

Resources to Navigate the Coronavirus in Turf

The effects of coronavirus in each of our communities is changing rapidly. At the time of this writing, we not have felt the same crushing effect of the epidemic as in other parts of the country. We can only hope that is still the case, knowing the crisis can change by the hour.

As the industry continues to deal with the new normal of 2020, we would like to remind you of resources available to help the turf industry. It is imperative to keep all employees and customers safe. Golf facilities across the country are sharing helpful tips and practical solutions facilities can use – regardless of budget size. GCSAA is a great resource to help navigate the virus at your facility and information can be found by visiting gcsaa.org/pandemic. Social media continues to be an immediate resource to share valuable information with your peers.

While you have hopefully heard this several times by now, it is important to repeat GCSAA is working hard on your behalf to be sure that with any community shut down, golf courses can still be maintained for future use. GCSAA has prepared a resource to help GCSAA members navigate a conversation with state and local decisionmakers on this topic. And, if you or your state is considering outreach to the governor after a shutdown, GCSAA strongly urges you to FIRST please reach out to Michael Lee at mlee@gcsaa.org to coordinate efforts.

It is a one-day at a time, and, while we can't be sure what next week is bringing, we do know we are all in this together.

Rounds4Research Auction

Your support is appreciated! While the auction is postponed, we can still collect rounds. To complete the online donation form, please visit <http://www.eifg.org/research/rounds-4-research/donate-a-round/online-form>

PPGCSA Events:

PPGCSA Scholarship/Education Summer Outings TBA
PPGCSA Fall Meeting & Trade Show October 13-15, 2020, Billings Hotel & Convention Center, Billings, MT
PPGCSA "Almost" Spring Meeting March 1 & 2, 2021, DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton, Billings, MT

BMPs Completed for Montana Golf Facilities

Best Management Practices for golf courses in the state of Montana is complete! Wyoming BMPs are soon to follow.

Our BMP manual is available through GCSAA's website and will soon be housed on the Peaks & Prairies GCSA website. The Peaks & Prairies GCSA Board of Directors is also considering other opportunities to place the document into the hands of our turf professionals.

As explained during the BMP workshop at the "Almost" Spring Meeting, facilitated by Mark Johnson, GCSAA Associate Director Environmental Programs, using our state BMP Planning Guide and Template, you can easily create a facility BMP manual for your facility.

We look forward to sharing more information about our BMPs through our email blasts and in the upcoming May issue of The Perfect Lie.

Lyon Chosen for Program

Mark Lyon, Teton Pines Resort and Country Club, Jackson, Wyo. is one of eight assistant superintendent members of GCSAA who have been chosen for the third class of the EXCEL Leadership Program, which is funded by Nufarm and administered by GCSAA's philanthropic organization, the Environmental Institute for Golf. See more about this experience on page 12.

Clipping Volume Tracker Spreadsheet

As Doug Soldat, PhD, mentioned in his presentation held at the "Almost" Spring Meeting, he is sharing their Clipping Volume Tracker Spreadsheet.

You can access this spreadsheet by visiting the News Tab of ppgcsa.org. Soldat explains it is a way for people who want to use clipping volume to estimate their annual N removal. It is easy to use and fairly self-explanatory, but he is happy to talk or email with anybody who has questions or problems using it.



*“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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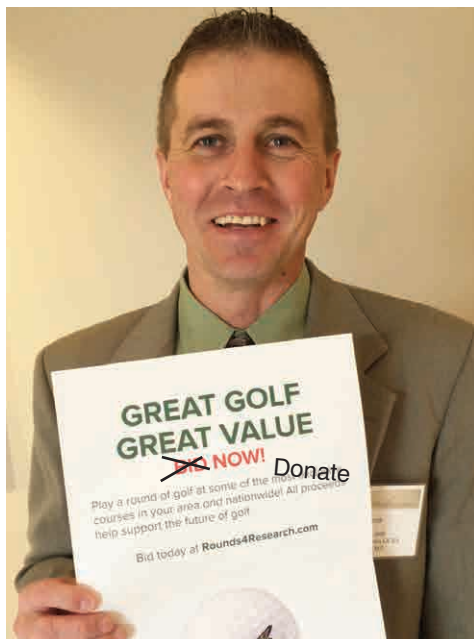
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President's Message

“The Morning of Guest Day”

Jason Lamb, Sidney Country Club, Sidney, Mont.



