

## Rounds4Research Auction

We appreciate all courses who donated, those who spread the word, and our silent auction team chaired by Cole Clark. The 2018 Rounds4Research auction nationally raised over \$313,000 - smashing previous records. Local results will be released in the near future.

## Montana Scholarship Tournament

Anthony Benes, golf course superintendent, and Brent Vardsveen, assistant superintendent, had Old Works in great condition, which far exceeds the usual spring expectations. We appreciate the entire facility for welcoming our group for the Montana Peaks & Prairies GCSA Scholarship/Education Golf Event.

The group enjoyed family style seating at the maintenance facility with a wonderful barbecue lunch made by the staff. The group of 56 donned their winter gear for the May event - which leaned towards the "brisk" side.

The Hilands Golf Club team lead by Peter Grass, CGCS, enjoyed bragging rights thanks to their team score of 61.

We enjoyed strong level of support from our allied partners. Please review our sponsor support, along with team results on page 19.

## Last Call for Directory Updates

Our annual membership directory will be going to print soon. Please take a moment to review your personal or company profile and make any needed changes by clicking on "your profile" under the members only tab. All changes are made live to the data base, except for email addresses - which must be changed by Lori.

### *PPGCSA Events:*

*PPGCSA Fall Meeting & Trade Show October 16-18, 2018, Billings Hotel & Convention Center, Billings,*

*PPGCSA Scholarship/Education Golf Event August 7, 2018, Riverton Country Club*

*For more events, visit [ppgcsa.org](http://ppgcsa.org)*

## MSGA 2018 Grant Received

The MSGA continues to be our important partner in the turf industry, and a valuable component in keeping continuing education affordable in our region. We offer our thanks to Wade Altschwager, Anaconda Hills Golf Course for representing our association at the spring MSGA meeting.

Even as the season starts to roll, we are already in receipt of their annual \$5,000 grant.

The annual support of the MSGA and WSGA helps to keep access to our continuing education open to all courses, regardless of budget size.

Please take the time to thank your local state golf association board member.

## A New Chapter for the Fall Meeting & Trade Show

The Billings Hotel & Convention Center will host the 2018 Fall Meeting & Trade Show, October 16-18. The property has the space we require and has undergone several renovations over the years - including installation of new carpet just this year. This conference facility has undergone a few name changes in recent years - but is now back to what it has been most known by in the community.

As we considered different locations for the event - we kept in mind the importance of keeping the entire event at one facility. The square footage required for both the conference and the trade show to be held in separate rooms - along with exterior access to the trade show floor may limit our options, but we have found a property that will not only meet our needs - but will also offer a fresh location!

## 2018 Wyoming Scholarship/ Education Tournament

The Wyoming region will host a tournament at the Riverton Country Club August 7, 2018. More information to come!



*“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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## Peaks & Prairies Golf Course Superintendents Association

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# President's Message



## Jason Lamb

Sidney Country Club, Sidney, Mont.

You are what you eat! As we all enter our extremely busy season, maybe that phrase should be, "You are what you teach." Now might be the time to consider what we do on a daily basis - and why.

I was having a discussion about maintenance practices with Zac, my recently added assistant. Zac completed the Rutgers' Turf Program. He also completed multiple internships at different golf courses, in multiple states, over the past couple of years. I am not just bragging about Zac; I am simply trying to relay why he has a different perception of our maintenance practices. This is the start of my 10th season in Sidney, mostly without an assistant. I have been in turf for almost 24 years. Over those years I have come to do things the way I see as the best and most efficient way, based both on what I was taught in college and through the numerous mentors with whom I have been privileged enough to have worked. So, where is this going? I am not sure, but let's take a ride.

We all have our set patterns, right? We mow fairways three times a week, greens every day and tees Monday, Wednesday and Friday, or something similar, right? What if we didn't? What if we mowed greens every other day and rolled on off days? What if we mowed tees twice a week? Would it cause a decline in tee quality? Would 1.5" rough around greens and along fairways and 2" be acceptable? Or would 3" rough be ok with the membership? What about fertilizer? Is the status quo ok, or should we look at new formulations? Or what about aeration? Could we get away with punching greens only once a year, say in the middle of the summer when the grass is growing strong and recovery time would be shortened? I am not saying everything needs to change, but does everything warrant a new set of eyes?

Since we are looking at everything we are doing on a daily basis, maybe we should also look at what we are teaching our crews, assistants and even our children. Are we doing every-

thing we should? Are we eating and exercising like we should? Are we working the hours required for the job, or could we be more efficient and free up time to be spending with our family and loved ones? I know one of my downfalls is thinking I am the only one who can do some of the jobs. I am realizing that much of my staff has hidden talents. These talents, with proper training, can go a long way to lightening some of my work load.

So, if you are still reading, I guess my sermon for the choir is: It is ok to question what we do and why we do it. It is important for us to look for the hidden talents of our crew; "exploit" those talents to the benefit of all. It is also ok for the teacher (or boss) to become the student sometimes and listen to the ideas of everyone around him/her. If I have learned anything in my short career, it is that I am the first to admit I don't know everything, and, sometimes even nothing, and that is ok. And lastly, people are always watching what you do, so be careful what you teach them.

***"You are what you teach."***

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# Renovations of Plenty!

