



# Turf's Up in the Inland Empire

Summer 2019

## This Conference is Relatable to YOUR Situation

### A bold statement, we know

We have what you want to hear. We have topics you requested – and we are covering many of your varied responsibilities. In fact, we have topics that may appeal to other key employees at your facility. Bring them along to the Fall Meeting & Trade Show, MaribeuPark Hotel & Convention Center, Spokane Valley, Wash., November 4 & 5, 2019.

### Regional agronomics

These presentations matter to you and your facility. Clint Mattox's research is conducted in the Pacific Northwest and is often partially funded by your NTA dues. We are talking truly regional topics, folks. With so many applicable options, it was difficult for the education committee to narrow down the presentations to offer. Mattox's career in turf has given him a wide scope of experience and would probably be a pretty interesting presentation in itself covering his time spent in Berlin and Paris, to his graduate studies at Oregon State University where he is currently working towards a doctorate. Mattox is majoring in Horticulture with a minor in Botany and Plant Pathology.

### Peer related education is...relatable

We know education offered by practicing superintendents can have a unique value. Chris Carson may be located far, far, away – but the information he has to offer is relatable to all regions. Years back Carson spoke to Peaks & Prairies GCSA with such positive results, we have been looking forward to bringing him to the Inland Empire. His no-nonsense "Jersey attitude" gets right down to the nitty gritty of dealing with budgets. You will learn practical information related to varying aspects of your budget to take home from the conference. This is regardless if your budget is "set"

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## Condos and Hotels Available in Chapter Room Block at GIS

Our chapter room block for the 2020 GIS in Orlando is open and the link can be found on our email blasts. A NEW option this year, we offer two and three bedroom condos, in addition to our two hotel properties. Not knowing how popular the condo option will be, we have a limited amount in our block. If we go through these quickly, we may have more added to our block if requested early enough! We have three options...

**TWO HOTEL OPTIONS:** Located on International Drive, Homewood Suites (recently renovated) includes a hot breakfast daily, and Monday – Thursday, also includes a complimentary evening social with beverages and food (\$184 single/double). All  
continued page 7

## October Pesticide Conference

Our annual pesticide meeting will be October 21 & 22, 2019 at the Hayden Lake Country Club, moderated by Gwen Stahnke, PhD. Earn 10 Washington and 10 Idaho Pesticide Re-certification credits GCSAA EDUs and enjoy an incredible lunch!

## Summer Outing at Palouse Ridge

We appreciate the entire facility at Palouse Ridge for making the players of the Inland Empire GCSA Summer Outing feel so welcome. We thank host superintendent Mike Bednar and his team for the great round of golf and conditions. The season was still early and it was a great opportunity to gather before the summer got away.

First place in the net division was Tom Walker, Coeur d'Alene Resort, with a 68. Mike Bednar shared second place on his home course with a net 72.

We enjoyed strong level of support from our allied partners. Please review our sponsor support, along with net and gross top scores - page 8.

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A publication of the Inland Empire Golf Course  
Superintendents Association



Inland Empire Chapter

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Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

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## *Tribute from a Farmer*

# Ask, Tom

## Jeremiah Farmer Hayden Lake Club, Hayden, Idaho

Seven years ago, this 'first time' superintendent accepted a job at the Hayden Lake Country Club. I know I am speaking predominately to a gallery of veterans, but I'm sure many of you can remember back to the time when you took your first 'super' position. At the time, I was a cocky assistant superintendent who was pretty sure he knew everything and was going to do his best to prove that point. Well, it didn't take long for the 'sledgehammer of humility' to hit me right between the eyes! To this day, I can't believe that, for all those years as an assistant, walking side-by-side my superintendents, I hadn't noticed the full scope of their responsibilities.

Shortly after my arrival at HLCC, I had heard through the grapevine that there was a very celebrated veteran CGCS from Montana, who was looking to relocate to North Idaho to be closer to his family. Rumor had it he was looking to work for a few more years before he retired and that he wouldn't mind stepping out of the driver's seat to assume a more supportive position. As you could imagine, the first thought that came to my mind (after having been mentored by a very successful CGCS) was, "This guy is going to try and walk all over me!" Then, in walks Tom Ask, who would prove over time to be, 'Mr. Pay it Forward.'



