

2021 Northwest GCSA Turfgrass Expo *(aka - An Incredible Opportunity)*

Where will you be when that “ah-ha” moment grabs your attention? On the trade show floor? In the conference room? In the hallway? On the golf course? Over that beer? Gathering with your peers at an event-filled opportunity, you will hear something that will cause you to pause and rethink at the Northwest GCSA Turfgrass Expo, **October 11 & 12, 2021**, at **The Coeur d’Alene**. This conference is hosted by Peaks & Prairies GCSA, Idaho GCSA, and the Inland Empire GCSA.

All of our speakers were thoughtfully selected for their interaction and rapport with an audience, in addition to their wealth of knowledge of their respective presentations. The expo will be moderated by Gerald Flaherty, CGCS, The Valley Club, Hailey, Idaho. Flaherty is a great choice to represent the three associations. He is a well-respected superintendent who will offer an ease to a responsibility few would care to tackle. The event offers a wide range of educational topics. Regardless of your industry experience, we offer something of value. One presentation description should

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PPGCSA Events:

Scholarship/Education Golf Events September 14, Kendrick Golf Course, Sheridan, Wyo.

Northwest GCSA Turfgrass Expo October 11-12, 2021, The Coeur d’Alene, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

PPGCSA “Almost” Spring Meeting March 7 & 8, 2022, GranTree Hotel, Bozeman, MT

September Scholarship/Education Golf Event in Wyo.

We appreciate superintendent Chris Cremer and Kendrick Golf Course, Sheridan, Wyo. for hosting the Wyoming Scholarship/Education Golf Challenge on September 14. Enjoy a beautiful fall day of golf with your peers.

Visit the calendar event of ppgcsa.org to register (on the home page). Full or partial teams are welcome. Plus, you don’t have to be a member to play! Proceeds benefit our scholarship and continuing education programs.

Chapter Room Block Open - San Diego 2022

February 2022 is right around the corner and we look forward to an in-person GCSAA Conference and Trade Show!

Our chapter room block for the 2022 conference in San Diego is now open. We have two properties to offer you — depending on your budget/needs:

The Hotel Solamar is across the street from our Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room at The Blind Burro. While we haven’t utilized this property for our chapter block in the past, it received high marks as a conference hotel at the 2018 GIS. It is in the desirable Gaslamp District and walkable to the convention center.

Our second property is the Horton Grand Hotel. This is our
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Peaks & Prairies GCSA Scholarship Application Deadline September 20

Visit “Scholarship Opportunities” under the drop down “Info” tab of ppgcsa.org for the online application or to download a PDF. Please read application carefully as separate accompanying documents may be required. Deadline is September 20.



“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

Don't Blink

Mike Kitchen, CGCS

Teton Pines Resort & Country Club, Jackson, Wyo.

Superstar country music artist Kenny Chesney is a staple in our house. My wife, Sam, LOVES all things Kenny and her contagious enthusiasm has infected the entire family. I estimate that my wife and I have seen his live performances together at least a dozen times in eight different states. While I'm not as big of a fan as Sam is, I do enjoy the energy he brings and how his music has brought us closer together. One of Kenny's hits is a song titled, "Don't Blink." In that song, Chesney warns us not to blink, "...cause life goes faster than you think..." I was driving the other day when "Don't Blink" came on and it prompted me to reflect on my career and the good fortune that I have had.

I remember in perfect detail a day over thirty years ago when I was spring skiing in Steamboat Springs. I looked down over the valley and saw a golf course emerging from winter and in that moment, I knew my destiny. One year later I returned to that very golf course to begin my career in golf. In that first season, I learned the basics and then I returned to Michigan State University where, in addition to my business degree, I earned a degree in turfgrass management. As part of my turfgrass education, I interned at the Coeur d'Alene Resort, where I worked my tail off for \$5.25 an hour. Despite the low pay, that experience set me up for the rest of my career. After graduation, I returned to the Coeur d'Alene Resort to manage the "night crew," where I was lucky enough to work for a demanding owner and two fantastic superintendents. During those seven years, I learned the value of the powers of observation, attention to detail, and finding opportunities in every situation.