## Aaron Gransbery, Superintendent Fairmont Hot Springs, Anaconda, Mont.



When I first walked the golf course at Fairmont Hot Springs Resort in March of 2016, I thought my biggest undertaking was going to be recovering the bent/poa greens from the worst case of snow mold I have seen. As big a task as that was, little did I know I was stepping into the first year of what has turned into three seasons of renovations. Bunkers, tees, greens, and, finally, a complete irrigation renovation was on my horizon. Fairmont Hot Springs Golf Course was built in the early 70s;



the modified sand based greens were constructed with slopes from back to front, on some 9 % or more! With the cutting heights and speeds that are attainable these days, a reading of 10 on the Stimpmeter proved too fast for many of these sloping greens. This is why, in 2016, one goal was to renovate three of the most severe greens. Along with decreasing the grade / slope of the three greens, we also were going to renovate the bunkers. Before my current position, the biggest renovation project I was involved with consisted of removing old sand, checking drainage, installing liners and, finally, adding new sand to 60 plus bunkers in north Texas. This was done in house and needless to say, I was glad that Fairmont only had twelve of the hazards.

In the spring of 2016, we hired Kip Kalbrener with Ridgetop Golf to recontour three greens, and reconstruct the bunkers. We eliminated one and enlarged two small bunkers into one larger bunker on two separate holes, making a total of just nine bunkers on the course. The project was set for June of

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**Renovations**  
continued from  
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that year and as it got underway, the weather was starting to get hot. I was hesitant, to say the least, to rip up the greens at that

point. Due to the temps, we decided to expand, level, and resod all of our par three tee boxes instead of the greens; the project was underway and the fun was just beginning. Of the fourteen

locations that were excavated on site, we hit something (pipe, wire, QC's) in every location except two. It was a headache! The



current irrigation maps are not very accurate, and in the past there was a lot of rewiring of the old system, all of which is no more than four inches below grade. You can imagine the rest of the story! Even with all the challenges that the irrigation system presented us, we finished the project and it made a huge improvement to the course. Looking back, the one thing I would change with that portion of the improvements would have been to add liners to the bunkers. I imagine that this will take place down the road.

During the fall and winter of 2016, we began the planning process to replace the 45-year-old irrigation system. Unfortunately, after going out to bid, and receiving a very competitive bid, ownership did not approve the project. With dollars still available for work on the course, the decision was made to contact Ridgetop Golf again for the spring of 2017. This time around we were able to schedule them earlier in the year to recontour three of the most severe greens. The greens were on schedule to be stripped and recontoured, and because we only did three, we decided to reuse the sod. We cut the sod

with a big roll cutter and labeled each roll with a number so that it was put back in the same spot from where it



had been taken. Renovations this past spring also included four more tees to be expanded, leveled,

and sodded, as well as expanding our driving range tee from 5000 to 15000 square feet. Mother Nature cooperated and the project went so smoothly, we were done in two weeks! The greens grew in nicely and we were playing on temps for one month before unveiling the new greens, much to the pleasure of our members.

Fast forward to this past fall and, much to the surprise of everyone involved, ownership approved a complete irrigation system renovation for 2018. Here we go, this is huge! As you all know, an irrigation system is the life blood of a golf course, and our system is in dire need of replacing. Fairmont's irrigation system is 45 years old and gravity fed by a 560,000-gallon tank that sits on a hill approximately 250 feet above the course. This tank serves not only the golf course irrigation system, but also the residents living adjacent to the course's front nine, and the resort. The current piping system is undersized and poorly designed, the biggest main on the course is 6", but most are 4". It is an H design with all of the laterals having



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four dead ends, 1.5" pipe, and at least three heads per station in the fairways, and in some cases, the greens. Needless to say, that pressure and lack of single head control is a big issue. Additionally, everything is running on residential style clocks that are scattered all over the golf course with the ability to only run one station at a time. It takes approximately 12-13 hours to water the entire course in the summer. So, again this winter, we went through the process of putting the project out to bid, and as I am writing this, I am happy to say that with the season rapidly approaching we have hired a contractor. I am anxious to break ground on this project. Referring back to the issues that we had during our first renovations in 2016, I am a bit nervous and anticipate this being a challenging, yet rewarding project. Looking back to when I accepted the position at Fairmont Hot Springs Resort, little did I know that all of these renovations were in my near future. It has been tough at times, but the rewards and knowledge that I have gained throughout these projects greatly outweigh the stress. I am very much looking



forward to getting this next project underway and seeing the benefits it will surely bring to the golf course. If any of you have similar projects in your future, I'm happy to share my experiences and insights, should you like to discuss. I hope all of you have a great 2018 golf season!



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# KANSAS?

**Mike Kitchen, CGCS,  
Teton Pines Resort  
& Country Club,  
Jackson, Wyo.**



Prejudice is something I strive to avoid, so when Lori told me I would be attending the Chapter Leaders Symposium at the GCSAA National Headquarters in Lawrence, Kansas, I was disappointed in myself when my first thought was, “Kansas? Are you kidding me? Kansas is flat, flat, flat. There’s nothing in Kansas but wheat. I don’t want to go to Kansas!” In keeping with my efforts to open my mind and broaden my horizons (as well as serve our chapter), I agreed to go on the trip. To get to Lawrence, you must first fly to Kansas City, Missouri. In the company of Lori, and Josh Benson of The Idaho Chapter, I waited in the Kansas City airport for Jeremiah Farmer of the Inland Empire Chapter so we could all drive to Lawrence together. There really isn’t much to do in the Kansas City airport so we decided to make the most of our time and sample the “local cuisine.” By the time Jeremiah arrived, we had spent a few fun-filled hours enjoying the local flavors. The relatively short drive from the Kansas City airport to Lawrence took us across the Missouri river and past the Kansas NASCAR track. Who knew Kansas had hills and trees? We arrived at the his-

toric Eldridge hotel in downtown Lawrence, dropped off our gear, and promptly headed out on the town to show Jeremiah what we had learned about the local cuisine while we were waiting for him at the airport. While unwinding with our beverages and duck fat fries, we did some research on our historic hotel (i.e. we Googled it). Who knew the Eldridge was haunted? Lori, Jeremiah, and I were delighted when we found out Josh’s room was “The Haunted Room.” Josh, on the other hand, was less than delighted.