Hello everyone. I hope this finds you all well. We just left the “Almost Spring Meeting.” I feel it was a great meeting with a lot of very useful information. The networking opportunities were “out-standing,” or, more truthfully, were “out-soaking” as we spent time in the hot tubs. In my opinion, this was one of the

Editor's note - Using this picture we are putting in a plug for R4R, even though postponed. You can still donate rounds to Rounds4Research - see link on page 11

best times I have had spending time with my cohorts. I know that many of my articles can get a little preachy, but this one will be more poetic. I was reading though the different articles that I have written over the years, and I thought this little piece I wrote based on “The Night Before Christmas” by Clement Clarke Moore may be a fun start to the beginning of the season. So, here we go. I call it, “The Morning of Guest Day.”

“The Morning of Guest Day”

T’was the morning of Guest Day and all on the grounds, No one was playing, not even a round.
The flags were all hung from the pins with care, In hopes that golfers soon would be there.
The mowers were parked all snug in the shop, With visions of grass soon they would chop.
With sprinklers all off and everything set, We were all ready for golfers to bet.
When out on the course there arose such a clatter, I sprang from my seat to see what was the matter.
Away to the door I flew like a bolt, Flung it open wide, and stopped with a jolt.
When what to my wondering eyes should appear, But a new Club Car, and fancy golf gear.
With a little old driver so lively and spy, I knew it was time for golf balls to fly.
More rapid than eagle to the course they soon came, And whistled and shouted and called each other names: “Hey, Hacker! Hey, Slacker! Hey, Sandbagger and Jim! Yo, Tommy! Yo, Barker! Yo, Dilly and Tim!”
To the flag at the top of the green, Now putt away, putt away, that was the scene.
As old men that curse when they miss a short putt, They swung and they growled, and chewed a cigar butt.
So out to their tees on the course they all flew, With electric sleighs and golf clubs too.
And then in a crack of the mic, a voice came to say, “The tees are all open, And enjoy the day!”
As I approached the first tee I was amazed at the sight, A five-some, preparing for flight.
The leader was dressed with gadgets and gizmos of all types, He looked like something an infomercial might hype.
A bundle of clubs he had slung on his back, He looked like a Ping rep opening his sack.
His clubs how they sparkled and danced in the light, The ball was all shiny and ready for flight.
His shoes were all polished and golf glove on tight, He looked like a boxer ready to fight.
From the line of his stance and the grip that he had, Soon gave me to know, that his slice was bad.
He spoke not a word but went straight to his work, With a waggle and pause, he swung with a jerk.
The ball went straight and just as planned, But started to curve before it hit land.
He sprang to his cart to see where his ball rested, And away they all flew, like money invested.
But I heard them exclaim as they drove away, “We love Guest Day, and the course we play!”

Jason Lamb

I hope you enjoyed that little nugget of prose. And, I hope this summer your grass stays green and your irrigation has no leaks.

“Audubon and the Assistant”

Greg Dillard

Jackson Hole Golf & Tennis Club, Jackson, Wyo.

I remember it like yesterday.... As I am quietly relishing the end of our 2017 season, all I can think is, “Awesome, another one in the books.” The end of the day rolls by and as I leave to ask my super if there is anything else I can take care of for the rest of the day. He replied, “Our Audubon re-cert is coming up next spring, how do you feel about working on it for the club this up-coming season?” I hastily replied, “For sure...”

Unbeknownst to me, this small project would be an amazing step ladder to the different realms we must venture into within our profession. I was really excited to have the opportunity to have a solo project like this to benefit our club and, in general broaden my education into the conservation realm of our world.

