deere bunker rake into a



water squeegee by welding steel side supports to the existing front blade with two 45-degree angles on each side. We then mounted three pieces of thick rubber to the bottom of the frame. Just like that, we have a power squeegee. You may be asking yourself how would this be beneficial on a golf course? If our greens are frozen, and we receive rain (with or without a small amount of snow), we have to act quickly before the water or slush turns into ice. The power squeegee allows us to get water off the greens surface in a hurry. We've dodged bullets on more than one occasion using this machine.

Another practice we use during late winter is finding the right product to melt snow if the conditions and pressure call for it. In the past, we've tried anything from black sand to a light weight granular designed to absorb water on baseball

infields. Last year, we tried a new product called Profile Porous Ceramic Greens Grade. A PPC particle is made up of

You may be asking yourself how would this be beneficial on a golf course?

74% pore space with 39% capillary (water) pores and 35% non-capillary (air) pores. We used walk-behind

fertilizer spreaders early in the morning while the snow was frozen to spread the product. We put (4) 50 lb. bags down per green. What we liked most about this product was the gradual melting cycle. Rapid melting, without allowing the surface water time to drain off before re-freezing, results in the "freeze thaw" factor, which we all know isn't a good thing. We also used Profile to melt snow on our bentgrass tees. Another benefit was that there was no clean up or heavy areas of black sand to mess with. We noticed a quicker spring green up, too. We use Profile for our divot mix during the golf season, as well. Ideally, we would like to leave our greens and tees alone during the winter and let Mother Nature do her thing, but that isn't always the case.



(We want to read about your tips - contact Lori)

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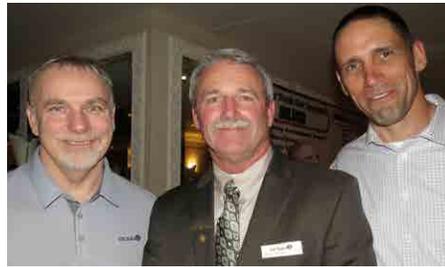
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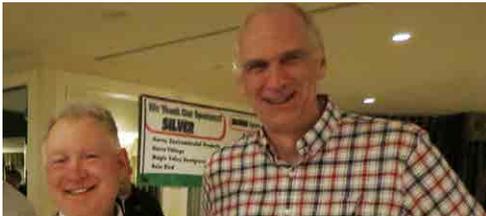
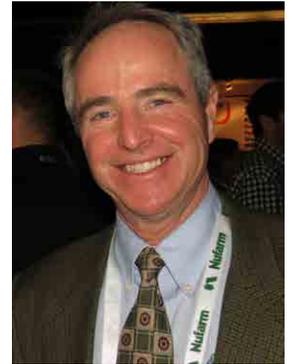
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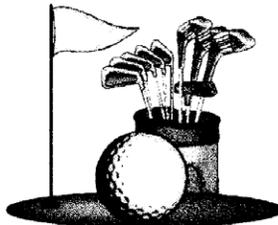


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