

## Looking Forward — the 2022 “Almost” Spring Meeting!

Bozeman is in the top faves for an “Almost” Spring Meeting location. Let’s kick off the spring season of our 46th year as a chapter together — in Bozeman! Join us March 7 & 8, 2022 at the Best Western Plus GranTree. Contracting with the property during the start of the pandemic, we were able to secure favorable hotel rates of \$104 plus tax. The Club Tavern & Grill located onsite received the 2021 Bozeman Magazine Reader’s Choice Award.

Even more important than the notable property will be the educational offerings that will benefit your facilities and make the road trip worthwhile! It is always our goal to address relevant topics, current research and innovative thinking to help you always provide the best playing conditions possible for your budget.

This will be a first-time visit for two of our presenters and in addition, we are bringing back a speaker you have requested to return.

continued page 10

## 2022 Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room

Our 2022 Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room will be offered in a cool location! Enjoy the evening with your turf industry peers at our private event at The Blind Burro, Wednesday, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m., February 9. The Blind Burro specializes in Baja coastal cuisine. Walking distance from both the convention center, and our chapter room blocks, the address is 639 J St., San Diego, CA, 92101. Complimentary food and beverages will be offered thanks to the generosity of our allied partners. Contact Lori to help sponsor the event.

### PPGCSA Upcoming Events:

*Private Webcast, PPGCSA January 19, 2022*

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

*Scholarship/Education Golf Events - TBA*

*Fall Meeting & Trade Show October 11-13, 2022, Billings Hotel & Convention Center*

## “Roch on” 2021

*“Roch on” with the Best of 2021* on Wednesday, January 19, 2022. Enjoy the best seat in the house — at your computer, with the 2021 Peaks & Prairies GCSA private webcast, moderated by Roch Gaussoin, PhD.

This private webcast returns each year because you find a value participating each year. Whether you attend as an individual, or invite fellow courses in their area for the benefit of additional thoughtful discussion and the comradery, it is a great way to connect virtually! Watch for more information to come.

## Liaison Positions for Board of Directors Open

Are you an allied partner or an assistant member interested in serving as the allied liaison or assistant superintendent liaison to the Peaks & Prairies GCSA Board of Directors? These positions are important to the board as they offer the perspectives of our diverse membership.

As a liaison, we ask you to attend the two board meetings each year held in conjunction with the Fall Meeting and the “Almost” Spring Meeting, as well as participate in online board discussions throughout the year, as needed. We also encourage you to keep in touch with your fellow members so you may offer their voice during board discussion.

Please contact Lori or a board member by February 15 to submit your name for consideration or for more information about the position. The positions will be appointed at the board meeting held in conjunction with the “Almost” Spring Meeting.

We would like to offer our thanks to our assistant liaison, Greg Dillard, Jackson Hole Golf & Tennis Club, and to Julien Pates, Midland Implement, our allied liaison, for their years of service.

## Peaks & Prairies GCSA Scholarship Awarded

Congratulations to Cecilia Abell, Montana State University - \$1,000 recipient of the Peaks & Prairies GCSA Turf Scholarship Award. Abell is majoring in environmental horticulture.



*“Peaks & Prairies Golf Course  
Superintendents Association is  
dedicated to furthering the education  
of our members for the betterment of  
golf and its environment.”*

## Inside this issue

President's Message	page 3
Thanks Bill	page 4
Ryder Cup Volunteer	page 6
Northwest GCSA Turfgrass Expo	page 12
New Members	page 16
Chapter News	page 18

## Advertisers index

Simplot Partners	page 3
Masek Golf Cars	page 4
Midland Implement	page 5 & 17
Tom Roe & Son	page 6
Floratine Northwest	page 6
2M Company	page 7
Pete Morris Solutions	page 8
Magic Valley Bentgrass Sod	page 8
John Deere	page 9 & 19
Brandt	page 10
Turf Solutions	page 11
Baer Design Services	page 11
Steiner Thuesen PLLC	page 12
Wilbur-Ellis/The Andersons	page 13
Rain Bird	page 14
DBC Irrigation Supply	page 15
Desert Green Turf	page 16
Planet Turf	page 16
Granite Peak Pump Service	page 18
Johnson Distributing	page 20