The next morning, we headed off to National Headquarters where we were greeted by Leann Cooper and Steve Randall, both Senior Managers at GCSAA. After that, Rhett Evans, CEO of GCSAA, treated us to an inspirational speech about working together. He also discussed GCSAA’s 20,000 by 2020 initiative - GCSAA’s goal of reaching 20,000 members by 2020. This is a lofty goal, but as Rhett pointed out, it’s also a worthy goal. Next, we were treated to a variety of speakers discussing GCSAA initiatives as well as ideas for how we can grow our chapter. Among the initiatives I found to be most intriguing were the new Assistant Superintendent Certificate Series, The Melrose Leadership Academy, and the Excel Leadership Program. The Melrose Leadership Academy is a scholarship to attend the GIS that includes leadership training during the event. The Assistant Superintendent Certificate Series is self-explanatory, and the Excel Leadership program is a three-year program that gives assistant superintendents the opportunity to advance their skills and their careers through various trainings sessions and trips to the GIS. I wish these programs had been around when I was an assistant, and I would strongly encourage all assistant superintendents to explore these incredible opportunities.

Our own Dave Phipps presented an update on another very worthwhile program, The First Green. The First Green is a great way to get young people on your golf course, learn about what we do, and even be a potential employment pool down the road.

That evening, the four of us went out to enjoy the local cuisine and each other’s company, as well as to network with several of our new friends. The following morning, we headed back to GCSAA Headquarters where we attended presentations by Henry Delozier of Global Golf Advisors and Chad Carden of the Carden Group. Both presentations were motivational and inspirational, in addition to being very educational. Should you ever get the opportunity to attend presentations by either Henry or Chad, I encourage you to do so. Both speakers were incredibly insightful about the Golf Industry, as well as unbelievably polished and entertaining. Henry is a past speaker of the Peaks & Prairies GCSA and we agreed we need to bring him back.

Is Kansas flat and boring, with nothing but wheat fields? Of course not. The scenery, the cuisine, and the people are dynamic and incredibly enjoyable. The next time someone asks me to go to Kansas (or North Dakota, or Nebraska), I’m all in!



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# I didn't think I had a chance, but I did, and so do you!

**Jerad Dill, Superintendent  
Cabinet View Golf Course, Libby, Mont.**

Have you ever pursued something in your career that seemed far-fetched or improbable? Maybe sending your resume off for a position at a high end club or requesting an increase in your budget. That is how I felt when I sent my application in for the EIFG Melrose Leadership Academy. A few colleagues had told me about it and I thought maybe I would apply. Then I proceeded to talk myself out of it. I don't like to travel, it will still cost too much money, they aren't looking for guys from small courses in Montana, I'm not educated enough, I'm too old, and so on. Then one afternoon, after playing golf in Cabinet View's Equipment Fundraiser Tournament, my confidence was high. I completed the application and basically forgot about it. I didn't think I had a real chance of being chosen.

In mid-November while waiting to have my snow tires put on, my cell phone rang, showing a number from Beverly Hills, CA. I don't know anyone there, but when you get a call from that area code, you answer. I was surprised to find Rafael Barajas from the GCSAA Board of Directors calling. He proceeded to tell me that I had been accepted into the 2018 Melrose Leadership Academy and I would be attending the Golf Industry Show in San Antonio at no cost to me! I was floored. I could hardly contain my excitement, but I had to, as the official announcement wouldn't be made for several weeks. I was able to tell my family and Board of Directors, but all my friends in the industry would have to be kept in the dark, and that was difficult. Once the announcement was made, it was great to share the news with the people who helped me on my path to becoming a superintendent.

For those unfamiliar, The Melrose Leadership Academy (MLA) was established with a generous 1 million dollar

donation to the Environmental Institute for Golf from Mr. Ken Melrose, former CEO of the TORO Company. Each year, a class of 20 individuals is chosen from all applicants to attend the Golf Industry show at no cost to them.

We chose to have my wife, Stephanie, accompany me to San Antonio, at our expense, as her birthday fell that week. She could see some sights and get out of the cold weather while I was attending the GIS. She was also able to attend the opening and closing events with me for an added bonus. We arrived on Sunday and were greeted by temperatures in the 70s and sun. That evening, we attended a meet and greet with the rest of the MLA, Excel, and Bayer grant recipients. It was great to meet everyone and to finally meet Mischia Wright and Libby Queen from the EIFG who had helped all of us get to the show!

The next morning it was down to business! The first session of the day was all about getting to know the rest of the MLA attendees. Learning about each of the members and their struggles and successes was an eye-opening experience and we all became a more bonded group with mutual respect for the jobs we do and the places we do them. When lunch with the group ended, we attended a short agronomy seminar. Then we were free to explore San Antonio for the afternoon. Steph and I visited the Alamo. We enjoyed seeing the history of that story up close and personal.

The second morning, we were scheduled to have breakfast with the GCSAA Board of Directors. I was very nervous, but I

shouldn't have been! I arrived early and found a spot. A few more MLA members joined me at a large table. To our surprise, Darren J. Davis, the incoming GCSAA President, introduced himself and sat at our table. Then CEO Rhett Evans joined us, followed by Rafael Barajas, and Bill Maynard, the current GCSAA President! As we were chatting

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**Melrose** continued from page 9

before breakfast, I heard a voice to my right say, "Hi Jerad, good to see you." The voice belonged to Pete Grass. "I heard it's Stephanie's birthday. Wish her a happy one for me," he continued. I had met Pete on a few occasions, but I was genuinely surprised he knew my name, let alone the rest. As we continued to chat at our table, the subject of MLA selection came up to which I commented, "I didn't think I had a chance of being chosen." Pete's reply was, "Sounds like the title to an article for the PPGCSA newsletter, Jerad." I laughed and said, "Sure, why not!" So you have Pete to blame for having to read this. That breakfast will be one of the highlights of my career. To sit at a table with turf legends and be treated as an equal by these great men was truly an honor!