*Tom and Peggy Ask*

Tournaments, I asked Tom if he would like a beer before heading home? He replied, "Thank you, but I plan on speeding!"

If anyone sees him on the 1st tee box of your golf course, I would encourage you to 'Ask' him any questions you might have; he most likely has the answer...

We arranged an interview. When he walked in the door, I was still thinking the same thing - that he was going to try and walk all over me. We began to talk and we weren't fifteen minutes into the interview when I began to realize that all the great things I had heard about him were 'spot on,' - a term of which he is very fond. We shared our backgrounds and experience; and, most importantly, our passion for this game and greenkeeping. He explained to me that he was here simply to be part of our 'team' and would help in any way that he could.

Being a 'first-timer' and new to the area, I knew I was going to need 'a lot' of help navigating a North Idaho Winter. With Tom's extensive experience in Montana, I felt as though I could begin my first superintendent job working with a net under me and, humbly, I hired him immediately. Since that time, Tom has expertly applied just about every spray application, headed up our IPM program and given me and our entire crew much advice over the years.

Although Tom agreed to work 'a few more years' upon arriving, a very intense (and fast!) seven years have now passed and he has finally made the decision to retire, spending more time with his wife, Peggy, and playing more golf! We will sorely miss Tom's expertise, his brilliant sense of humor and calming presence! Humor example: After the final round of one of our Member-Guest

## Chapters of the Northwest Hospitality Room

January 29, 2020, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

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# 4 T's to Improve Your Golf Course that Won't Cost a Dime



Dan Tolson, CGCS, 3 Creek Ranch, Jackson, Wyo.

*The Perfect Lie, May 2019*

Do more with less. We've all heard the axiom. It's tossed around so regularly, it seems like a fad. It usually precedes notification from a board member that your budget has been cut, or a rant by a superintendent who is dealing with shrinking resources.

In a "do more with less" industry, and when dealing with factors outside of your control like Mother Nature and a fickle economy, success can be found regardless of budget size. No matter if your operating budget is six digits or seven, growing or shrinking, there are certain things you CAN control unrelated to finances. By implementing a few common sense tweaks, you can do more with less and make huge improvements...for free!


## Tune your Culture

Ever worked for a screamer? How about the negative 'Eeyore' who is convinced the glass is half empty? No one likes working in a negative environment. Unfortunately, those managers still exist and the attitude you project will be reflected in your staff. In the modern world, if we are going to successfully recruit staff

in a highly competitive market, we don't have much choice but to create a culture where employees enjoy coming to work and feel valued.

In the book, *DRIVE, THE SURPRISING TRUTH ABOUT WHAT MOTIVATES US*, Daniel Pink dissects how three intrinsic motivators can do more to create an outstanding workforce than any external motivators like salary or benefits. By offering autonomy (the ability to be self-directed), mastery (continual improvement) and purpose (working for a transcendent cause), we can lead our staff from robots who are working for a paycheck to 'think-for-yourself' partners engaged in pursuing the success of the operation. It is not always easy to apply these three motivators to a golf course maintenance staff because the problems we're trying to solve just aren't that complicated. Crafting a unique mission, vision, values statement and holding your staff accountable to it can lead them towards these three intrinsic motivators without even trying.

As you consider what you want your culture to be, start with core values. What



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are you passionate about? What is your automatic default that you can't compromise even if you wanted to? The answers point to who you are and what is most important to you, your core values. Distill those down into a



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few concise words or a statement to define your department. As you LEAD and your crew follows, they will begin to share those same core values and it will define your culture. From there you can establish a mission statement (why you are here) and a vision statement (where you are going). Workers will enjoy their work more when they know what they are there to do and why. Once you know what your vision is, you can begin to set tangible goals. Once goals are set, turn your staff loose to accomplish them and boom! you've created autonomy, mastery and purpose AND the resulting intrinsically motivated employee!

This topic is the subject of untold dozens of leadership books and I have just skimmed the surface here. The most important thing to remember as you begin to tune your culture is that the single biggest improvement you can make to your operation is to become a better manager of people. Personally, I have a long way to go in this regard, but I've attempted to become a student of the subject. Find some books that move you, study them and put them into practice.

