



# Turf's Up in the Inland Empire

Spring 2017

## Summer Golf Outing at The Club at Rock Creek

Join your fellow members for an opportunity to network mid-season at The Club at Rock Creek! Relieve your summer stress and spend a little time finding out what is working – or isn't working – in the region, while you play this beautiful links style course designed by Tom Weiskopf,

The fun begins at 1:00 p.m. on July 11! We timed this to allow an opportunity for morning responsibilities and/or travel time.

Hole sponsorships will be available and appreciated! You are welcome to reserve your sponsorship now.

A box lunch is included with your \$60 registration fee. We thank course superintendent, Kyle Capps, CGCS, and The Club at Rock Creek for hosting our association.

Treat yourself – and your employees - to this experience. Guard July 11 on your calendar. Registration will be available late May.

*(The Club at Rock Creek shown below)*

*"... the canvas we started with was absolutely spectacular. Eleven hundred acres of rolling lakeside terrain thick with mature Lodgepole Pine, Western White Pine, Black Cottonwood, Quaking Aspen and Western Red Cedar, and blessed with dramatic elevation changes and numerous creeks and wetland areas."*

— Tom Weiskopf, Course Architect



## We Thank YOU!

Already since the start of the year we have enjoyed a successful GIS hospitality room, a booth at the Spokane Golf Show, and the Spring Meeting - which included a silent auction, golf event and wine tour. Lots of volunteers and sponsors stepped up to ensure each event was successful. And this is only spring – BMPs are up next with several volunteers taking the lead, and more events are still to follow in 2017.

All of this activity keeps your association strong and your involvement keeps it your association. We couldn't do it without you and we thank each of you.

## Turf Equipment Technician Certificate Program

*Training and skills recognition for EM and technicians*

The Turf Equipment Technician Certificate Program is a series of exams designed to demonstrate proficiency in key competency areas related to turf equipment. This certificate program is available to any and all turf equipment technicians regardless of whether or not you work for a golf course. For more information visit [gcsaa.org](http://gcsaa.org) and find Certification & Exams under the education tab.

A publication of the Inland Empire Golf Course Superintendents Association



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## *Where It All Began*

### **Shane Hughes, Golf Course Superintendent Tri-City Country Club Kennewick, Wash.**

I was recently asked how I completed my career goal of becoming a golf course superintendent before age thirty and

what driving force influenced my lifelong passion for the turfgrass industry. Well, remember those Fisher-Price bubble mowers? They were awesome! It's safe to say most of us have played, purchased, or watched a child pop around with one. That's where it all began. As a little boy, I followed my dad while he mowed the lawn, mimicking his every motion and loving every moment.

The bubble mower soon developed into a real lawn mower. I was in fifth-grade, walking my dad's lawn mower down the block, and mowing my neighbor's lawns. The learning curve was steep at that age! But, it was fun, it was hard work, and it was rewarding.

Fast forward to senior year in high school and business in the neighborhood is booming. I'm eighteen-years old, owning a truck, trailer, mowers, blowers, weed eaters, and servicing twenty-five clients each week. I was running a real business with real customers and what I loved most at the time, real independence.

That's how my story in the turfgrass industry started. In those early years I learned what I was passionate about. That time in my

life fostered the desire to set goals, develop, and implement plans towards achieving those goals. The early years created my path forward attending college, working three incredibly diverse internships, and moving my career to the Tri-Cities.

Were there slipups along the way? Of course! Funny thing is, that fifth-grade boy was fired from his very first lawn-mowing job. But did that deter me? Maybe it should have! I believe that instance motivated me even more to succeed and accelerated my path forward at a young age.

So, what advice do I have, what would I do differently, what would I tell someone setting foot into their first day in the classroom or onto the golf course? My first piece of advice would be to have patience. A mentor once told me everything happens for a reason, and I truly believe that. There have been many, many moving parts that got me to where I am currently and many individuals involved along the way. Make a plan, be flexible, and have patience. Your goals and ambitions will not happen overnight in this industry. It takes time, planning, effort, and a little bit of luck to get to where you want to be. Stick to your plan and have patience.