## Peaks & Prairies Golf Course Superintendents Association

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**THE PERFECT LIE** is published quarterly by Peaks & Prairies GCSA, and is edited by Lori Russell. Our newsletter is not copyrighted, but we would appreciate credit being given when original material is reprinted. Advertising and article deadlines are the 10th of February, April, July, and October.

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# President's Message

## From Bo Jackson to My Own Turf of Dreams

**Rick Hathaway**

**Rock Creek Cattle Company, Deere Lodge, Mont.**



First, thank you. It is my honor to serve as president of the Peaks & Prairies Golf Course Superintendents Association. I am humbled to follow in

the footsteps of all the great leaders who have come before me serving one of the finest chapters of the GCSAA.

For those of you who don't know me very well, I'd like to briefly introduce myself. My wife of 24 years and I reside in Hall, Mont. We are one year into being empty nesters as both of our children have left to attend Montana State University. Professionally, I have been the superintendent at the Rock Creek Cattle Company in Deer Lodge since 2011.

My "professional" career started in 1986 planting trees for a few extra bucks on a new golf course under construction near Cheney, Washington. Back then, most of those extra bucks went towards packs of Topps baseball cards hoping to find Bo Jackson's rookie edition. My tree planting career led to a steady high school and college job cutting cups seemingly every day for nine years, until I graduated from Eastern Washington University. Go Eagles!

I first joined Peaks & Prairies in 1996 after accepting an assistant superintendent position at the Old Works Golf Course in Anaconda. I became the superintendent of Old Works in 1998 and remained there until 2003. During that stretch both of my children were born in Butte.

At the end of 2003, I was offered the opportunity to host a few Champions Tour events as the superintendent of TPC

Snoqualmie Ridge near Seattle. That continued until new management was brought in when the course sold in 2008.

Unfortunately, 2008 was a bad year to be looking for new superintendent opportunities. Luckily, I was able to find work back home in Spokane, Wash., for the Wilbur-Ellis Company. I served as the turfgrass technical sales representative until the opportunity to move back to Montana presented itself in 2011 at Rock Creek Cattle Company.

And that brings me to today, as I write this article. Upon opening the mail today, I received the 29th edition of my GCSAA membership card. That "Years Active" number at the bottom of the card got my attention. Really, 29 years? How could 29 years have passed and I still don't have a Bo Jackson rookie card?

All kidding aside. Through all of those years, no matter the highs and lows that a career can throw your way, the greatest influence on my professional growth has always been the comradery and continuing education opportunities offered through the association. I don't know where I'd be professionally if it weren't for those colleagues who have guided me through the tough times or lent me a piece of equipment in a pinch.

Whether it is a spring or fall meeting, I always come away armed with new information and ideas that will challenge what I think I know and push me to improve. After all these years, I am always inspired by the "aha" moments during a presentation of the latest research that I can apply the very next day, week, or season.

Our association is special. Thank you to everyone who has made it so. Again, I am humbled to be your president. I look forward to serving you for the next year.

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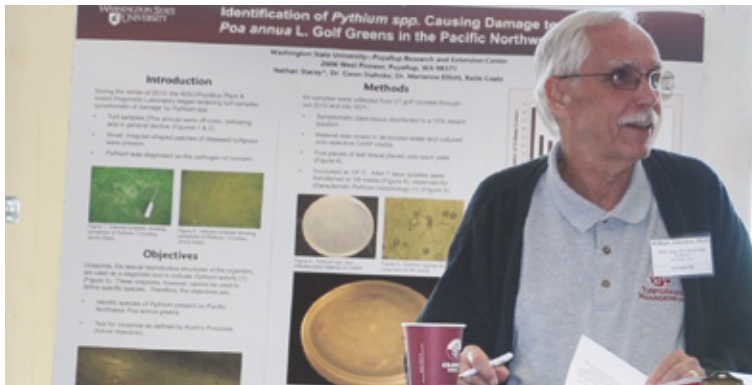
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# Thanks, Bill