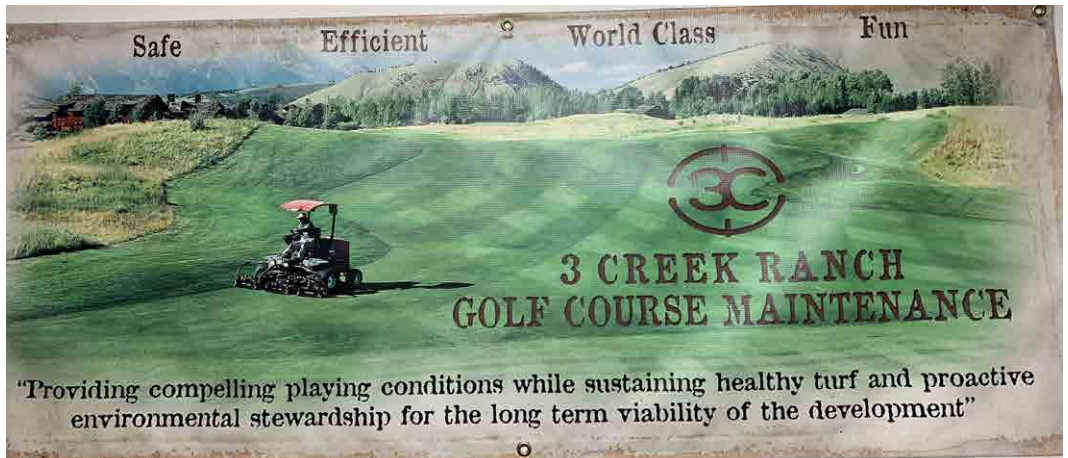


### Teach your Standards

Standards of performance make it possible to hold employees accountable, create a consistent product and streamline training. A maintenance staff working without written and clear standards is like flying an airplane with your eyes closed.

Standards set the bar to get

*High quality framed prints communicating the standard for each area of the course remind the crew daily what is expected.*



*A banner hangs prominently in our break room to communicate our mission and core values*

everyone on the crew shooting for the same goal, and they give a clear communication tool for your golfers on what they should expect to find on the golf course. Most courses have some kind of written standard, usually within the pages of an employee handbook given to new employees on their first day, and then buried in the bottom of a locker never to be seen again. So, how do you get your standards translated off the page into actions by everyone on your staff day in and day out?

Standards should be as short and concise as possible while still getting the point across. We have our standards broken down by area with a short bullet list of expectations for those areas and a picture of what we expect them to look like every day. A picture speaks a thousand words and should be incorporated into your daily training. With the pictures in our manual, a new employee can understand what our expectations are for every area of the golf course in less than an hour.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a video is worth a novel. Don't overlook the power of the video recorder in your pocket. Years ago, the SVW videos were available to help train course staff on the various facets of golf course maintenance. I remember the VHS tapes droning on in the break room, and how we used to have to pause the tape to explain how our course was different from the Florida course in the video. Nowadays with an abundance of video editing apps, you can shoot a clip from your own golf course on your cell phone, throw it into a short video and have it posted to YouTube in 15 minutes without ever leaving your cart. iMovie is a good one that is easy to use and it comes free with every iPhone.

Some people learn by reading, but very few in my experience.  
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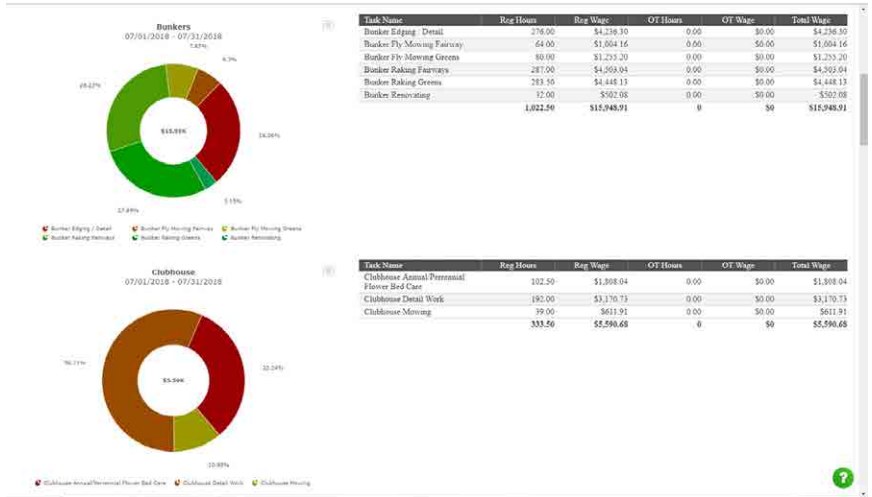
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There is a reason for the explosive growth and success of "YouTube University." Most people learn by watching others. Videos communicate through language barriers and save you time by not having to show different people the same thing over and over. If you have a chronic problem with some aspect of your training program, try making a video of someone doing it the right way and see if that problem goes away.