I left the Coeur d'Alene Resort (briefly) to work for a management company in Colorado. It was there I learned the importance not only of asking the right questions in an interview, but also having a shared vision with ownership. Upon returning to the resort, I worked with a veteran superintendent for a couple years before moving to McCall, Idaho.

In McCall I was tasked with building and growing in the

golf course at Whitetail Club. I was begrudgingly promoted to project manager after that position suddenly became vacant when some criminal activity on the part of my predecessor was uncovered. I oversaw the construction of the clubhouse, cart barn and golf course, until the

owner hired a general manager who did not share my vision. Fate was smiling down at me because that's when Teton Pines called. I have been in Jackson ever since, largely because Teton Pines is a phenomenal club with realistic expectations. The unwavering support my family and I have received over the last 20+ years from both the ownership and the membership has been overwhelming. If it seems like this recap of my career was a whirlwind, you're correct. This recap, and my career, have flown. I encourage all of you to reflect on your careers and remember: Don't Blink, because both Kenny Chesney and I will tell you it goes faster than you think.

Since my story started at the Coeur d'Alene Resort, I am eager to return for the second edition of the Northwest Turfgrass Expo in Coeur d'Alene. I am excited to revisit the town Sam and I moved to as newlyweds, where we met people who are lifelong friends, and where my daughter was born. Throw in the opportunity to stay at the resort with my wife, play golf at one of the best resort golf courses in the country, and revisit the world's only floating green, all while partaking in a fantastic educational program with my peers? This opportunity is too great to pass up. Don't delay, this event will sell out! I hope to see you all in Coeur d'Alene!



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First Green Event

Ryan Franklin, Superintendent
Fossil Inland Golf Club, Kemmerer, Wyo.

Fossil Island Golf Club held its First Green event for the local kindergarten classes on May 10. About 60 students participated from four separate classes. Our focus for this year's event was how the golf course provides homes for local animals, native wildflowers, and native trees. We had four stations and three volunteers helping with our event. We merged Arbor Day and First Green together. We planted a maple tree on the golf course for the kids and dedicated it to their class so they can come back and see how it has grown.

Our four stations included native birds, native wildflowers, trees, and the history of Arbor Day. To keep the learning interactive, we offered a hands-on activity at each station. Once they finished learning about some of our native

birds that frequently stop by the golf course, they made pine cone bird feeders. As for the wildflower station, they made native flower bombs. This is when you take a peat/clay mixture and combine it with native seeds then throw them into our native area on the golf course. For the tree station, we reviewed the lifecycle of a tree, as well as CO2 exchange and how it works in a tree. We then played a guessing game about what tree products are included in certain products. This included aspirin, chewing gum, sponges and, of course, maple syrup. Since we merged Arbor Day and the First Green, the fourth station included a presentation about the history of Arbor Day and an intro to the First Green. As a gift from us, we gave every kid a small flower pot and sunflower seeds for them to take home



Ryan Franklin

and grow.

The kids loved the hands-on part of the learning at each station and helping to bury the tree. It was some work to put this event on, but the most enjoyable part of the experience for me has been hearing reports about how their sunflowers are growing.

We are looking to continue this event and expand it to provide opportunities for the 5th and 6th grades. We consider it to have been a great opportunity for us to host a First Green event and I would encourage anyone to reach out to their local schools and create an event at your own facility.



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2021 Northwest GCSA Turfgrass Expo continued from page 1

appeal to all — regardless of length of experience, budget size, or level of responsibility. In fact, it can apply to any profession. “Your career performance will be judged based on what you promise and how you say it.” Check out **Improving Your Communications** by Henry DeLozier, GGA Partners.

Brian Horgan, PhD, returns in 2021 after speaking at the 2017 Expo. Horgan is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences at Michigan State University. His current research interests focus on developing and integrating sustainability metrics for golf facilities. Specifically, his research seeks to position golf courses as urban greenspaces that provide economic and community value through ecosystems services. His presentations continue to resonate with our members and he is one of the most frequently requested speakers among the three associations.