Following breakfast, we took in a seminar that should strike fear in the hearts of all salespeople and board members, "Negotiating Strategies for Superintendents" with Bruce Williams and Tommy Witt. All kidding aside, the information presented was very interesting and helpful for future negotiations. However, like all things in golf, the situation is different at each individual course and some things they were able to achieve through negotiation are only attainable if your club can bear the burden. It was still very useful information.

When the morning session ended, the MLA had lunch with Bruce and Tommy. Again, individual time with GCSAA rock stars! The Q+A we had with them during lunch was time well spent. At one point the question of what advice they would give to an up and coming super was posed. The answer given really stuck with me, "Make a list," Bruce said, "of every person who can help you advance in the industry. If it only takes 30 seconds to make that list you are in trouble. It should take you several minutes to make this list. It should have everyone you have helped over the years, contacts you have made, salespeople you work with, and hopefully, some longtime friends and mentors." I thought about that for a while. I am ashamed to say my list was fairly short for a person who has been in the business for 20+ years in many different roles, but I am making an effort to be helpful to those who ask and do what I can for my fellow grass farmers. I am very thankful for those who have helped me along the way, and I truly hope that someday I will be on as many of your "lists" as possible.

After lunch, the group learned all about social media in the



workplace at: Snap, Tweet, and Post. This was a very informative session and well presented. We learned how quickly you can get yourself and your club in hot water with social media! Be cautious of this great tool.

Then it was off to the EIFG Donor and Grassroots Ambassador reception. This was a high point in the day as Ernie Els made a surprise appearance. He lived up to his nickname "The Big Easy" as he is surprisingly tall and a super nice guy. It was an honor to shake his hand!

Later that evening, Stephanie and I attended the opening celebration. The event was top notch, with recognition of so many in the industry. You can't help but be moved by the dedication of people with 40-50 years in this business, whether as a researcher, professor, or superintendent - all were equally celebrated. Mr. Els was in attendance and was presented the Old Tom Morris Award. If you haven't checked out Els for Autism, I encourage you to do so.

After the celebration, the convention center common area was brimming with attendees, being entertained by mariachi bands playing great versions of current music. As we wandered the festivities, we ran into all the guys from breakfast that morning. Every single one remembered that it was Stephanie's birthday from that morning. Now this is a small thing, but it was huge for both of us. I will never forget their kindness!

Wednesday was filled with time on the trade show floor. I enjoyed seeing all the new innovations in our industry. It was also great to see some of the salespeople I do business with at the show and say hello. Coming from a small course with a budget to match, seeing all that bright shiny new equipment was almost torture, but all was forgotten when I got a chance to see the puppies at the Fly Away Geese booth. So cute!

continued page 14

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## Melrose continued from page 12

That evening was the Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality gathering. It was filled with great food, great beer, and even better people. At the start, Ed Price let us know of Wally Michotte's passing. Ed spoke warmly and fondly of Wally, a gentleman, with whom he was in direct competition. That says a lot about Ed. He is a true class act, and I am proud to call him a friend. We have a fantastic group of people in the Northwest. It was a pleasure to see old friends and make some new ones. A big THANKS to all the sponsors and to Lori for a classy event!

On our final day, we met for lunch to discuss our experience at the GIS and with the MLA. Everyone agreed that it was an exceptional experience in the big picture, but being a part of the MLA was the highlight. The time we spent as a group was a unique opportunity to learn and teach each other and to strengthen the friendships we made. After our lunch, we spent time with everyone at the Toro booth. It was great to thank them for their generosity. The closing celebration

that evening was a great time and included entertainment by Darrell Hammond, who told some great stories. His impressions are still spot on as well. Extremely entertaining night with a very funny guy!

To sum up this experience is nearly impossible. The tremendous opportunity defies summary. This chance for personal and professional development is something I will always appreciate. I encourage all of you reading this to take a shot, even if you don't think you stand a chance. Even if you are at a small club, too old, too young, whatever excuses you use to talk yourself out of applying for this or other opportunities, believe in and take a chance on yourself. You won't be disappointed with the experience. I walked away knowing that the GCSAA is filled with great people from the CEO and President right down to its newest member!

The best advice I can give you on the application is to give real answers. By that I mean be honest and don't be afraid to do some self-promotion. Be proud of what you do at your unique course, and for Pete's sake, no one word responses. I hope to see some names



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# Montana at the Masters

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## Official Unofficial Start of Northern Golf Season

Now that March Madness has revealed itself, the NBA and NHL plod endlessly toward their playoffs and the Stanley Cup. Major League Baseball is under way, but with all their delays and postponements, it really should still be Spring Training. And so, it falls to golf to usher in springtime across the North: after all, it's Masters Week, the first "major" of the year. Not so fast. Bozeman, Billings, Bismarck, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Detroit; never have I seen such a consistent white layer carpeting the entire landscape the first full week in April, Masters Week. While Augusta National and The Masters need only worry about a few showers and wind, I remain persistently hopeful that soon we'll be golfing across the North.