**Matt Nelson**  
**Magic Valley Bentgrass**

The recent Northwest GCSA Turfgrass Expo afforded all attendees an outstanding opportunity to learn about new scientific discoveries pertaining to turfgrass management and golf, observe current industry tools and products, and enjoy direct networking with peers. Whether catching up with old industry friends or meeting people for the first time, networking is arguably the most valuable component of live, in-person conferences. No matter how many monitoring gadgets, predictive models or remote technologies you employ, ours is truly a people business. The many conversations concerning labor overheard during the conference is but one testament to that fact.

The connective web shared by so many of the members of the Peaks & Prairies GCSA, Idaho GCSA and Inland Empire GCSA is both impressive and welcoming. Many golf course superintendents at the conference can count several former assistants now managing facilities on their own. Former superintendents now employed in industry roles, or vice versa, refine and evolve standing relationships that further strengthen our

associations and collective expertise. And for many, this occupation of tending to turfgrass in whatever capacity is a family affair. Getting together in person is a chance to share some laughs, share some war stories and reflect on the many people who have helped shape our industry and our individual careers. Yes, there is still value in face-to-face conferences and tradeshows.

It's sometimes said that an absence is perhaps more noticeable than a presence at events such as the Expo. I suppose there is maybe some truth in that saying, but we live in the moment. An absence I noticed in so many familiar faces without even acknowledging it was Dr. Bill Johnston. Bill was a dependable presence in Northwest turfgrass circles for 40 years. He taught and mentored countless attendees of the Expo, conducted a lot of applied research that helped refine management strategies we commonly use today, and tackled many major issues confronting grass seed production. Whether you think about it directly or not, Dr. J and his work probably helped just about everyone at the conference improve their success. He is but one of the many heroes of the collective associations and this industry.

And that brings me back to networking. Its value has been emphasized forever, and no doubt a pandemic reinforces our appreciation of it. Appreciate the opportunities to see old friends and catch up on work and family. Appreciate the opportunities to meet someone new and learn new information. Sometimes our seasons seem to never end with interminable duties, weather challenges and other surprises, but time truly does fly. Take the time during these networking opportunities to thank the people that have positively influenced your career, provided you with timely service, shared advice, given time to serve the associations, shared laughs and stories, lent equipment or just been a good friend. Do it before it's too late. Thanks, Bill!



*Ellen Johnston, Matt Nelson, and Bill Johnston*



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# A Volunteer for the Ryder Cup at Whistling Straits

**Justin Bishop**  
**The Powder Horn, Sheridan, Wyo.**

After a long season with little to no rain and record high temperatures, I was finally on a plane to volunteer for the Ryder Cup at Whistling Straits. The tournament had been postponed due to COVID the previous year, so the anticipation and wondering if there would even be a Ryder Cup taking place this year was finally over. It was time to take a break and enjoy some down time working a major tournament.

Orientation began Sunday afternoon with the superintendents and assistants introducing themselves, along with the crew members who would be leading the volunteers. GCM magazine has a more detailed background on everybody, so I would refer to that if you are curious.