In addition to improving communications, Henry DeLozier, Partner, GGA, will share ways to hire and retain the



right team members and create a culture to inspire and motivate top performers. The pandemic has changed the workplace and it’s time to put those lessons to work. DeLozier has been recognized as one of the “Most Influential People in Golf” by Golf Inc. magazine. We are honored to have DeLozier participate in the event; his insights will benefit everyone present.

When the name Mike Richardson, PhD, is mentioned, an immediate response from someone in the room is, “I can listen to him all day.” While Richardson’s research can be specific to regions of the country, **50 Shades of Trouble** offers a huge value to the Northwest. His extensive research

addresses not only how the amount of light affects healthy turf, but how cultural and chemical practices such as mowing practices and plant growth regulators can alter shade tolerance of turfgrasses. We should have allocated more time to this presentation, which simply means Richardson will need to return. Richardson is a professor at the University of Arkansas, Department of Horticulture.

Paul Koch, PhD’s extensive research focus includes snow mold — extremely applicable in the northwest region. In fact, Koch is presently conducting snow mold research in Idaho. Koch excels at keeping his audience engaged. His second presentation, **Practical Applications for the Turfgrass Microbiome on Golf Courses**, will share the findings on their most heavily researched topic at this time. Research into the turfgrass microbiome has the potential to change how we manage golf courses — including reduced input strategies for disease control, fertilization, and irrigation.

The pandemic turned the world upside down before we all had a chance to meet Cory Isom, our regional agronomist with the USGA Green Section, who (pictures from 2017 Northwest Expo)



Directions to register:

- Scroll down on the home page and click on the calendar event.
- Options available to register online or download a pdf.
- Download a conference agenda for all times for all events



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came on board in 2019. He is based out of Washington and was still able to make course site visits during COVID. Isom enjoyed a distinguished career as a golf course superintendent in California and Colorado before joining the USGA. Isom is ready to offer the kind of presentation you have been missing the past couple of years — tales and pictures shared from regional site visits.

Educational opportunities come in many formats — especially on the trade show floor. Allied partners from all over the region will be in Coeur d’Alene to

not only support your association and profession, but to share their extensive knowledge of products and services that can make a difference at your course. Make new contacts, renew and strengthen previous relationships and take advantage of the wisdom on the floor as so many professionals



gather under one roof.

We can safely say the wind will not blow as hard as in 2017 while you enjoy playing the renowned Coeur d’Alene Golf Course. “Lightning” won’t strike twice in that hurricane-like gale force wind — right? Golf course superintendent, Tom Walker, and his team are ready to share their hard work with

their peers. This beautiful course never ceases to showcase its beauty and always offers an exceptional experience. Whether your value is derived from the educational opportunities, talking turf with peers or allied partners, or hearing what is new in the market, we have you covered. Attending such an event can be energizing after a long season, or simply a time to step back and consider the past season and prepare for the next. See you there.



Joe Chavarria
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Registration is open! Visit
calendar event of ppgcsa.org

Northwest GCSA TURFGRASS EXPO

October 11-12, 2021

The Coeur d'Alene Resort
on the shore of Lake Coeur d'Alene
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

An event tailored to solve
today's golf course challenges!

Reservations were due by September 1, but there is a chance they may honor our rate - request the Northwest Expo rate.

Sunday, October 10, 2021

7:00 p.m. - **Bushwood Briefing** - meet your fellow conference attendees and see old friends while you join for a no-host gathering at Coeur d'Alene Taphouse Unchained.

Monday, October 11, 2021

Education presented in the Convention Center

6:30 a.m. Registration desk is open.

7:45 - 8:05 a.m. **Welcome**
Event moderated by Gerald Flaherty, CGCS, The Valley Club, Hailey, Idaho

8:10 - 9:05 a.m. **Sustainable Turfgrass Systems** Brian Horgan, PhD, Professor and Chairperson Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences, Michigan State University
sustainable turfgrass system.