Second piece of advice, know what you do best and utilize resources that help you understand what you don't know. I excel at the business aspects, budgets, scheduling, performing maintenance practices, and managing my team. That's what I'm good at. I utilize industry professionals to help me develop chemical programs and am constantly learning, as a book states, 'The Art of Balancing Soil Nutrients.' That's ok for me now.

I'm not an expert at everything nor intend to be at this time in my career. I have room to grow and am aware of the areas that need my attention. Know your strengths, do them exceptionally, and don't be afraid to reach out and ask questions to those who know more than you do. You will be surprised at the warm feedback and information our industry provides individuals who simply ask questions.

Last, work really freaking hard and have fun doing it. This industry is very unique. Long hours and hard work are a requirement. I believe you either both love it and have a long prosperous career, or you get out quickly. I love what I do and worked very hard for ten years to have been offered my current position as the golf course

continued page 4



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**Hughes** continued from page 4  
 superintendent at Tri-City Country Club in July of 2016. I also have made it my goal to have fun each day at work performing some task that keeps me coming back. Make it your business to perform efficiently, but have fun doing it. Your personal wellbeing will be improved if you find a balance between the hard work, long hours, and having fun.

I truly love this industry, what we do, those with whom we work, and what we collectively accomplish. I believe as a young industry professional that there will be many more opportunities for advancement in the coming years. For students, assistants, or young industry professionals like myself, continue to network and get involved in your local communities. Become a GCSAA Member, join your local GCSAA Chapter, talk to the superintendent down the street, join a business networking group, sit on a development and economic counsel, get certified with the WSDA, and complete American Red Cross courses. Opportunities present themselves at the most random times, so have patience, brush up on your skillsets, work hard, and have fun. You will achieve your goals. At age eighteen I thought it would take me four years to become a golf course superintendent. Well, it took ten years and I'm much more diverse personally and professionally because of the effort it took to achieve my goal.

## UTILIZE RESOURCES WITH BMPS

**Blake Meentemeyer,**  
**Agronomist,**  
**USGA Green Section,**  
**West Region**



As stewards of the land, superintendents manage a complex ecosystem of soil, grass, trees, water and native areas. Resource management is no longer a novelty – it's a way of life and it affects the bottom line. The goal of resource management is simple; make a golf course the very best it can be at a reasonable cost while bolstering its benefits to the plant-based ecosystem on which we play the game – i.e., economic and environmental sustainability.

Many superintendents have fostered best management practices (BMPs) to best utilize resources. BMP Case Studies highlight how superintendents are shaping the game on a local level and creating opportunities to share individual successes and hardships. They highlight some of the very best ways to get things done. To find case studies, simply use a web-based search engine and type in 'USGA BMP Case Studies' or go to the Course Care section of USGA.org to find a complete list of case studies cooperatively written by USGA Green Section agronomists and golf course superintendents across the country. The USGA BMP Case Studies Interactive Map also is quite helpful to find case studies near your respective location.

While many of the case studies are site-specific, they offer a good starting point to help the industry work toward the GCSAA's initiative of having golf courses in all 50 states adopt science-based agronomic practices that support proactive environmental stewardship. The USGA is proud to collaborate with many of you and the GCSAA on this important project.

*Do you have a unique way of doing things that saves time and money or bolsters the environmental benefits of golf? Please share your ideas with me this season, as I'm happy to showcase your facility and share your ideas with other superintendents throughout the country.*

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# A YEAR OF EXPERIENCES, OPTIMISM AND THANKS

**Peter Grass, CGCS  
Hilands Golf Club, Billings, Mont.**

Having just completed a year as President of GCSAA, I am looking back on the people, places and responsibilities that were all intertwined within that year.

