

# Turf's Up in the Inland Empire

Spring 2016

## New Dates for Our Fall Events

Don't forget we have moved our Fall Meeting and Trade Show to November, and we moved our Pesticide Meeting to October!

We know timing can be everything, and we thought it would be worthwhile to see if these new dates would be better timed for you and your staff.

The Fall Meeting & Trade Show will be November 14 & 15, 2016, at the MirabeauPark Hotel, Spokane Valley, and the Pesticide Meeting will be October 17 & 18 at Hayden Lake Country Club,

We have a crazy great rate of \$70 for the "Executive" sleeping rooms for the fall meeting – but our room block will end earlier than usual. To receive this low rate, your reservations will need to be made early. But don't worry, we will remind you!

## Grass Makes History

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

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



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

We are proud Pete Grass is our guy. We benefit year after year from his participation and his insight. And we are thankful he still cares as much today about his profession and his associations as he leads GCSAA into the future.

## Camp Attends Symposium

Jen Camp, Parks and Open Space Superintendent, City of Liberty Lake, Liberty Lake, Wash., and Lori Russell attended the 2016 Chapter Leader/Executive Symposium at GCSAA headquarters in late March.



Representatives of 27 GCSAA chapters came together to focus on their leadership skills to better lead their chapter, as well as course facilities. Numerous topics were covered during the event including leadership, governance, operations, and communications, as well as a small group discussion among the northwest chapters in attendance.



Lamb (PPGCSA), Roth (IDGCSA), Camp (IEGCSA), Phipps, and Russell

A publication of the Inland Empire Golf Course Superintendents Association

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## *Superintendent Profile*

# Chamber's Way

I was born and raised in Spokane, but I spent a number of years in New Jersey on golf courses and now my family and I live in Yakima. My wife, Brianna, is also a Spokane native and although born in New Jersey, Landon (our three-year old son) is quickly becoming a Pacific Northwest kid. Our four-year old Weimeraner named Paisley has spent her entire life on golf courses and loves her new home.

While working seasonally at Hangman Golf Course, I earned a BA in Business Administration from Eastern Washington University and with inspiration from Mr. Mike Barber. I enrolled and attended Washington State University to earn a turf degree.

While in New Jersey, I worked for two different private country clubs. I completed an internship in NJ at Ridgewood Country Club in 2003 and the superintendent offered me a position before the end of my internship. He wanted me to start immediately but I told him I would see him in May 2004, after I graduated. I started as a spray tech and was then promoted to assistant the following season. I remained there for five years. The final five years were at Panther Valley Golf and Country Club as the superintendent.

Once our son was born, we were determined to get back to the northwest near our family. The Yakima Elks Golf and Country Club presented an offer to become the superintendent, and I accepted, starting April 2014. And yes, the "Palm Springs

**Curt Chambers, GCS,  
Yakima Elks Golf Course  
Yakima, Wash.**



*Brianna, Curt, Landon and Paisley*

implementing an aggressive aeration schedule, repaired equipment that was said to be un-repairable, retrained the staff, updated the irrigation pumping system, and overall improved the little details.

There are four fulltime employees (including myself), and eight seasonal employees, four of whom are part time. Long-term projects are to implement a tree program to include pruning, take-downs, and re-planting. We are also considering an

continued page 4

of Washington" sign, just as you enter Yakima, frightened both my wife and me as we drove into town for the first time. However, we now call Yakima home and are happy here.

We are a private 18-hole Elks club. The majority of our play comes locally, but we allow Elks from other lodges to play. The property includes an RV area, of which we are also responsible to maintain. The course is open year round, pending snow cover, and we do utilize temporary greens during the winter months.

The Elks needed some TLC. So my main focus when I started was to give everything from the maintenance shop, equipment, golf course, member golf cart storage and landscape beds a big hug. First project was a reface on the bunkers; we reestablished edges and lost features. I then addressed agronomics – the thin turf in fairways,







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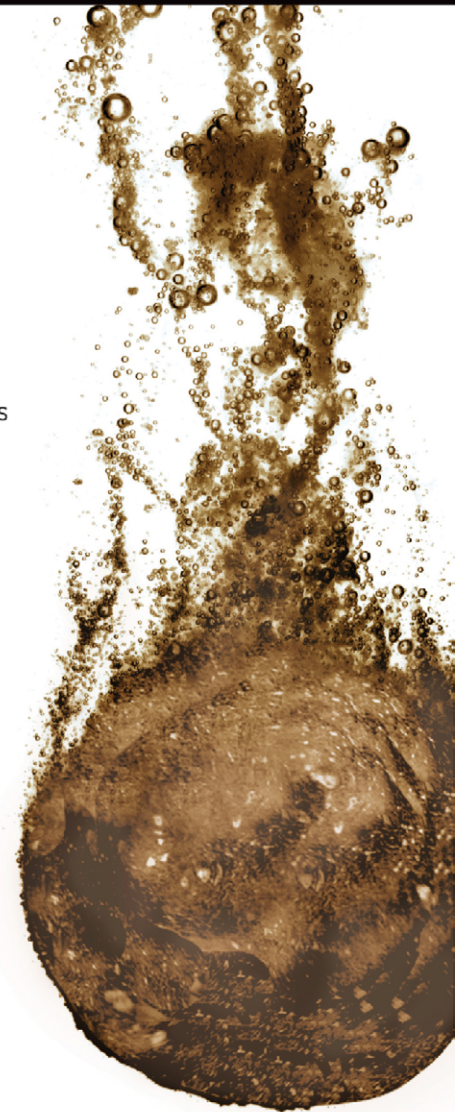
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When I am not on the golf course, you can find me with my family on an excursion around the area, in the backyard playing with our son, or in the garage roasting coffee. I also enjoy mountain biking, hiking, and recently began snowshoeing.