### Travel Planning

I checked early last year about staying at the Holiday Inn Express in Aiken, South Carolina, a thirty-minute drive east of



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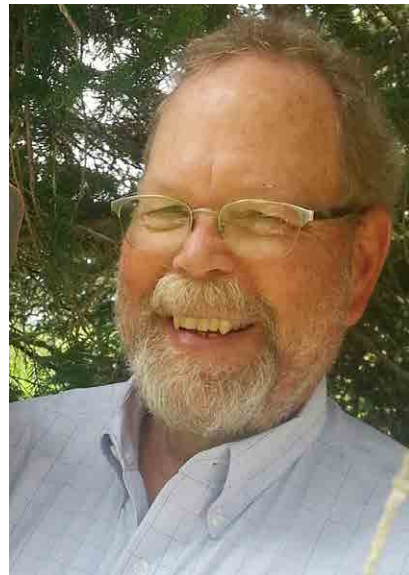
Augusta. No luck, they were sold out at \$459 per night plus tax. With five-night minimum stay requirements common, Airbnb offered more than suitable alternatives, though a bit more distant.

The airlines have continued their relentless pursuit of filling every seat possible at the best rate, for them. While Atlanta Hartsfield, the busiest airport in the world, has plenty of flights, flying into Augusta is pretty well limited to the private planes shuttling patrons into and out of Daniel Field. Nearby Columbia, S.C. has become a favorite point of arrival and it shows in the fares.

I'm at The Masters this year with three other golf course superintendents and a golf professional. Two of them have never attended the event and it has been several years since the others attended. I'll rely on their reactions and reflections throughout the tournament.

We've had our plans for several months and feel pretty good about our arrangements. Last minute travel could be tough, unless you are PGA Tour player and Houston Open winner Ian Poulter. After nearly qualifying two weeks ago, and having gotten incorrect information telling him "you're in," oops, "you're not in," Poulter went out the following week and won in Houston, earning a spot in The Masters. I'm sure Poulter was more than happy to have the last minute travel blues.

With the field of 87 players now set, the Official Unofficial Start of the Northern Golf Season happens tomorrow with Masters Tournament Honorary Starters Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player on the first tee at Augusta National Golf Club.





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## Embrace Disbelief

The most common refrain among the spectators at The Masters begins, "I can't believe...". Coming from the superintendents I kept company with today, it started with, "I can't believe how the playing conditions are so consistent and perfect. I can't believe there's nothing out of place; the bunkers, the second cut around fairways, the pine needle straw under the massive trees; all perfect. I can't believe the elevation change fairway to fairway and the humps and hillocks on the greens. I can't believe I am so tired at the end of the day. The smoothness and ball roll and the challenge the greens presented was unbelievable." Embrace it!

You need to suspend your beliefs if your sporting event experiences include long, slow lines at limited and hard to find comfort stations. If you believe you'll find overpriced and over-rated food and drink offering, embrace disbelief. If you believe you'll be paying through the nose for parking a half mile away, suspend your belief. At The Masters you'll park for free right outside the gate, go inside and get a sandwich, a bag of chips, a sweet tea and change from a ten dollar bill. Believe it.

Finally, you can believe you're watching the best golfers in the world and yet within that you find yourself needing to embrace disbelief. Such was definitely the case as we watched defending champion Sergio Garcia star in a Kevin Costner-like redo of Tin Cup on the par five fifteenth hole. Find the water five times, make a seven-foot putt and write down a record tying high hole score of 13. Believe it!

## Sounds of The Masters

Ceremonial starters Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player received a warm welcome on a cool morning to open the tournament. It wasn't until USGA Mid-Amateur Champion and fulltime Brockton, Massachusetts fire fighter, Matt Parziale, striped his tee shot down the first fairway that the spectator appreciation reached a higher level of enthusiasm. Matt Kuchar followed a front nine 37 with a back nine 31 eliciting a soft, murmuring, "Koooooch" growing steadily as he made his five birdies. It was Jordan Spieth's back nine run of five straight birdies that brought out the greatest roars of appreciation. But those were Thursday roars, easily distinguishable from what we might hear on Sunday. There were no Tiger roars; everyone is hoping for that tomorrow.



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## It's All About Everything

How many greenkeepers does it take to find a hole location for tournament play at the Masters? More than four Montana golf course superintendents with combined greenkeeping experience of over 125 years, but not as many as you see at the end of the day at The Masters. Following play, there was a contingent of green jacketed Augusta Competition Committee members, blue jacketed administrative officials, khaki clad "real" groundskeepers and several tablet toting interns on the tenth green. Appearing from nowhere like ants out to spoil a picnic, seventeen people in a symphonic like performance descended on the green with a multitude of tools. A tape measure to find the centerline of the green, a salt shaker like sand bottle to touch up pitch marks, a spray water bottle to help with turf recovery, electronic levels to calculate direction and degree of slope, tablets for recording data and finally, one man with one ball and a putter.

Several years ago, we were fortunate enough to visit with long-time Augusta greenkeeper (now passed away) Clarence Stokes. I'm not sure if Clarence ever set up the course for The Masters, but he did change holes and set the course for member play for over forty years. If I was able to ask him, "How many greenkeepers does it take?" his answer would be, "Just one. Me."

Don't think for a minute that it's just all about the greens. At Augusta it's all about everything.

Par three tees can take a beating; it might not look good, especially on TV. It's pretty standard to fill divots with sand and a little seed. A touch of class includes a little green dye on the fill to blend in a bit. That may have been standard in past times but now a platoon of seven interns are there with a specially designed turf plugger, removing and replacing the divots, rendering them invisible.

Irrigation takes place with a fleet of hose wielding carts progressing through the fairways and hand watering with magnum hose end nozzles. Water is placed exactly where they want it. The possibility of an overnight automatic irrigation malfunction is thus eliminated. Turn the automatic irrigation off and leave it off.