For all you assistant superintendents out there, this is a great opportunity to put yourself in that “superintendent” role. It is the chance to put down a stamp on your course and not in the conventional way we might think. The following are great general guidelines to accomplish the site visit, including an example itinerary for your possible site visit.

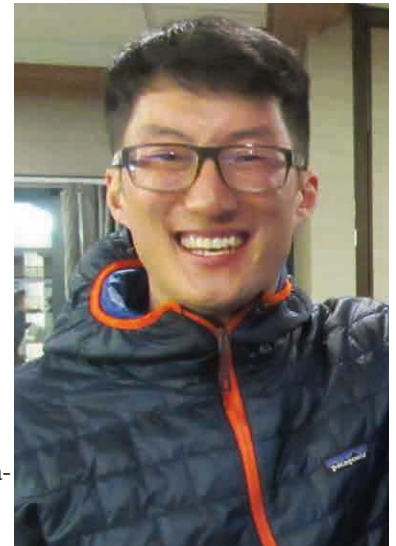
Reach Out: Search for possible cooperatives or stakeholders

who will work with you in obtaining the certification. For example, local animal/wildlife/conservation non-profit groups will more than likely be qualified and willing to do your site visit. Keep in mind these organizations may have a negative bias of the golf industry.

This is a great opportunity to highlight the positive impacts of your golf course and potentially change some attitudes.

Commit to The Plan: Have a layered out plan for how to organize. After reading through Audubon “<https://auduboninternational.org/acsp-for-golf/>”, I sketched out my consolidation plan for what materials I wanted to provide for the site visit. Here is a sample list of some areas I focused on for our site visit:

- Habitat areas (These can vary and be divided into multiple
- continued page 6



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Audubon

continued from page 4

areas! Where are your resident animals located? Migration paths?)

- Water bodies (e.g. native buffer zones/



spray buffer zones)

- Playable areas (i.e. Greens/Tees/Fairways/Rough and the different agricultural practices we use or are working towards)
- Maintenance facility (e.g. Proper chemical storage/logging, maybe you have an ESD wash station-they will love water conservation)
- Additional environmental overview (e.g. Any local groups utilizing the property for a First Green or conservation field trip? Girl Scouts/Boy scouts make you any bird boxes??)

Possible Itinerary: Remember, every course is different and each organization might want to see different things. These points will help guide you along the way to creating a memorable experience for your guests.

- Welcome visitors to the clubhouse (remember, this might be the first time they have visited a golf course)
- Tour clubhouse/guest facing areas (e.g. make note of drought tolerate plants in



clubhouse landscape area)

- Tour maintenance facility (remember that water conservation)

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Audubon continued from page 5

- Tour your property (e.g. drive with them and make it fun)
- Booklet? (what info are you giving them as they depart their site visit)

K.I.S.S.: An acronym we all use! Keep It Simple, Silly! Summarize your plan to a condensed two-three page sheet with bullet points. The onsite visitors love having a check list for each topic covered and highlighted points of interest that your club/membership is showcasing.

Don't be afraid to reach out in your community! You as an assistant should take the leap of communicating with stakeholders and community groups to structure a possible conservation project. Non-profits, schools and sports teams are great starters to get the ball rolling.

Sustainability and conservation are becoming even bigger issues within our industry; taking the step as an assistant gives us even greater experience for the future and stepping up into that superintendent position! Hopefully, a certification like the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses or similar can raise the bar for your facility. Following their guidelines, and adding your course's influences can create a wonderful template for this type of project!

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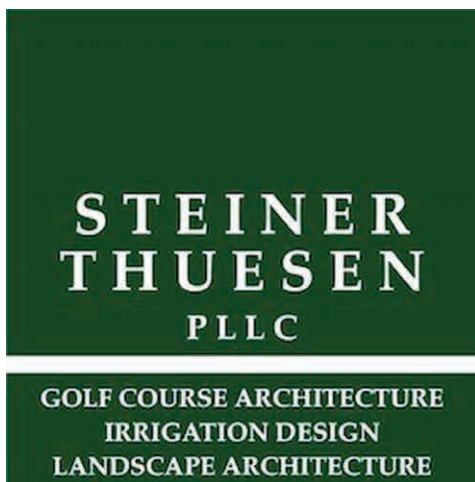
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“ALMOST” SPRING MEETING 2020

Wow! What a success! We enjoyed outstanding education and strong allied partner support. Many attendees brought their families along to enjoy the facility. Nights were late for some enjoying great conversations and beverages with peers under the stars in the pools.