First of all, the title of President is reflective of the person responsible for heading up the Board of Directors, which, as a group of nine, is really the entire elected leadership of GCSAA. No one of the nine is any more or less important than another to the representation and governance of our Association. As a whole, our job is to give strategic guidance to Rhett Evans, our CEO, and then for he and our staff to carry out the mission, vision and values that GCSAA has established.

As President, my role differed from my previous seven years on the board in that it was my responsibility to be the main representative of GCSAA at major golf, industry and allied association events along with helping to organize and preside over our four quarterly Board meetings.

My year of representation was filled with so many unique and rewarding experiences that gave me a chance to share the stories about what our growing membership, now just over 17,800 members in 72 countries, does for the golf industry each day. Whether superintendents, greenkeepers, course managers, assistants, university teachers and researchers, allied association representatives or those representing our great industry partner companies, our members are passionate about their roles in this great sport and game that is "golf." Attending for at least a few days (often more at golf

events like The Masters, US Open, PGA Championship and special bonus events last year), the Olympics and Ryder Cup, were exciting and the reasons for being there were twofold. First, being able to meet, thank and interact with our members who work daily at those facilities and also the hundreds of members who volunteered on the maintenance staffs during those events. Second and equally important was to interact among the leadership of the major golf organizations, USGA, PGA of America, PGA Tour, R&A and International Golf Federation, to make sure that the work of our members was recognized as key to the success of those golf events. This meant being an



*Rhett Evans, CEO and Grass "Ambassador", as such, for the hard work and long hours our members put in to make golf events such as these "majors", down to the everyday play at courses around the world, enjoyable for the participants and profitable for the facility or organiza-*

*tion, of which they work.*

The non-golf tournament area of representation was to attend conferences; the world (literally) of acronyms included BIGGA (England), CGSA (Canada), FEGGA (Europe), ASGCA (Architects), NGCOA (Owners), GCBAA (Builders), the annual meeting of the PGA of America and meetings with the leadership of the USGA and new PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan. The main goal of this area of representation is exactly the same as mentioned above, but also to, in one-on-one settings, be able to discuss how our groups can work more closely together and better support our roles within the industry.

Looking back now as people have asked, "Was it fun, did you enjoy the experiences?", my answers have been, "Absolutely, it was fun (95% of the time, travel can be a pain sometimes) and my experiences were great." It was not without unique challenges at times, when you have that many members (and opinions), but it is a good thing when people are passionate and care about their profession so much. The people I was able to meet and places visited around the world were once in a lifetime opportunities. I ask myself, "Did I give more than I got?" I got a lot, but do truly feel that by my representation and the work of my fellow board members,

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Wine Valley Golf Club and  
Tyler Daniels, host superintendent  
for a great  
afternoon of golf  
during the Spring Meeting!**

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Rhett and the GCSAA staff, plus the great work that you all as GCSAA members are doing, we have a great story to tell and the world of golf is listening. I have seen it firsthand and hope you feel at your facility the recognition and appreciation for what we contribute to the enjoyment of the game and stewardship of the land with which we are entrusted.

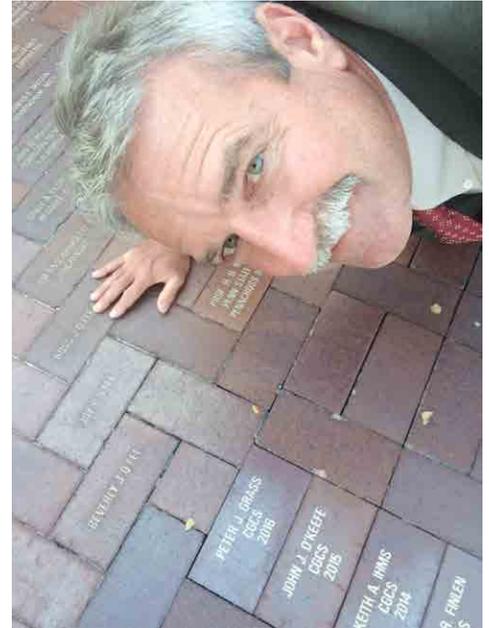
Representing Hilands Golf Club as a nine-hole facility, where I have spent my entire career, has been special and I am thankful for the board, membership and staff of HGC for their support and help, allowing me to serve as president. An extra special thanks to Stephen Grass and Jesse Bury, along with all of my other grounds

staff (including former assistants NaTalia Arlint and James Thelen) covering for me while away and also many times while I was "home" but busy attending to GCSAA business. Think about your situation and thank those who make your life better and work hard at your facility. Remember that we work as a team to achieve all that we do.