Bunkers get some TLC too. The bottom of the bunkers are brushed, not raked, to provide a predictable playing option. The faces, or slopes, of the bunker are kept firm, allowing shots

to trickle to the bottom of the bunker, ensuring a reasonable chance for recovery. Water is used to keep everything firm, and minimize any fried egg lies. After watching several players step down into the bunkers, seeing their depth and realizing the difficulty of the shots they faced, good grief, don't make it any harder!

At Augusta it's all about everything; even the golf.

## The Roundup

Saturday at the Masters was a little like the Humphrey Bogart movie Casablanca. There's a scene where Rick (Bogart) is contemplating taking action against the Nazi Major Strasser. In response local police Captain Renault sends out an anticipatory order, "Major Strasser has been shot...round up the usual suspects."

While Saturdays on Tour are known as "moving day," this Saturday was more like a round-up. With many of the top players playing well coming into the tournament, it's not surprising to see the likes of Rory McIlroy, Ricky Fowler and Henrik Stenson near the top. A little less well known but no surprise at all is Patrick Reed at the top.

Reed, known for his fiery Ryder Cup American enthusiasm, backed up by his stellar play, gave everyone plenty to talk about today. After bogeying early, many in the crowd talked of tightening nerves and the beginning of a slide back to the field. On the contrary, in what looked like a Ryder Cup rehearsal, Reed put on a rally which came to a peak with eagles on both back nine par fives, 13 and 15. The accompanying roars from the crowd kept us informed even though we were separated by several holes.

### A Few Random Notes

With twenty-seven countries represented, it's no wonder that half of the top ten players going into Sunday's final round are from outside the U.S.

Tony Finau, the only player from the mountain west, dislocated his ankle while celebrating a hole in one during the Par-3 tournament Wednesday. As a first time invitee, he was not to be deterred. That said, he's the only player wearing high top shoes.

Six eagles on Saturday included one by Phil Mickelson. Without that, Mickelson would be in last place.

With off and on showers, the Sub-air water evacuation system was on all day. The greens, spectator crossings, and key fairway areas all have the system installed to minimize wet conditions.

You can still get your picture taken in front of the clubhouse. The iconic flowerbed shaped like the United States with a flag set in Augusta is in the circle drive known as the Founder's Circle. With three photographers hard at it, they snap your picture and provide a website and code to access it for your memory book.

### Sunday's Outlook

Cooler temperatures, sunny skies and a 100% chance of a green jacket being placed on the 2018 Masters Champion.



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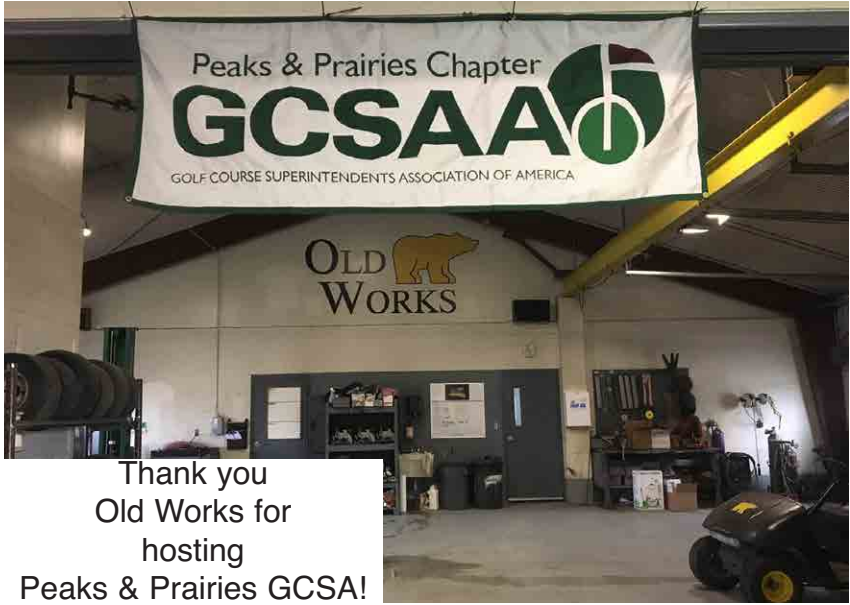
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<b>56 players braved the cool temps! Bragging Rights Belong to:</b>	<b>2nd Place 62</b> Mike Wilczynski Garrett Turner Jason Crow Patrick Bean
<b>First Place - 61</b> Peter Grass Stephen Grass Doug Hagen Eddie Kauran	<b>Third Place 64</b> John Lafko Renzi Lee Mike Sullivan Gary Dahl



# A Change in Goose Management Practices is Long Overdue

Joe Aholt, Superintendent,  
and Aaron Gross, Grounds Crew Hillcrest Country Club, Boise, Idaho

Grass Clippings, April 2018

Canada geese have become a problem for golf course maintenance crews everywhere across the United States. Those of us in the field know that all too well. Annually, golf course superintendents and maintenance crews alike spend hours attempting

to keep Canada geese off their golf courses. What is rather unfortunate about the relationship between golf courses and Canada Geese is that a golf course is a goose's ideal habitat. Aside from mass expanses of grass to eat, grass at the golf

course is cut particularly short, which provides them with a safe habitat free from predators and visual obstructions, as well as water features providing them with sanctuary. More or less, golf courses or other open spaces, with grass and water features for roosting, basically invite geese to their property. What is even more unfortunate is that the Canada goose problem is becoming more widespread every day.



Joe Aholt

From the Boise Greenbelt, to public parks, to businesses in the city, any swath of grass in a public space has become a safe haven for the Canada goose.