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Seeing the Golf Industry Show with a Fresh Set of Eyes Thanks to the EXCEL Leadership Program

**Mark Lyon, Assistant Superintendent,
Teton Pines Resort & Country Club, Jackson, Wyo.**



I was recently checking out my lifetime transcript from the GCSAA and noticed I have been going to the Golf Industry Show since 2011. That made this year's show in Orlando my tenth time attending the educational conference and trade show. Having attended the show nine times, I was prepared to fall into the familiar routine of taking classes the first couple days, meeting with many of the same colleagues and vendors, and walk-

ing around the trade show floor on Wednesday and Thursday. This year, however, turned out to be very different.

My boss, Mike Kitchen CGCS, had been pushing me to apply for the EXCEL Leadership Program for at least a year, so last fall I went online and proceeded through the application process. It consists of basic questions about the applicant and then several essay style questions. The way I understand it, the

selection committee for this program only knows in what state you reside. All other personal and course information is left out to ensure any biases are not brought to the selection process. Well, a couple months later and much to my

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Excel Leadership

continued from page 12

surprise, I was chosen to participate as part of the 2020 class. The EXCEL program is a three year program exclusively for assistant superintendents, sponsored by Nufarm and administered by GCSAA's philanthropic organization, the Environmental Institute for Golf. Participants are sent to three events throughout each year of the program. The focus of this training is to promote leadership abilities both personally and professionally and to allow assistant superintendents to use those skills in community and industry stewardship.

When I received my itinerary for the EXCEL program during the Golf Industry Show, it became instantly apparent that this year would be very different than the previous nine. The schedule was filled with receptions, meetings, classes, and other events - each with the opportunity to meet and network with people in our industry. This was definitely outside my comfort zone. Being out here in the mountain west, it is easy to feel a little isolated from the national golf "scene." It can be hard to feel like you belong in a group when it consists of so many people from top 100 courses, or those who are very well known

on social media, etc. I went in with an open mind, however, and was not disappointed. It is great to hear that people all across the country, regardless of what club they work at, enjoy many of the same things about this profession, as well as facing a lot of the same challenges. Every person I engaged with, from the other assistants in the program to the leadership group of the GCSAA, seemed genuinely invested in helping me succeed in this industry, both personally and professionally. I always feel a sense of renewed excitement for my job after the GIS, but this year especially so.

The next trip with the EXCEL group will be to the National Golf Day in Washington, D.C. We will be participating in a community service project as well as meeting with legislators on behalf of the golf industry. Once again, I will be out of my comfort zone, but that can only help to prepare me for a future in this industry. I highly recommend that any assistant superintendent with a desire to grow his or her career apply to be part of the 2021 EXCEL class. I guarantee you will not regret it, and, who knows, maybe I will be seeing you at next year's Golf Industry Show.

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Chapter Delegate Report

Jason Busch, CGCS
The Powder Horn, Sheridan, Wyo.

2019 marked my first year as the chapter delegate representing Peaks & Prairies GCSA. It has been an eye opening experience and I look forward to continuing my service for several more years. Last year's chapter delegates meeting was held October 28-30 in Kansas City and in Lawrence, Kansas. During the meeting, the leadership and staff at GCSAA briefed us on all of their programs and upcoming initiatives. We hear a lot about how hard the GCSAA works to advocate for our industry, but it is truly amazing to see just how much they are taking on at the moment.

Our industry is coming under attack from many different angles and our national association is meeting these challenges head-on. Initiatives like the GCSAA PAC, Grassroots Ambassador

Program, and BMP Initiative are helping to ease the regulatory burdens and ward off legislation that threatens our facilities. The Rounds4Research program continues to grow through the efforts of our membership. GCSAA is doing so much good work that I could never acknowledge it all here, but I can assure you that every membership dollar is being used in a wise and responsible manner.