## Track Data

Goal setting and goal accomplishment is much more difficult if you aren't keeping track of data. Knowing data like payroll numbers, chemical usage, mowing frequency etc., helps you make educated and confident management decisions. I admit, I'm guilty of being a data-head. I have files full of records that I haven't looked at in years. But I save them...just in case some day I need to compile a report. Collecting data IS important and, if done right, can greatly improve your operation. If you have a certain area you want to improve, start with gathering intelligence about that area. Maybe you think you need a new irrigation system. Do you know exactly how much you spent last year repairing breaks and hand watering? How many gallons of water did you use? Was that less than the year before or more? What is the five-year trend of irrigation costs? Without clear and accurate answers to those questions, it would be very difficult to convince your owner or board to drop



\$2 million on an irrigation system. And maybe when you discover those answers, you realize you don't need one as much as you thought you did.

In the old days, tracking data like this was done with a pen and a yellow tablet. It took an OCD mind to keep track of it, file it and compile it into something useable. Thanks to modern technology, we can gather metrics on just about anything automatically and use apps and computer programs to compile it into beautiful graphs and charts. For the do-it-yourselfer, Google offers an abundance of tools. In Google forms, you can create an easy form for your crew to fill out (they all have a phone in their capable of anything) to track everything from greens moisture to bunker sand depth. At the end of the week, export it to a



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spreadsheet and filter out the pertinent info. And best of all, it's free. All you have to do is create a Google account.

If you have a little cash to spend to track labor and other metrics, there are some great companies offering internet platforms for a small monthly fee. At my course we use ASB taskTracker. In my humble opinion, it's worth every penny. I'm not endorsing them over others, but it's a perfect fit for us to beautifully merge a daily digital job board with labor tracking for every job on the golf course. We now have five years of accurate data for every area on the course. Come fall budget time, my board receives concrete numbers of payroll details from the prior three-five years, supporting the labor numbers I'm requesting. It makes budgeting much easier and gives credibility to the requests for increases.

### Take Inventory

Every golf course is unique and has something to offer no other course can, whether a beautiful stream flowing through the middle, a compelling historical past, the 'best' greens in town, perfect bunker sand, or environmental significance. If you want to make your course better, set it apart from the competition. Take an inventory of what makes it unique and special, then leverage that difference for your benefit. Lots of superintendents across the country do a wonderful job at this. Through social media outlets and in their communities, they loudly tell the story that makes them special. When you think of golf in Northern California, what comes to mind? The 7th hole at Pebble Beach! When conversation shifts to wildlife on the golf course, usually Paul Carter's 'Eagle Cam' at Bear Trace comes up in the discussion. Granted, those examples are outliers and not the norm of Montana and Wyoming golf courses, but when your golfers are

sitting around the breakfast table talking about your canvas, what do you want them to talk about? Wouldn't you rather they focus on an asset or something positive than complain about the slow greens or bunker sand? As the superintendent, you have the greatest influence to leverage your best assets. Take an inventory of what makes you special and maximize the impact that can benefit your clients. If the asset you want to leverage isn't quite where you want it to be, set some goals to make it better...see above.