9:10 - 10:05 a.m. **50 Shades of Trouble**
Mike Richardson, Professor, University of Arkansas Department of Horticulture

9:30 - 11:20 a.m. **Convention Center - Equipment Distributors** move in first as overhead door will be shut at 11a.m. to allow booths along wall to set up.

10:05 - 10:25 a.m. **Break**

10:25 - 11:20 a.m. **Improving Your Communications** Henry DeLozier, Partner, GGA Partners, Phoenix, Arizona

11:00 - 1:30 p.m. Trade Show individual booth move in - Convention Center (overhead door will be closed by 11a.m. to allow set up along wall) (Must be ready to show by 2 p.m.)

11:20 - 11:40 a.m. **Business Meeting**
PEAKS & PRAIRIES GCSA

11:20 - 12:30 p.m. **Lunch**

12:30 - 1:20 p.m. **On the R.O.A.D. in the year 1 A.C.** Cory Islom, Agronomist, Green Section, USGA, Puyallup, Washington

1:20 - 1:40 p.m. **Break**

1:40 - 2:40 p.m. **Snow Mold Solutions for Your Course** Paul Koch, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Plant Pathology, Molecular and Environmental Toxicology Center, University of Wisconsin - Madison

2:45 - 6:15 p.m. **Northwest GCSA TRADE Show** - Take advantage of this opportunity to talk to leading supporters at a unique event. You must be registered to attend.

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

6:00 - 9:00 a.m. Trade Show Exhibitor move out - Convention Center

6:45 a.m. Continental breakfast

7:20 - 7:40 a.m. **Business Meeting**
IDAHO GCSA

8:00 - 8:55 a.m. **Community Value of Green Spaces: Golf Courses as Natural Capital** Brian Horgan, PhD, Professor and Chairperson Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences Michigan State University

8:55 - 9:15 a.m. **Break**

9:15 - 10:00 a.m. **Practical Applications for the Turfgrass Microbiome on Golf Courses** Paul Koch, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Plant Pathology, Molecular and Environmental Toxicology Center, University of Wisconsin - Madison

10:05 - 11:30 a.m. **Hiring the Best Team Possible** Henry DeLozier, Partner, GGA

11:30 - 11:45 a.m. **Business Meeting**
INLAND EMPIRE GCSA

12:30 p.m. **Northwest GCSA Golf Challenge** The Coeur d'Alene Resort Golf Course. Host Superintendent: Tom Walker

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Bob Popp, Superintendent
Laurel Golf Club, Laurel, Mont.

It all began in 1966 when Laurel Golf Club, started constructing an 18-hole recreational facility. The first golf round was in September 1968.

The maintenance building was built during that time on a tight budget. It was a 29' x 60' cinder-block building with one walk-through door. The ceiling height was 7'10" and the overhead door was 8'7" x 6'10". There was no insulation in the walls and only four inches of insulation in the ceiling.

In 1983, Joe Brinkel, the superintendent prior to me, convinced the membership to build a 50' x 100' cold storage shop



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with a concrete floor. This gave them 5000 sq. feet for equipment storage. They thought that would be plenty big and it would take a while to fill with equipment. Truth be known, it did not take long at all.

In 1988 I came on board as a seasonal grounds crew worker; by that fall, I was asked to go full-time. I had worked for Joe about nine years when he recommended me to the Laurel Golf

Club Board of Directors to fill the position as superintendent in the fall of 1997, upon his retirement.

I asked the board for a little more storage in September 2004, and we put up a pole barn that was 30' x 100' x 14', with a gravel floor. We needed the storage for extra equipment acquired over the years with better technology to help with doing our jobs more efficiently. That new technology equipment included greens mowers, fairway machines, two bunker machines, and two rollers and leaf blowers, to name a few. All of this equipment was needed as the course was maturing and the trees were getting larger and required more maintenance.