The GCSAA Annual Meeting took place at the GIS in Orlando and elections for new officers were conducted. Darren Davis, CGCS, retired from the board after a serving as Immediate Past President, and was replaced by Rafael Barajas, CGCS. John Fulling Jr., CGCS, was elected President; Mark Jordan, CGCS, Vice President; and Kevin Breen, CGCS, Secretary/Treasurer. Kevin



Sunderman, CGCS, and Douglas Dykstra, CGCS, were elected to Board of Director's vacancies.

I would like to thank the membership of Peaks & Prairies for allowing me to represent you as your delegate. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time if you would like to discuss how our chapter is represented with the GCSAA.



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A Lesson on Starting a Bluebird Nest Box Project

David Phipps, GCSAA NW Region Field Staff

Early in my career, I became very involved with the Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project. While serving as the assistant superintendent at The Oregon Golf Club in the 90s, bluebirds had finally discovered the golf course so I reached out to the PBRP so they could monitor the nesting boxes and band any young birds that would be hatched. The PBRP's goal is to increase the populations of the Western Bluebird across the Willamette Valley and, by banding them, track their progress.

I have seen bluebirds now during site visits across the region including Southern Oregon where the superintendent had no idea that they were even there. Stone Creek Golf Club, where I tried for 12 years to lure them in, finally had birds show up a few years after I left and are now regular residents.

Bluebirds and golf courses just happen to go very well together, but there's a lot more to starting a bluebird nest box program than just putting up a few boxes and hoping they will come. I would strongly suggest working with a local conservation group such as the PBRP and finding out where to locate the boxes, so they are in a safe and productive place. And don't forget this is a great opportunity to engage local schools through the First Green program and have them construct your boxes and teach them about conservation.

I still receive the PBRP Newsletter and this month they posted a very good article from the Journal of the North American Bluebird Society, by Bet Zimmerman Smith. I would like to share it for those who have considered a nest box program or for those who may need a refresher course. The following reprinted with permission.

A Dozen Bluebirding Myths By Bet Zimmerman Smith

MYTH: You can put up a nest box and forget about it.

REALITY: Bluebird boxes should be monitored at least weekly to check on progress and control house sparrows, blowflies, paper wasps, and to remove unhatched eggs, etc. Boxes need to be cleaned out after nesting.

Check boxes at least annually to replace split, rotten or broken boxes that could let rain in and chill nestlings. OR, replace the entire box.

MYTH: Bluebirds will remove old nests from a nest box.

REALITY: Bluebirds will not typically clean out old nests. They may build a nest atop another nest, but this promotes disease and parasite infestation and may increase the likelihood that a predator will be able to reach in and nab eggs/nestlings that are closer to the entrance hole. Remove the nest as soon as the young birds fledge (around 3 weeks after hatching) or if nesting fails (as bluebird may attempt another nest in 1 – 7 days).

MYTH: If you open the bluebird box or touch the nest or young, the parents will abandon the nest.

REALITY: Don't worry that monitoring will make the parents desert the nest. Most songbirds have a poor sense of smell. Adults may pester you (it's their instinct to protect their nest, eggs, and young), but are unlikely to abandon the nest.


MYTH: House Sparrows won't bother bluebirds or their nests.

REALITY: House Sparrows are probably the #1 enemy of bluebirds. House Sparrows are capable of entering the 1 ½ inch round opening of the nest box. They will attack and kill adult

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Bluebirds

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bluebirds (sometimes trapping them inside the box) and destroy eggs and nestlings. These sparrows are non-native invasive pests not protected by law. Their nests, eggs, young and the adults may be legally removed or destroyed. It is better to have no box at all than to allow House Sparrows to reproduce in one.

MYTH: If you don't have problems with predators or competitors on a route the first year, you never will.

