

Turf's Up in the Inland Empire



Summer 2022

A New Location with a Wide Variety of Topics to Make a Difference at Your Facility!

Our 2022 Fall Meeting & Trade Show will bring together several requested topics from our members, as diverse as the locations from which our speakers will travel. This will be the first time each of our speakers have participated in an Inland Empire GCSA event. And in addition to valuable educational offerings, you have the opportunity to expand your knowledge and seek additional expertise from our supportive allied members participating at the trade show.

The conference and show will take place in downtown Spokane, at The Centennial by Davenport Hotels, November 14 - 15, 2022. Located along the Spokane River and Centennial River Trail, this newly renovated contemporary property is near many of Spokane's best dining options and music venues.

Joining us from the University of Georgia, Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, is David Jespersen, PhD (below), an associate professor and turfgrass physiologist. Prior to joining the UGA faculty in 2016, Dr. Jespersen earned his PhD from Rutgers University in New Jersey (his home state) under the advisement of Dr. Bingru Huang. Jespersen's efforts have resulted in a number of



Presented by Jespersen:

Biostimulants:
What's in biostimulants that is so stimulating?

Heat Stress in Cool-Season Turfgrasses:
What is happening inside plants during summer months.

awards including the Watson Fellowship from the GCSAA
continued page 6

Gwen Stahnke, PhD Retires

Earlier this summer, Gwen Stahnke, PhD, retired as the instructor for the turfgrass management's two-year AAS program at Walla Walla Community College in Walla Walla, Washington, a position she held since the fall of 2013. Stahnke was responsible for recruiting, advising, and both setting up and teaching the turfgrass curriculum online. Reflecting on her time at Walla Walla, she shared, "I appreciate the team of instructors I worked with at WWCC who helped to make this program possible to offer to the turfgrass industry. Everyone is a team player. I also appreciated the varied experiences and personalities of all of my students in the program. I may have been teaching them subject matter, but I learned so much from all of their experiences shared in class with their fellow students. It helped to keep me current with what is going on in the industry, as well."



Stahnke grew up in Illinois where she enjoyed mowing the lawn and trimming the grass. She became interested in gardening and horticulture by working with her mom's father, a dairy farmer during the summers and with her dad's father, who was an avid gardener. This interest led to her studying horticulture in college.

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What's Upcoming!

Inland Empire GCSA Northwest Crew Challenge Aug. 9
Chapter Room Block Opens, Orlando 2023 TBA
Northwest Crew Challenge Championship TBA
Pesticide Meeting Oct. 24
Fall Meeting & Trade Show Nov. 14 & 15

Inland Empire Chapter



GCSAA

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

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My Journey Following the Love of Golf

**Geoff Haynes, Superintendent
Galena Ridge Golf Course, Kellogg, Idaho**

I recall being quite young when I first noticed golf courses as we whizzed by in the car. The vast expanses of emerald green grass, the flag fluttering in the breeze, the sparkling blue water, the striking white bunkers and the little carts buzzing with people...it was all very alluring to me. Little did I know then just how large of a role golf would play in my life!

My dad only played golf a handful of times each year and occasionally would take me to carry the bag. I sometimes would get to hit a chip around the green, or a putt from within said green. It definitely captured my attention, but never quite enough to beg for lessons or to go to the course more often.

In the summer of 1988, between my freshman and sophomore years in high school, a close buddy of mine talked me into going golfing with him. Eric was a goofy, lanky kid who had showed up at my small Christian school a couple years previously. He was not what you would call a gifted athlete, yet he played all the sports as I did and we quickly became fast friends. His family bought a house down the street from the local course, The Cedars, and he played a few times and subsequently was bitten pretty severely by the Golf Bug. One lazy summer afternoon, he called and asked if I wanted to come with him to play. He had a driver's license already, and as the youngest one in our

class due to taking first and second grade in one year, I did not. It meant getting out of the house, maybe a Slurpee and some laughs, so I agreed. Sadly, I don't recall much at all about that "first" round of golf that day. I do recall being teased about showing up then, or soon thereafter, in a red Nike tank top with fluorescent blue T&C Surf Designs board shorts, and black and white high-top Converse Weapons. Thankfully, Cedar's management wasn't too hung up on a strict dress code and was more interested in seeing youngsters taking up the game. The junior rate for nine holes was a scant \$2, so with my dad's Spaulding golf set and plenty of time spent in the trees on Easter egg hunts looking for balls, I could afford to go several times per week after the same infectious Golf Bug sank its teeth into me. On the occasion that my buddy Eric couldn't go, my mom would drop me off at the course. I would play nine holes and then call her collect from the payphone in the slightly haunted clubhouse basement to come pick me up. I never took a lesson back then (still haven't had one as I type this in 2022), yet my skills progressed quickly and I was soon shooting bogey golf that next summer.