I have seen many changes over the years I have been at Laurel. The greens were rebuilt. The bunkers, irrigation, and tee boxes were renovated, along with many other smaller projects. I told the board of directors that while I have had the privilege of seeing these changes, there was one more goal I would like to accomplish before I retired, and that was a new maintenance facility for the grounds. They kind of laughed a little and said, "If you get a new shop that means you would retire?" They laughed, again, and said, "We will look at it in about 10 years," shaking their heads.

In 2020 when the COVID pandemic hit, the whole world had to make changes. Golf courses had to follow regulations that were different from state to state. We saw a steady increase in the rounds of golf. With the restriction of six-foot social distancing, the clubhouse was limited to the number of people to be in the facility at one time. Limited on space, the board

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Taj Mahal

continued from page 11

decided to meet at the maintenance facility to conduct board business. This is how I proceeded to get the ball rolling for our new building.

The board all had seen our facility before, but the majority had not seen the facility and staff functioning on a daily basis with limited space and storage. We parked a fairway mower in front of the overhead door and showed them how the machines would not fit into the shop without first taking the canopies off to get them into the building. Our two-post lift was in our cold storage building, which we could not utilize in the wintertime. The board was on board and said something needed to be done for the maintenance department. They directed me to get bids



Makeshift shop 2020

on a building that I would like to see built. I told them I would get four bids — two turnkey, and two where I was the general contractor.

I presented the four bids to the board. With about 36k difference between turnkey vs general contractor, the board agreed I would have enough on my plate without being a general contractor for the build. They decided to pursue a turnkey bid. After the board researched the finances and talked to a local bank, they presented to the membership via ballot a \$10.00 dues increase for 10 years, at a fixed rate, to finance the project. After the

10 years, the dues will reduce back down. It was presented at the annual meeting on August 23. The vote passed unanimously to proceed with the project.

As we collected the bids, we told the contractors we wanted to start the project the day after Labor Day. However, the annual membership meeting was not until the end of August. Since we were not sure the project would pass, it pushed the start date back. The project was started October 1 and we moved into the new shop March 2021. The new facility is 50' x 100' with 14 ft.

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Greg Baer

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Taj Mahal

continued from page 12

sidewalls. The building has three overhead doors. We have three offices and a restroom; the remaining space is work area. We were able to put in a two-post and a four-post lift in the shop, which has been nice. We partitioned the third overhead door off and made it a separate room for our sprayers and miscellaneous equipment, which will maintain a different temperature for the winter. We installed a 300-gallon catch basin into the floor in that area, as well. The extra space has been great.

When we think back to the old facility, we wonder how we were able to work in that small area. We now can bring more equipment in to the shop and work on them without being on



A new maintenance facility

A Christmas present





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top of each other. The cost of the total project was 336k for the complete building.

Looking back now, it is amazing how the morale has changed as more employees are taking more pride in making sure the facility is kept clean. It is not just a grey cinder block box anymore.

Hopefully this can help some of my colleagues so they can pursue changes or add-ons to their maintenance facility.

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THIS IS THE WEEK THAT WAS - A GREENSKEEPER DIARY

By Anonymous Superintendent

Editor's note: This humorous piece was submitted by a PPGCSA member with an anonymous credit. It appeared in the May 2011 issue of The Perfect Lie. While the author is unknown (at least to us), we do have a guess.

Monday: Want to spray bad dollar spot on greens. Cushman won't work. Sprayer won't work. I don't want to work. Nobody else wants to work. Two of the crew stayed home and did not work. Just had a phone call. The junior golfers are to have a shotgun start on both nines at 8:30. Hung up in caller's face. Should not have had that last beer last night. Mowed greens and tried not to notice that the cups needed changing and the dollar spot is even worse than I thought. Did not mow 13. Hate it. Between the winterkill, oil spill kill and the disease, we ought to tow it to the SPCA and have it put to sleep. Chairman left message in the pro shop to get in touch with him at once. He better not hold his breath. Hit 95 by late afternoon.

Late for supper, wife mad, supper lousy, I'm mad. Watered 'til dark. Showered and went to bed. Wife sexy— I'm not.