REALITY: It may take time for raccoons, cats, and other predators to discover nesting areas. Unless you don't mind finding broken eggs, abandoned/dead babies, or a pile of blue feathers, take precautions to prevent predators from entering the box.

MYTH: If you don't get bluebirds in your nest box/trail the first year, you never will.
REALITY: It may take several years for bluebirds to find your nest boxes and choose to use them.

MYTH: It's too late in the year to install a nest box because bluebirds have already begun laying eggs.

REALITY: It's never too late to install a nest box. Bluebirds may raise two or three broods. If a nesting attempt fails, they may choose to move to another box. Bluebirds may roost in nest boxes during the winter.

MYTH: Bluebirds prefer to nest in boxes mounted at eye-level.

REALITY: Eye-level is convenient for human monitors. Bluebirds will nest in, and may even prefer, boxes that are 8-20 feet off the ground. It is preferred to mount boxes at eye level – it won't deter bluebirds and will facilitate monitor safety and maintenance of the nest box.

MYTH: You should collect earthworms and put them in a feeder for bluebirds.

REALITY: Bluebirds love mealworms but should not be fed earthworms. The nestlings' underdeveloped digestive systems cannot handle earthworms because of the dirt castings in the worm gut. Eating earthworms (sometimes used as a source of food by bluebird parents during bad weather when nothing else is available) can cause severe diarrhea, which can result in dehydration and starvation. Also, bluebirds rarely eat seeds – 68% of



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pokeweed and viburnum.

MYTH: Plexiglas roofs/holes in the roof/extra light in boxes can keep House Sparrows out.

REALITY: Not true. A change may temporarily deter sparrows, but they will nest in such boxes. Open topped boxes or those with holes in the roof are no longer recommended due to concerns about wet nest and hypothermia.

MYTH: Bluebirds were on the brink of extinction, but now they are back and no longer need your help.

REALITY: Bluebird population decreased by an estimated 90 per cent from 1920-1970, threatened by competition from introduced, non-native species, loss of open space and nesting cavities, pesticide use, climatic events, and development of new farming methods or developing former farmland into human housing. With assistance from people like you, since none of these issues that cause declines has really gone away, bluebirds and other songbirds have managed to stabilize their population through periods of variable success. There are new climatic events with more profound effects already upon us over the 50 years starting in the 1970s

MYTH: Bluebirds behave the same way, all the time, everywhere.

REALITY: Eastern, Mountain and Western Bluebirds in different areas behave differently and show different preferences. The same birds may behave differently as they age; seasons, climate and conditions change from one year to the next. Do whatever works in your area to help bluebirds maintain their numbers and a special place in our lives.

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Lessons and Surprises of My Career as a Golf Course Superintendent

Tim Ansett, CGCS

Manito Golf & Country Club, Spokane, Wash.

(Turf's Up Winter 2019, Inland Empire GCSA)

My first job working on a golf course was in 1974 (in Michigan) and every job I have held since has been in the turf-grass industry. That is 45 years since I first started walk-mowing greens, and yes, it is like riding a bike – a skill once learned and never forgotten. Although, the mowing lines get less straight if you aren't doing it regularly, and it has been a number of years since I have mowed more than a few passes.

My employment as a golf course superintendent began in 1984, working for the City of Portland, Oregon. I have been superintendent at Manito Golf & Country Club in Spokane, Washington since 1989. 2019 was my 31st season at Manito and my 35th season as a superintendent. I turned 67 in 2019, and the last few years I have been asking myself and others have asked me, "When are you going to retire?" or, "Why are you still working?" I don't think I will be able to give an honest answer to those questions until I can decide for sure if I like being a golf course superintendent or if I am simply addicted to it.

So, that is my background and likely the reason I was asked to write this article. Perhaps the old guy, who was once

the young guy, might have some words of wisdom to share with others. I agreed to write this, but, I need to preface it with telling you that the self-awareness I have, has informed me that I have the gift of stating the obvious, and most that if not all I write, you have probably already thought of yourself, or read or heard it from others. "There is nothing new under the Sun." (Ecclesiastes 1:9)

A few words of explanation; right away, I have referenced the Bible. I must, as its lessons have been validated by the lessons I have learned in my career. And, I don't believe I could have had the career longevity I have had without my relationship with God and the trust I have placed in the truth of His Word to guide my life. If this is offensive to you, as apparently it is to many in our culture, I encourage you to Google and listen to a song from The Eagles, and do as the song's title suggests – "Get Over It" and still read on.