Everyone looked exhausted but you could tell the excitement from all the volunteers was starting to re-energize the Whistling Straits staff. The staff knew the end was near and all the hard work that everyone had put in was coming to fruition. Once everyone was introduced, jobs were delegated to each person with the statement, "You will be doing this each day for the rest of the tournament, unless told otherwise." I had a feeling I would be doing something simple and, sure enough, I was assigned hand-raking bunkers. Even though raking bunkers might not seem as glamorous as riding a machine every day, I was able to walk through the course twice a day, each day, and see firsthand all the effort each



person put into their job. Whether it would be raking bunkers, push-mowing rough, hand-watering with a watering can, walking fairways with a backpack blower to clean clippings, or walk-mowing greens in near darkness. After dinner all the volunteers received a loaded swag bag that was filled with everything you  
continued page 8





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# Ryder Cup

continued from page 6

needed — plus a few gift cards to buy some cheese (we were in Wisconsin, after all). We followed Heidi, the course representative, to where we would be staying, which was not the Ritz Carlton unfortunately, but I was able to pull two bunk beds together and double stack the mattress pads making a very comfortable setup. Time to hit the rack with a 3:30 am wake up time for a 4:00 am start time.

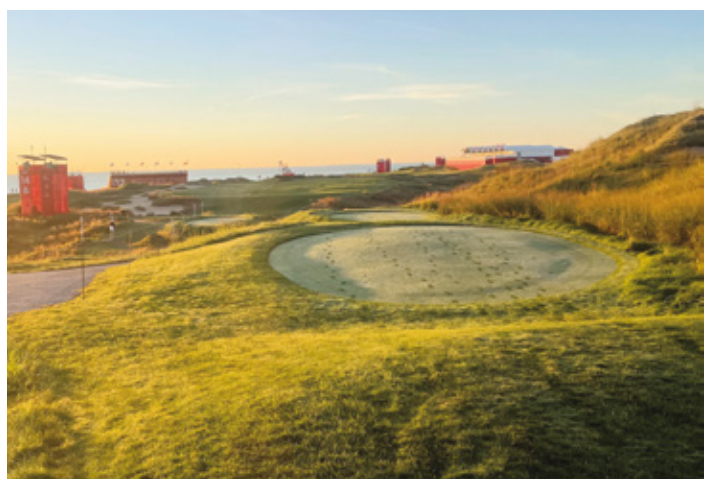
By the start of the Ryder Cup tournament, everyone was dialed in to what he or she had to do, plus with whom they were working. The morning meetings were straightforward and everyone surprisingly showed up on time. My routine consisted of pre-game coffee and donuts before we started, big breakfast after morning jobs, sleep for three hours, go watch golf all afternoon, dinner, evening jobs, team building at Butch and Anne's (a wonderful local establishment), hit the rack and repeat. Throughout this routine, while it was fun talking about golf related stuff, the best conversations were talking about each other's lives and how working on a golf course is so interconnected with our families and their lives, and how our wives and children understood the commitment made, no matter what type of course you are working. Once you finished discussing



that subject, it would shift to how to find a balance with work and family, only to end with, "Why do I work so much?" Everyone has a reason why they enjoy this profession.

The main reason in writing this article was not to talk about everything I did at the Ryder Cup, but to encourage everyone, if possible, to volunteer at regional and national golfing events to take a break from the everyday routine, meet new people, gain a new perspective on things and to have fun. It will benefit you and everyone around you.

For an additional perspective of volunteering at the Ryder Cup, Wally, on Twitter's @Turflego, knocks it out of the park. I worked with Wally every day. I would like to thank the staff at Whistling Straits for all they did to host us, and everyone at The Powder Horn Golf Club in Sheridan, Wyo., for all of their support.



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## “Almost” Spring Meeting continued from page 1

Joining us will be Paige Boyle, a Presidential Doctoral Research Fellow at Utah State University. She earned a bachelor's in environmental, soil, and water sciences and master's in