Tuesday: Went in at daylight — the air feels like a police dog's breath. Got the sprayer working. Can't figure out why the chemical companies package dusty chemicals in bags that are impossible to open without getting it all over yourself and the sprayer, not to mention breathing it. The cheapest cereal on the market is packaged in easy-to-open-and-close containers. We all should go to granulars — that would snap their eyes open. Fairway mower stuck in wet spot right next to the huge

continued page 18

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Diary continued from page 16

localized dry spot the crew calls Iran. Why are there so many cars in the club lot? The pro shop says it is a ladies member-guest transferred from another club that had a fire in their kitchen. I think I will set one in ours and let them eat at Burger King. Went home early — slept through supper. Wife mad again, too tired to be mad. Mowed rough 'til dark. Showered and ate cold, leftover supper. Felt sexy — wife still mad from early evening. Lost interest.

Wednesday: Slept late, went in at 7:00. Changed cups 18 greens, hit 14 rocks. No record, but close. Thirteen green had a disease that looked like vomit. On close inspection, it was vomit — what a relief! You can always hose off vomit. Birds working on the greens. How many cutworms does it take to fill up a crow? I think their mother was raped by a rooster the way they scratch with their black toenails and dig with their beaks. The member who owns the ice cream plant told me we need more sand in the traps. I told him his maple walnut needs more nuts. He said “times are tough.” I agree. Went in the club for a cup of coffee and the manager asked me if I knew anything about the septic backing up. Left without getting the coffee. Fairly normal afternoon except we are down to one Cushman. Are flat tires contagious? Home for supper at the right time for a change — no one is home. Note says heat a TV dinner. Go

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down to the Old Eagle Inn and wash a steak down with a half-dozen PBRs. Finish mowing rough. Wife mad. Don't care, sleep on floor after watching Sands of Iwo Jima. Love Big Duke.

Thursday: My yellow crud is back. Every year it comes the end of July. Interesting light green spots get weaker looking then turn yellow ... then gray ... then dead. Some say it is Fusarium, some say Anthracnose, some say fu- nose. Wife says it is my imagination. My assistant got rid of the persistent red leaf spot patch on the practice green. He cut it with an eight-inch patcher and threw it in the pond. Sure is wonderful what they teach you at the University of Rhode Island.

Friday: In at dawn again and fell over the barn dog before I could get a light on. Friday is the day we do EVERYTHING. Assistant late again. Sometimes I wonder about him. He wouldn't even hold still when I had to cut the bubblegum out of his hair. Got mad because I cut his headband. This is the day I was going to spray because I missed last Friday that should have gone down the Friday before that. Maybe Monday. Maybe by then the cutworms will have turned to moths and have flown away. Looped around the course in the pre-dawn light and saw four joggers, a mushroom picker, two ball hoppers in the pond,

three members walking dogs, an old lady cutting dandelions and a Canadian goose in the pond. Threw a rock at the last mentioned. I love the course this early in the morning - so quiet, peaceful and tranquil. I think I'll call the state troopers and have all these people arrested. Picked up the remains of a big beer party by the fifteenth and then went to work.

Saturday: Everyone in the world loves weekends except greenkeepers. More turf disasters have happened on Saturday and Sunday than all the Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays put together. Right off the bat four pins and a dozen markers missing and the usual moronic messages written in the sand traps. Why can't they write inspirational messages or the weather report? A neat group partied last night. All imported beer, an empty Southern Comfort bottle and two Cutty Sark's — members' kids. Went to look at a very large pupa dangling from the tree by the ninth and after gazing in wonder for two seconds realized it was a tampon. Left it there, maybe it will hatch.

Sunday: Greens mower failed to show till I had mowed five greens. I would have fired him but then I would have had to finish. Things looking pretty good today. Can't wait till Monday to see what the hell will happen next.



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My Kidney for My Friend

Fred Skogen

The Perfect Lie March 2004

Editor's note. While this is a current picture of Fred and Neil, this article is from the March 2004 Perfect Lie. As we are always looking ahead, sometimes it is easy to forget our archives can be a good source for articles. Early 2004

on our way home from the GIS, my husband, Tom, and I ran into Fred at the SLC airport and learned about his kidney donation. After a lot of urging, Fred (who was superintendent at Mission Mountain CC at the time), agreed to write the article. Now that Fred has recently rejoined the association and enjoying working at Yellowstone Country Club, Billings, Montana, I thought it is a story worth sharing, again.