I look forward to getting to know everyone in the region and being part of the IEGCSA.

*(Editor's note - We offer our appreciation to Curt - even as a new member, Curt was willing to serve all of you on the board of director's!)*



# Turf Tips from Whitetail

**Rick Mooney**  
Whitetail Golf Club, McCall, Idaho



## December 2015, Grass Clippings

Winter has arrived here in the West Central Mountains. We've received eight inches of snow and hope it will stick around to keep the ground insulated from freezing. We had a great season in 2015, in large part because we weren't growing in or sodding new turf in the spring, like we have done in recent years.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain to my fellow members some of the unique practices we use here at Whitetail. While on the topic of potentially having to grow in new grass due to ice damage, I would like to share a couple of things we've done



in the past to help manipulate Mother Nature's grasp. I had our mechanics turn our John Deere bunker rake into a water

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

Another practice we use during late winter is finding the right product to melt snow





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if the conditions and pressure call for it. In the past, we've tried anything from black sand to a light weight granular designed to absorb water on baseball infields. Last year, we tried a new product called Profile Porous Ceramic Greens Grade. A PPC particle is made up of 74% pore space with 39% capillary (water) pores and 35% non-capillary (air) pores. We used walk-behind fertilizer spreaders early in the morning while the snow was frozen to spread the product. We put (4) 50 lb. bags down per green. What we liked most about this product was the gradual melting cycle. Rapid melting, without allowing the surface water time to drain off before re-freezing, results in the "freeze thaw" factor, which we all know isn't a good thing. We also used Profile to melt snow on our bentgrass tees. Another benefit was that there was no clean up or heavy areas of black sand to mess with. We noticed a quicker spring green up, too. We use Profile for our divot mix during the golf season, as well. Ideally, we would like to leave our greens and tees alone during the winter and let Mother Nature do her thing, but that isn't always the case.

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## Are you Building Social Capital?

David Phipps, GCSAA NW, Field Staff Representative

We all know how important it is to have a good working relationship with your head golf professional. Sometimes, it is just enough to keep things running smoothly, and with others, it can become a truly lasting friendship. At The Valley Club in Hailey, Idaho, Gerald Flaherty, CGCS, and Jamie Sharp, PGA, have taken their relationship to the next level. They have become business partners in a small venture that is called Advanced Scoreboards, LLC. They have combined their talents to produce a product that is called TaskTracker. With Gerald's ideas and firsthand knowledge of the golf maintenance industry and Jamie's background in

internet technologies, the two of them put together a labor tracking product that is internet-based and works on multiple platforms.

By now, you have probably already heard of TaskTracker or even walked by the both at GIS 2015 and GIS 2016. Chances are you would have had to wait in line to get the scoop on the product. Aside from the fact that Gerald and Jamie won the 2015 Innovation award, sponsored by Jacobsen, and their product is winning the favor of many superintendents, the most important factor is the friendship that the two have forged throughout their time at The Valley Club.

Last October, I was taken by their presentation that they gave to the Idaho GCSA at their annual fall meeting. The two of them stood up there and gave, what I would consider, the best presentation that I have heard on the pro/superintendent relationship. They both brought up the obvious elephants in the room but instead of Gerald saying Jamie was the best sweater folder he had ever seen, Jamie actually shouted his own accolades. Gerald even admitted that he had fudged on a few frost delays or so in the past, as well. In

the early years, the pro shop/maintenance shop relation was rather contentious. Gerald quickly realized that much of the issue was in his own house. His assistants had grown to expect an adversarial relationship so that's just how things were expected to be.

Gerald knew that things had to change so he began what he called, building social capital. In other words, getting to know one or another outside of the boundaries of the everyday work place. Or you could say building social relations that have productive benefits. Gerald and Jamie both began to spend more time in each other's area, getting to know their respective staff members. Then they began to ask their assistants to do the same thing. They were building social capital in one another and pretty soon the channels of communication had opened up completely and the overall workplace was more productive. This has been so successful that the general manager has seen the benefits and now wants the F&B manager to spend a week working on Gerald's crew.

On the few occasions that I have visited The Valley Club, I can certainly say that the atmosphere is a very positive one. Gerald and Jamie have created a teamwork atmosphere that has transcended throughout both of their professional and personal lives.



*Second from the left, Jamie Sharp, PGA, building social capital*



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