1) I have learned to be willing to be a servant to my employer. Yes, I know more about maintaining a golf course than my employers (I work directly for the Board of Trustees and the club president who changes annually), but they are in charge. It is not my golf course. My employer's task is not to please me or feed my ego. My job is to make my employer look good by providing the

playing conditions they want and managing the budget dollars they allocate to golf course maintenance efficiently. I should never try to deceive my employer in any way. I should make promises to them sparingly and keep them faithfully

to the extent I am able. My credibility with my employer and the responsibility and freedom I have been given has increased over the years as I have faithfully served them. "Because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities." (Luke 19:17)

2) I have learned to become less defensive in responding to questions and criticisms. Golfers are passionate about golf, they are very interested in golf course conditions, and they generally do not have a great deal of knowledge about how good golf course conditions are produced. So, why should I be surprised that they have questions or comments which make evident their lack of knowledge? Or get upset about them? It is an opportunity to educate. Regardless of the

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Lessons and Surprises continued from page 21

questioner's tone, I must pause a moment to remain calm, and respond patiently and courteously. "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Proverbs 15:1) It also helps to have a golf course dog with you, as dogs seem to calm down even the most irate golfer.

3) I have learned that knowledge is far less important than the ability to implement, and you can implement very little without a good staff. Hiring the right people for key positions and seasonal ones seems to be getting more and more challenging. All other qualifications being similar, attitude and willingness to take initiative are the key, and they can even trump qualifications. A motivated staff is a joy to manage and direct and I am doubtful that a lack of motivation can be overcome by training. It can be encouraged however, and showing appreciation for my staff's work is an essential aspect of building a good "culture" for the maintenance staff. Being able to delegate is also essential and I have tried to give employees as much responsibility as they desire, once they have shown me the evidence that they are able to carry out a job successfully. (A helpful hint I have tried to adapt is, "If I think someone can do a task 70% as well as I can, I should delegate it." And they will likely come much closer to how well I would have done it. And I shouldn't be surprised when they do it better than I would have).

4) I have learned that my primary responsibility is not to grow grass, but is to provide a playing surface for the game of golf.

Similar to many superintendents, I came into this profession through a love of golf. But my academic training is in agronomy and crop & soil science. This training is important and helpful, especially in dealing with turfgrass problems. But golfers don't care what my soil test levels of nutrients are and I could get carried away with the agronomics and put too much emphasis on that. Yes, I must keep the grass alive so that it can continue to provide a good playing surface in the future, but "my harvest, my crop yield" for today is what is left after mowing, not the clippings I return to the turf or take away in the basket. My emphasis is directed toward simple practices, what I would call the blocking and tackling of golf course maintenance – mowing frequently with sharp mowers, and maintaining surface firmness through sand topdressing and moisture control.

5) I have learned that adding new maintenance practices does not necessarily make golf course conditions better or make my job easier. The technological advancements that have happened over my career have been incredible – specifically I would note improvements in irrigation coverage and control, advances in topdressing equipment, and the use of growth regulators. But, adding tools and practices can make my maintenance plan more complicated and more difficult to accomplish. An example of this is my decision to use growth regulators on greens only to limit *Poa annua* seedhead production and not to regulate leaf growth throughout the season. I could grow denser and thicker grass on our greens and provide a deeper green color if I applied more nitrogen and then applied growth regulator to limit leaf growth. But would that produce any better putting surface than simply limiting leaf growth by limiting my

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nitrogen applications? I only need enough daily growth so that when the greens are mowed the next day, it is a fresh putting surface. For me, adding more nitrogen and then limiting leaf growth by applying growth regulators makes it harder to produce a quality putting surface. I would be interfering with golfers more, due to additional spraying, and end up feeling like the hamster on the treadmill wheel treading faster and faster but not going anywhere. If what I am doing now is successful, what is my compelling reason to add a new maintenance practice? Especially one that increases our costs! As evidence that I am not a complete, I think they call it, Luddite; we are flying a drone daily at Manito during the playing season and using the aerial photos it takes to adjust irrigation times and identify problem areas.