Sometimes events come up in our busy lives that cause us to reevaluate our priorities. We ask ourselves why we do the things we do. I have recently had an experience that has changed the way I look at everything: my job, my family, my friendships, and life in general.

Until July of last year (2003), I had never seriously thought about the subject of organ donation. Like many people, I had "organ donor" checked on my driver's license. I thought that would be easy if I'm suddenly killed in an accident. I could donate an organ to someone who needs it and it would be no sacrifice on my part; I'm already dead. What could be easier?

In July, I received a call from my best friend, Neil Harvey. Neil is a teacher-athletic director and lives in Manhattan, Montana. We have been best friends since we were five or six years

old. We grew up together in Ronan, Montana, where I now live and work as the superintendent at Mission Mountain Country Club. Neil called to let us know of his deteriorating health. His doctors had informed him that he would soon need a kidney transplant or be faced with dialysis. I could tell by Neil's voice that he was scared as he asked us to pray for his family and for him. We talked for a while and I told him we would be praying and that I was sure God would answer.

Neil and I talked every week or so and he filled me in on the progress, or lack of, of finding a donor. He has two brothers, neither of whom met the criteria of being a match. They were either the wrong blood type, wrong tissue type, or had high blood pressure. Neil said next he would ask several cousins to see if they would be willing to be tested. I

always ended the conversations saying that my family and I would be praying for him, and for someone to be a match. I asked him during one conversation about the possibility of a non-living donor, an anonymous "organ donor," someone who had already passed away. Neil told me that kidneys from non-living donors typically last for 10 years or less. Kidneys from a living donor (that is a good match) can last 30 years, and in some cases, longer. The non-living donor option was to be a last resort, and even then, finding a match was difficult. In any event, I assured Neil that we would keep praying.

In late October, Neil called again. We traded jabs about our favorite football teams and other small talk. Then I asked Neil how things were going with his cousins. Was there anyone who was a match? Neil sounded tired and discour-



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aged. None of the cousins were a match. We were both quiet for a moment, then Neil asked with a crack in his voice if I would be willing to be tested. The instant that he asked, I knew. I was the answer to the prayer. I told Neil that he could stop looking for a donor... I was the guy. Neil was very thankful and said he would call his doctors and they would be in contact with me to start the testing process. I was strangely excited as we ended our conversation.

A few days later, a nurse from the University of Utah called and the long process began. The nurse told me what the process involved, and, if we were a match, what the surgery involved. I told her early in the conversation that I was the person they were looking for, that they could stop searching. She became a little upset and informed me that "friends" almost never work out to be donors. She said that I should try not to get my hopes up, or Neil's. The odds against being a match were too great. Only four or five percent of kidney transplants came from friends; the rest came from close relatives or non-living donors. She sent me the first round of tests.

Within a month or so, I was confirmed as a blood match, and later as a tissue match. These are two issues that are very important for the kidney to be accepted by the recipient. The nurse continued to be surprised with the results. I was never surprised. More tests followed, along with blood draws, countless urine samples, MRIs, and complete physical exams by doctors and kidney specialists. The testing process was grueling; the later tests were mostly to confirm that I was in good health and that my kidneys were healthy.

Finally, just after the first of the year, the testing was completed. The doctors said the final results would come in a week or so. We continued to pray, but I already knew what the verdict would be. On January 16, the same nurse that told me not to get my hopes up earlier called and confirmed that Neil and I were a match. In fact, an excellent match, better than is usually seen even between siblings. I think she was still a little in shock when she told me the date of the transplant would be February 10.

In preparation for the surgery ahead, I added miles to my running schedule, and pounds to my weight training routine. The doctors told me that I was in excellent shape, but I wanted my recovery to be as smooth as possible with the golf season coming quickly. My recovery time should be about six weeks. I am very active, so I was not looking forward to the inactivity I would have to go through.