What I have learned, and think that so many GCSAA members do not fully appreciate, is what OUR Association does for our profession, careers and the game of golf each day. It may not always seem that there is a direct result back to us from paying our dues, but I saw it every day in the programs, services, advocacy and overall caring to do the things that make our mem-

bers and golf in general successful. As with anything we do or belong to, what we put into it directly reflects in what we are able to gain from it. I will leave you with this... use GCSAA and the resources your membership provides to better yourself, your staff, and your facility and

that will carry over to making your career and the game in general better. Over many years now (thru my involvement in both Peaks & Prairies GCSA and GCSAA), I have become a better boss, employee, leader, follower, friend, husband, and community member. By giving, I have received the friendship of so many and learned so much from those with whom I have been associated.



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# A Great Elevator Speech

David Phipps, GCSAA Northwest Field Staff

I know we've all heard about it, but how many times have you needed to use it? I'm talking about your elevator speech. Google defines an elevator speech as a clear, brief message or "commercial" about you. It communicates who you are, what you're looking for and how you can benefit a company or organization. It's typically about 30 seconds, the time it takes people to ride from



the top to the bottom of a building in an elevator. If you are a superintendent or someone working in our industry, being prepared for that one time when someone asks you what you do, can make a big difference in how that person perceives you.

We all have our own elevator speech and are probably not even aware of it. Let's say you run into an old friend and they ask you "How's the family?". For the next 30 seconds, you will probably give them a brief update on the kids and your spouse and then you're off to the next subject. This morning after my swim at the gym, I was enjoying the sauna for a few minutes and started a light conversation with a gentleman sitting across from me. He proceeded to ask me what I did for a living so I explained that I was a golf course superintendent by trade and am now currently working for the golf course superintendents national association (GCSAA). I knew right away that this guy wasn't a golfer when he asked me how we keep the grass so green. I went into my elevator speech and told him how superintendents are always in the quest for knowledge and how we constantly work to reduce our inputs. Then I gave him my favorite analogy which worked out great since I wasn't wearing my shirt. As I patted my tummy I said, turfgrass is like you and me, if we over feed it and give it too much to drink, it becomes unhealthy. Right then, I saw that look in his eye. It was either the fact that he instantly got the point or he was repulsed by my budding spare tire. I would like to think it was the prior.

My point is, I gathered enough information in that short period to give him the golf course superintendents perspective on fertilizer and pesticide use. I feel like he left enlightened on our position and could probably tell someone else the same story. It's all about one victory at a time. We may not be able to change the masses in one fail swoop, but if we all work as individuals with a common message, or our elevator speech, we may be able make a difference just one encounter at a time.

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Thank you Lane Mountain Sand, Simplot Partners and  
Desert Turf for the wine tours!

## New Members 2017:

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The Club at Rock Creek  
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Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814  
Assistant Superintendent

Matthew Crane  
PO Box 328  
Sunnyside, WA 98944  
Student  
Walla Walla Community College

Sean Lanphere  
Yakima Elks Golf Club  
318 Golf Course Loop  
Selah, WA 98942  
Golf Course Superintendent

Mikeal McLain  
Meadow Springs Country Club  
700 Country Club Pl  
Richland, WA 99352  
Spray Technician

*The Inland Empire GCSA is established to serve members,  
advance the profession and promote the enjoyment of golf  
through responsible golf course management practices.*