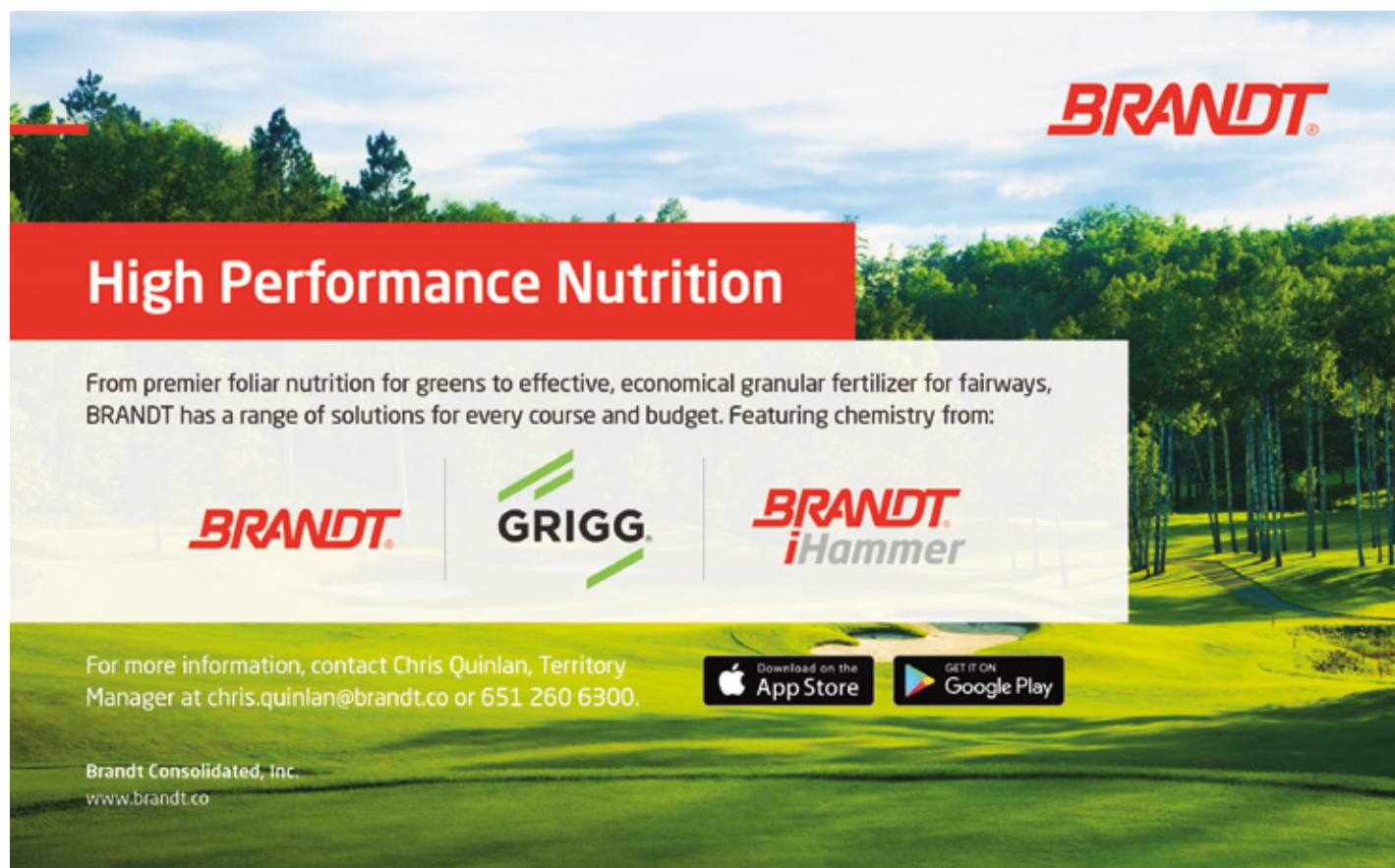
horticulture from the University of Arkansas. As part of her doctoral dissertation research at Utah State, she is studying clover inclusion for value-added turf. Her research background includes stream restoration design, in-vessel compost processing, and earthworm management on golf course turf.

Mickey McCord has been working on golf courses for over 40 years, in one way or another. He enjoyed a 25-year career as a golf course superintendent (achieving CGCS in 1994), and in 2012 started his own business, McCord Golf Services and Safety. McCord's interest in workplace safety training grew and after a couple of years of hard work, research, and many revisions, he eventually developed a series of safety training modules he knew would be a big help to other superintendents. Since starting McCord Golf Services and Safety, over 300 golf courses from Maine to California have used his videos to hold safety training meetings.