On Sunday February 8, my wife, Tammy, and I flew to Salt

"This experience has changed my outlook on many things."

Lake City. We met Neil and his wife, Laura, at the airport. We spent Monday at the hospital getting the pre-operation items taken care of: blood draws, paperwork, release forms, and visiting with surgeons.

Tuesday, surgery day, came fast. Up until this point, I had not been apprehensive or nervous about what was about to happen. About ten minutes before I headed for the operation, it hit me: "What in the world am I doing? I'm healthy — I don't need this surgery! What about my own family if something goes wrong?" Genuine fear had hit me, at the worst possible time. Just when I was about to tell my wife my fears, the anesthesiologist walked in to the room. He explained what his job was, and how I would feel following the surgery. He then said, "By the way, I gave a kidney to a cousin two years ago... piece of cake, nothing to it." When I needed it the most, the Lord had sent someone to encourage me. I was heading to surgery with no doubts about what I was doing.

I went into surgery Tuesday at 7:30 a.m. and was out by 9:30 a.m. I don't remember much about Tuesday. Wednesday was a hard day with some pain, lots of discomfort, not much sleep, and lots of poking and prodding by doctors and nurses. By Wednesday night, I was up and walking, and I had a new roommate. Neil had responded better than expected and was let out of intensive care; Neil and I were sharing a room. From that point on until our release on Saturday, we had a great time, especially telling each other how terrible we looked. Neil and I joked that when they released us, the first thing we would do was go bowling. We knew we couldn't golf — there was too much snow!

Both of us improved steadily and enjoyed catching up on old times. We watched old, sometimes bad, movies, and gave the nurses a hard time. Maybe the toughest part of entire week was hearing over the phone how my son's basketball team was faring at their divisional tournament. My wife and my father took turns calling me at every quarter... my blood pressure rose steadily as the games got tighter.

Neil and I were both released on Saturday. I flew home on Sunday, while Neil stayed in Salt Lake for several weeks to be tested every day to be sure that he was accepting the kidney. I want to say here that the University of Utah Hospital was a great place to have major surgery, with a very professional and friendly staff.

At the present time, it has been three and a half weeks since the surgery. I am back to work doing some deskwork, planning for the upcoming golf season, and training new staff. I feel great and I try to walk three to four miles a day. Neil is home, doing well and is enjoying some time with his wife and two young children.

This experience has changed my outlook on many things. I don't take myself as seriously, but I take my friends and family more seriously. I don't take my good health for granted. I take God much more seriously... I'm very careful what I pray for, because I may be the answer!



Chapter Room Block

GCSAA Conference & Trade Show continued from page 1

third return to this property, which consistently offers a lower price point. The Horton is a grand, older hotel located in a bustling part of the Gaslamp. Enjoy antique furniture in the smaller-sized rooms and the classic reflection of the 1880s. Free wireless connection is available. It is within walking distance as well, but near the opposite side of the convention center.

To reserve one of these properties in our room block, please use the link provided via email blasts. The Horton Grand Hotel is \$191 a night for a single/double. The increase in rates is only \$48 total more over a three-night stay, compared to our visit three years ago. The Hotel Solamar is \$261 for a single/double — \$6 total more over a three-night stay — compared to our visit three years ago (at the Residence Inn). The rooms within the block are expected to be a mix of one and two beds, and are available on a first-come basis.

When you book your hotel, please make note of any cancellation fees that could be applicable with either GCSAA Housing or the property. As always, it is important to read the fine print when making your reservation.

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NOTE: We welcome more pictures to share in future issues.



Jack and Gary Colstad. 41 years and 31 years in the golf course maintenance business. Valley View Golf Club, Bozeman, Mont.

Kelby and Sean Sullivan, CGCS
The Briarwood, Billings, Mont.



In this issue,
these pictures are father and sons.



James Gamble directing Dad, Dane Gamble, on course set up for club championship. Bridger Creek Golf Course, Bozeman, Mont.

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



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