Unfortunately, the relationship between golf courses and Canada Geese has been a long-standing problem. Numerous management practices have been implemented in the past with only limited success: coyote decoys, swan decoys, dead goose decoys, bitter grape extract applied to turf, noise makers, and goose lights. We have found the following to be the most effective in keeping Canada Geese off the golf course temporarily: green laser pointers in low light or dark, trained dogs, paintball guns, and fences to keep goslings off the property. Golf courses out of city limits may not face the same problems. Hunting is allowed outside of city limits during the appropriate season, obviously the most effective deterrent. Unfortunately, this is not an option for any goose haven located within city limits.

While this problem is ongoing, so is our knowledge of these birds and their lifestyle habits. We know that, during the winter months, there is a population boom in the Boise city limits. Based on

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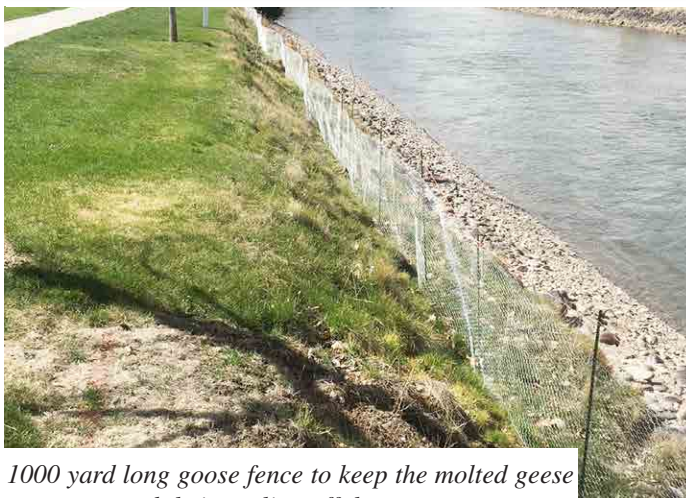
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observation from bird marking by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, we know that many migratory geese move into the city during the fall and winter months. The city provides them with a refuge; constant human interaction becomes the norm and they become less and less timid around people. The geese that nest within the conterminous United States in the months of March, April, May, June, July or August are collectively referred to as "resident" Canada geese. While these birds nest here, many of them still go on molt migration that take them to Canada and back each year. The more we continue to learn about these birds, the better our knowledge will be in attempts to manage their population.

What is also rather unsettling is the amount of money this problem costs. With labor allocated toward daily cleanup, harassment, and any other means necessary to keep these birds away, Canada Goose management cost more and more each year. We all want to see a change, but more needs to be done. I recently sat down with Rick Ward, the Idaho Fish and Game regional wildlife manager, Jeff Knetter, the Upland Game & Migratory Game Bird Coordinator of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Todd Grimm of the United States Department of Agriculture and Wildlife Services, and Steve Fuchser of Real Animal Management to discuss this problem. There was no question that the Canada Goose population is increasing every year and changes need to be made. In order for this to happen, there is a need for accurate documentation from all golf courses being impacted by Canada Geese. We need evidence documenting how much Canada Geese cost you in labor hours and dollars. How many hours do you spend on clean-up and harassment daily? What are the approximate costs? By compiling data from many golf courses, we can use this evidence to implement change.

Canada geese are federally protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Regulations governing the issuance of permits to take, capture, kill, possess, and transport migratory birds are authorized by the Act, and issued by the USFWS. However, with Idaho Fish and Game, Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services, and U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) all on board to see changes made, we are optimistic for the future. With enough evidence in hand we hope to implement the following changes: increases in egg addling programs on a much larger scale, large scale transplants, and modifications to laws pertaining to the hunting season. Technically, the season cannot go longer than 107 days in place. Currently, the season cannot run beyond the last Sunday in January. The hope would be to



1000 yard long goose fence to keep the molted geese and their gosling off the course.

extend that framework end date, perhaps into February with a 107 day season. We would also like to see an increase in bag limits. The state of Utah recently extended their hunting season framework into February and believe they have seen positive results.

For those of us being impacted by Canada Geese, there is hope, but we need your help. We will be contacting you via e-mail or phone to discuss the details of your goose problem and the costs. I hope to give a report on the cost per each golf course at the end of the season. Below are some things to keep in mind when documenting the cost of your goose problem:

- Hours Spent Chasing
- Hours Spent for Clean Up
- #'s of Geese Seen Daily
- Cost for Cleanup, Chasing, and deterrents for total Season.



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# Biological Control of *Poa annua* in Fairways 2017 NTA Research Report

William Johnston and Charles Golob, Dept. of Crop and Soils Sciences, WSU, Pullman, Wash.

*Note:* This is an abbreviated report. The complete 2017 NTA Research Report with figures, application dates, etc. is available at [turf.wsu.edu](http://turf.wsu.edu) (Research – Pullman; Biological Control of *Poa annua* in Fairways)

## Project Background:

Elimination of *P. annua* from golf course turf has been an objective of turfgrass managers and research personnel for decades. Its elimination from golf course fairways will enhance aesthetics, playability, save money and labor, and make the game a more positive experience for golfers. The use of a biological control to achieve this objective will be proactive environmental stewardship by the turfgrass industry.

Showing promise and warranting additional research is *Pseudomonas fluorescens* strain D7, a deleterious rhizosphere bacteria that has been registered (EPA Reg No. 71975-U, 71975-WA-001) by Verdesian Life Sciences primarily as a biological control (herbicide) in the agricultural sector for the control of downy brome, aka cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*). D7 shows promise to provide biological control of weeds in the PNW, it was developed at WSU, has been under ongoing WSU research for over 20 years, and has been tested on numerous soils in the PNW. Anecdotal observations have indicated that D7 might have some control of annual bluegrass. However, research is needed to confirm, or dispute, the potential of D7 for the control of *P. annua* in turf.