In addition to developing safety training programs, McCord designs and installs golf course drainage systems with a partnering company. He has degrees in turfgrass management from Clemson University, and business administration from Ohio University, and he is a 35-year member of the GCSAA.

Our return presenter will be Peter Kolb, PhD. We learned at the 2020 meeting at Fairmont Hot Springs what a rock star Kolb is in the world of trees. Attendees were actually inviting him on site to return. Kolb has been the Montana State University Extension Forestry Specialist since 1997. He conducts research and teaching on a variety of forest restoration practices: post-wildfire recovery and the role of salvage and sanitation logging, forest debris treatments and impacts on site ecological processes, climate impacts on forest processes and disturbance, windbreak establishment and tree pest management and maintenance techniques, tree care and pruning, and private family forest ownership trends. His lengthy list of tree experience truly reflects his expertise — so there was no reason to shorten the list.




Registration information will be available in January and all you need to do right now is save the date!



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## GCSAA Proposed Dues Increase

Jason Busch, The Powder Horn, Sheridan, Wyo., attended the 2021 GCSAA Chapter Delegates Meeting in October on behalf of our association. While Busch will offer a delegate report in the spring recapping both the delegate meeting and the annual meeting at the GCSAA Conference and Trade Show, he wanted you to be aware of the upcoming vote to increase GCSAA membership dues.

GCSAA follows a dues increase process created in 2006 from with input and approval from chapter delegates. The process is tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and equates to smaller and more frequent increases in dues rather than infrequent larger increases. There has been a 6.6% increase in CPI since 2019. The proposed increase is a \$30 increase for A and B (\$430) and \$15 increase for C (\$220). The approval rate for dues increases in the past have ranged from 87%-96%.

## Rounds 4 Research Auction April 25-May 1, 2022

We need your donated rounds! It is never too early to get rolling.

We have two superintendent/assistant teams out there to help you! For any questions or concerns, or for a little help on how to get started, please contact Ryan Blechta, 406-539-4405, Spanish Peaks, or Jason Busch, 307- 752-3579, The Powder Horn.

The Rounds 4 Research program was designed to address a critical shortage in turfgrass.

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*On behalf of our membership, Rick Hathaway expressed our gratitude to outgoing president, Mike Kitchen, CGCS, for his years of service.*



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## 2021 Election Results

We offer our appreciation and thanks to our newly elected officers and directors at the Northwest Turfgrass Expo!



*Derek Hofer*

The slate of directors was an impressive group willing to serve the association. Newly elected to the board were Derek Hofer, Green Meadow Country Club, Helena, Mont.; and Cody Schulke, Yellowstone Country Club, Billings, Mont.



*Cody Schulke*

Elected as officers: President - Rick Hathaway, Rock Creek Cattle Co, Deer Lodge, MT; Vice President - Ryan Blechta, Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, Big Sky, Mont. ; and Secretary/Treasurer - Garrett Turner, The Reserve at Moonlight Basin, Big Sky, Mont.

On behalf of our membership, Rick Hathaway expressed our gratitude to outgoing president, Mike Kitchen, CGCS, for his years of service.

## Blechta Attends Symposium

Thank you to Ryan Blechta, Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, Big Sky, Mont., for attending the GCSAA Chapter Leaders/ Executive Symposium, GCSAA, Lawrence, Kansas. The March 2021 event was rescheduled to November due to COVID. Two of the many learning objectives of the program included how to be a highly successful team leader for your facility and your chapter, and how to provide a more meaningful chapter experience, through the engagement of members and volunteer involvement.



*Ryan Blechta & Bryce Burton*

Pictured below are Mike Bednar, IEGCSA; Lori Russell, Ryan Blechta PPGCSA, and Bryce Burton, IDGCSA.





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