On to some surprises -

6) I am not sure that this surprised me, but every day brings surprises and requires me to be flexible. How so? Where should I start? I like planning and believe it is an important and essential part of my responsibilities. The more elaborate my plans, the more I need to be willing to be flexible, and this can be hard for me as a planner. What are the typical daily surprises? You know them: the weather and what it is vs. what was predicted, staff members not reporting for work, play schedule changes of which we were not informed, equipment breakdowns, etc. How can I cope with this? What if the same thing happens tomorrow? Relax and remember: "Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (Matthew 6:34)

7) I was genuinely surprised, and almost astounded, that metal golf spikes went out of favor and are now banned at most golf courses. Why was I surprised? Golf is a very traditional game, although that seems to be changing. I thought that the sound of metal spikes on pavement was too sacred to be taken away from golfers. Of course, I am not sure that some of the newer non-metal spikes are much better than the metal ones at reducing damage to turf. There are also some surprises that I hope for in the future: bans on blaring music from golf carts, a resurgence of caddy use on golf courses, traffic control measures that might include fines for carts going too close to greens, and physically removing golfers from the course if they do not repair ball marks on greens.

8) I was surprised and ultimately amused when a seasonal staff member took my instructions very literally. This one was very hard for me to appreciate: We have an island green to which we try to limit traffic. We hand rake bunkers and would expect that staff members would walk onto the island and to the bunker. And there is no place on the course that would require driving between the green and a greenside bunker to get to the bunker and rake it. This is part of our normal training. So, imagine my surprise when I saw someone driving between the green and the greenside bunker on the island green. As is my learned habit, when I see something like this I choose to try to remain calm and to confront the issue later. I did this, later that day, giving the staff member instruction and the admonition, "You should

never drive a cart between the green and a greenside bunker." Fast forward two weeks: I observe the same staff member following my instructions literally – He doesn't drive between the bunker and the green. He is driving the cart over the middle of the green. (Note: This was the last season of employment for this staff member.)

9) I have been surprised by how quickly time passes and thankful that I learned early in my career that it was not good for my life, my family, my employer, or my employees to have my career dominate my life in an all-consuming manner. When we first moved to Spokane in 1989, it was my wife Leslie, our daughter Margaret (not yet two years of age), and me. What has happened in the 30 years since - we have had three more children, our sons Joel, Spencer, and Eric. Leslie has survived breast cancer twice. We have been actively involved in our church. We were part of a group of parents that started a classical Christian school in 1996 where all our children graduated. It has over 300 students enrolled today. In hindsight, all this has happened very quickly.

I knew in pursuing this career it would at times be very demanding and stressful. But I did not want this or any career, to be the be-all and end-all of my life. Life "balance" has been important to me. So, I have consistently left the golf course each day with tasks not fully completed, as I am sure you must also, as the job is never finished, but at peace with that for the most part. I have taken annual family summer vacations, leaving the golf course in the capable hands of my staff, not considering myself indispensable to fulfilling the expectations of my employer. Several years ago, I traded salary for additional vacation time, and now have 8 weeks of vacation each year, which I actually take. This allows me to stay fresh and gives my staff an opportunity to take on more responsibility and grow their talents and skills.

From reading trade magazines that frequently mention all the sacrifices which superintendents and their families make for the sake of being successful in this industry, I wonder and marvel that it has been possible for me to please my employer and yet have balance in my life.

How has this been possible? I attribute it to the grace of God upon my life and that He has chosen to grant me favor in my employer's eyes, as he did for Daniel. "God gave Daniel favor in his superior's eyes." (Daniel 1:9)

When will I retire? I am not sure and am just taking it one season at a time.



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