Despite popular opinion and in contradiction to most of the grumblings heard at the bar on Friday night, it doesn't take more money to improve your golf course. As a manager in charge of the most valuable asset at your facility, you have the power to create a positive culture with a clear mission. Once you have everyone headed in the right direction, use photos, videos and clear standards to teach your staff what is expected. Tracking data will allow you to set and accomplish smart goals while leveraging the assets which make your club special. Before you know it, golfers



The first 14 days of a Mountain Bluebird. This box on 6 tees is rocking again for the 6th year in a row. These babies will likely be fledged before the weekend is over. Then summer begins! #wildlifeonthegolfcourse #theclubat3creek



2:43 PM - 14 Jun 2018

will be flocking to your course, business will be booming and the growth in the budget you've always longed for will follow.

## Chapter Room Block Options

continued from page 1

rooms are suites with a complete kitchen and offer free Wi-Fi. Our second property, The Rosen Inn at Pointe Orlando has been an option within our chapter block the last two rounds. We have several attendees who return to this budget property for its proximity to Pointe Orlando and the Convention Center (\$115 Single/Double). Attendees have reported the walls are thin – so if noise is an issue, we just wanted you to be aware. Enjoy amenities such as refrigerators, microwaves, coffee makers and free Wi-Fi (sorry, no pool).

VACATION RENTAL PROPERTIES are now available! The 2/3 bedroom condos and townhomes are located within Vista Cay. Vista Cay is a vacation home rental community off of Universal Blvd. When you arrive, you will go directly to your vacation home – no need to check in at an office. All condos include balconies and the townhomes include patios. The complex also offers swimming pools. (This property was not part of the GIS housing options last time, but it was still popular among GIS attendees - and now available through official GIS housing!)

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## Fall Meeting & Trade Show continued from page 1

each year out of your control, if you have years of experience budgeting, or if you are new to budgeting. Carson always has great suggestions to help you advance your career. The title of his second presentation includes “assistant” – but in actuality, the information can be helpful to anyone striving to move ahead.

### Keep your facility evolving

Larry Gilhuly has an important message for facilities about the use of properly placed forward tees and how it can impact the value of the game. This is a topic applicable to other key employees of your facility, as well. Professional credit is usually awarded for attendance to our events – another great benefit to other departments for participating. As you are probably aware, Gilhuly is retiring from the USGA after 35 years serving the Northwest and beyond, making over 4,000 USGA site visits to over 1,000 facilities. He will highlight the best (and probably the worst) that he has witnessed in his career in the turf industry.

### Stormwater BMPs

Stormwater is capable of delivering large amounts of pollution directly to rivers and lakes. It's a hot topic these days, as is natural stormwater treatment through raingardens, bio swales, riparian vegetated buffers, and other best management practices. During Jim Ekin's presentation, he will address different types of stormwater BMPs - what they do, why they are necessary, and how to be sure they are effective.

### Trade show

To ensure a truly well-rounded educational opportunity, we have a

trade show! We didn't lead with that information because you expect us annually to come through with this great opportunity to talk shop. We will bring you the opportunity to improve conditions and services in the region – regardless of what side of the conversation you are on in the booths. As a conference attendee, it is to your facility's benefit to talk to as many allied partners as possible on the trade show floor. Sometimes the best information or advice comes when you least expect it. Work that trade show floor and take advantage of the knowledge present.

### Epic fails

This meeting, we are changing it up a bit. Instead of closing the event with the popular roundtable discussion, we are offering a moderated panel discussion. We all have experienced failures. Chances are the epic failures of the past will be eclipsed by an epic failure in the future. In fact, while writing this article, a writing failure of my own surfaced. It would be nice if it qualified as an epic failure in my world, but it wasn't - I know I can out-do it without even trying. I am just having a horrifying moment after noticing that a cover article I wrote for another group – an article of which I worked hard to convey my message – included the incorrect title. Today it is glaring, weeks ago, eh, it wasn't. My point is, everyone has failures. A panel of your peers will be assembled to share larger failures, of which you may relate. This will offer a great opportunity to learn from – or laugh about - each other's misfortunes or unexpected results. Do you have an epic failure to share? We are assembling the panel and would like to hear from you.

## Summer Outing

continued from page 1



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

### Top Four:

#### Net:

Tom Walker 68  
Mike Bednar 72  
Jake Leiser 72  
Kevin Staunton 72

#### Gross:

Ivan Gibbs 75  
Geoff Haynes 78  
Charlie Parson 78  
Michael Sorenson 79

#### KP Prizes to:

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