## Uniqueness of the study:

1. Potentially identify a biological control of *P. annua*.
2. A single application may provide long-term control.
3. Biological control may eliminate *P. annua* seed presently in the seed bank over time, which is not possible with currently available herbicides.

## Research Objectives:

- 1) Golf course study to determine the effect of timing and rates of D7 (fall only vs. fall + spring) on *P. annua* control in a mix *P. annua*/Kentucky bluegrass fairway over several years.
- 2) Fairway study to determine the effect of herbicide treatments (Tenacity + Xonerate and PoaCure) to initially knock down the *P. annua* population followed by D7 applications for long-term control.
- 3) Evaluation of *P. fluorescens* strains, other than D7, to control *P. annua*.

## Experimental Design & Methods:

**Study 1** - evaluate timing and rates of D7 (D7 applied only in year 1 for *P. annua* control over 3 years). Field studies were initiated at Palouse Ridge Golf Course in late fall 2015 with applications of D7 to a Kentucky bluegrass/*P. annua* fairway.

**D7 applied fall only.** D7, 3 applications, was applied fall 2015 at 0, 2, 10, or 30 g/acre. PoaCure was also applied at 1.26 fl oz/1000 ft<sup>2</sup> for a chemical treatment for comparison fall

2015. Three applications of PoaCure were made fall 2017. Plots were evaluated for *P. annua* control and turfgrass quality during 2016 and 2017.

**D7 applied fall + spring.** D7 was applied, 1 application, fall 2015 and spring 2016. PoaCure was applied fall 2015, 1 application, and spring 2016, 3 applications. Three applications of PoaCure were made spring 2017 and 3 applications of PoaCure were made fall 2017. Plots were evaluated for *P. annua* control and turfgrass quality during 2016 and 2017.

**Study 2** – Chemical + Biological study to evaluate applications of herbicides (to initially knock back the *P. annua* population) followed by D7 applications over the top of the initial herbicide treatments. Herbicide treatments were: 1) PoaCure at 1.26 fl oz/1000 ft<sup>2</sup> in 3 applications spring 2016, 3 applications fall 2016, and 3 applications summer 2017. 2) Tenacity (4 fl oz/1000 ft<sup>2</sup>) + Xonerate (1.4 fl oz/1000 ft<sup>2</sup>) in 3 applications fall 2016 and 3 applications summer 2017. D7 was applied at 2, 10, or 30 g/acre fall 2016 and 1, 5, or 15 fl oz/A fall 2017; note, change in D7 formulation but equivalent rates. Plots were evaluated for *P. annua* control, turfgrass quality, etc. during 2016 and 2017.

**Study 3** (new objective) – evaluation of *P. fluorescens* strains (other than D7) to selectively control *P. annua*. A combination of three *P. fluorescens* strains reported to have selective control of *P. annua* were applied to a fairway and a green at the Palouse Ridge Golf Course at WSU on 11/2/17. Also, currently underway are growth chamber and greenhouse studies evaluating formulations and rates on germination and growth of six turfgrass species.

## Results:

**2016 (Year 1)** – see **2016 Biological Control of *Poa annua* in Fairways at [turf.wsu.edu](http://turf.wsu.edu)**

## 2017 (Year 2)

### Study 1. D7 applied fall 2015 only.

On the final 2017 rating date, 2 years after the initial application of D7, there was no statistical differences in *P. annua* control by any D7 treatment. Kennedy, Hansen, and Stubbs had observed approximately a 50% reduction in cheatgrass, a cool-season grass with a growth habit similar to *P. annua*, 2 years following an application of D7. To date we have seen little evidence of *P. annua* control with a single fall only application of D7; however, we will continue to monitor these plots in 2018.

PoaCure numerically showed 4% less *P. annua* than the check, which indicates that the *P. annua* population was at least not increasing, as is the usual case. Three fall 2017 applications of PoaCure made were after the 9/15/17 rating date; thus, any control will not be evident till 2018.

### Study 1. D7 applied fall 2015 + spring 2016.

Applying D7 in both the fall 2015 and the spring 2016 did not improve the control of *P. annua*. There was no statistical differ-

ence between any of the D7 treatments and the check.

PoaCure numerically showed 11% less *P. annua* than the check, which was better *P. annua* control than noted above in the fall 2015 only study. Johnston and Golob (2015) have noted that spring applications of PoaCure, which these plots received in 2016 and 2017, in the Pacific Northwest have not provided the significant control of *P. annua* seen with fall applications. Three fall 2017 applications of PoaCure made in 2017 were after the 9/15/17 rating date and thus any control will not be evident till 2018.

### Study 2. Chemical + Biocontrol.

Unlike study 1, the reduction in *P. annua* compared to the check by both Tenacity + Xonerate and PoaCure treatments was evident. Compared to the 5/26/16 rating (36% *P. annua*,) by fall 2017 *P. annua* in the check had increased to 56% while *P. annua* in the Tenacity + Xonerate plots had decreased to 17% and the PoaCure plots had a decrease to 22%. Thus, a reduction in *P. annua* was accomplished with chemical treatments.

D7 was applied in late fall 2016 and 2017. Although there were no D7 alone treatments in the study, based on results from study 1, to date there does not appear to be additional control of *P. annua* by D7.

As anticipated, based on previous research (Golob and Johnston, 2015), the decrease in turfgrass quality due to the Tenacity + Xonerate application in fall 2016 and summer 2017

was completely gone by 9/15/17. Tenacity + Xonerate and PoaCure treatments had turfgrass quality ratings significantly better than the check.

**Study 3. (new objective)** Evaluation of additional strains of *P. fluorescens*. Field and laboratory studies were initiated late 2017. Field evaluation, on a green and fairway at Palouse Ridge Golf Course, of treatments applied fall 2017 will begin spring 2018.

### References:

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