In our senior year, Eric and I tried to walk on to the local high school golf teams, in whose districts we lived, since our small school didn't offer a golf team.

We each made the team, but living in different districts we qualified for rivaling mortal enemy teams

— he for Prairie HS (Home of the Falcons) while I made the Battle Ground Tigers team. We clashed on the links and traded barbs all along the way that season. I was thrilled when I made the cut at the district tournament (surviving a four-hole playoff with coaches and players following along behind in the fairway) and was going to participate in the state tournament, while Eric narrowly missed qualifying. Even better was that I ended up being the only boy from the boys team to make it to state (and I had played in the 3rd or 4th spot all season), while the entire girls team went to state! The practice rounds and traveling in the school van with a bunch of cute golfing girls was a bit of Xanadu. Maybe that's why I shot 83 and finished in the middle of the pack at the state tournament...while the girls won! I know nerves played a huge role in my round, which I would struggle with for years as I played collegiately and in other amateur events.

After two years at Walla Walla College (now University), I moved across town to Walla Walla Community College in 1993 to enroll in the brand new turfgrass management program after a friend I worked with at The Cedars told me you could go to school to learn about grass, fertilizers and mowers. I had no idea that was a thing! So, I pursued the degree and played golf for the Warriors. I had the time of my young life learning about soil and plant science, pesticides, weeds, irrigation systems and mowers, all while traveling the state playing golf and dining at all-you-can-eat buffets after tournaments, win or lose. I wish I had more time to describe the cast of characters I played with — hilarious individuals whose swings were as different as their personalities, and I wish even more that I hadn't lost contact with them.

I interned at Royal Oaks Country Club in Vancouver, Washington, and was hired full-time after graduation in 1995. I learned a great deal from Alan Nielsen (now retired) during my six years there. We consistently made top ten in the state lists then, and after, due to a challenging tree-lined design and impeccable conditioning.

In 1999, I applied to Troon Golf (the management company) for an assistant superintendent





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My Journey continued from page 2

position. I had married in 1996 and our son was born in 1998. The following year, shortly after our first daughter was born, I accepted a job at The Crosby National Golf Club in Rancho Santa Fe, California, just north of San Diego. Despite said nerves raising their ugly head again, resulting in me vomiting all over the side of my soon-to-be boss's pickup on the freeway, as he took me back to the airport. It was a construction and grow-in position at a high-end private club with a fully Hispanic workforce, two things I had never experienced! The next year was chock full learning bentgrass greens, broken Spanish and working 70 to 80-hour weeks. It was exhilarating and tiring, and when we settled into maintenance mode in late 2001, I was more than a little relieved. Commercials were shot on the course. I met Fred Couples and several other touring pros and started building relationships with the other assistants and superintendents in the region.

After our second daughter was born in 2005, I finally got my chance to be a head superintendent at Maderas Golf Club in nearby Poway. A high-end, daily-fee course, Maderas has a beautiful Robert Muir Graves/Damian Pascuzzo layout draped over and around inland canyons and had been a Troon property since it opened in 1999. It was a challenging ownership group, but I learned a great deal about golf business acumen from my time

there, as well as completing a full bunker renovation.

Early 2011, I found myself with a chance to work at a private residence during construction and grow-in of a three+ acre practice facility. The owner is a certain left-handed major champion with a penchant for big smiles and throwing thumbs up as he walks around the course. He had been trying to get the permitting for the project for years and finally it was happening. He was stoked. One particular morning he was out practicing while I was mowing one of the small 1,000 sq. ft. greens. I looked over in between passes and he was playing the famous backwards flop shot on one of the other greens. Just him and me hanging in his backyard. A very cool few months of my life!

Later that year of 2011, I accepted the superintendent position at Carlton Oaks Golf Club in Santee, a Perry Dye course complete with the trademark railroad ties and volcano bunkers. I immediately embarked on a full bentgrass re-grassing of the under-performing *Poa* greens. We soon were being lauded for having some of the best putting surfaces in the area.

In 2016, in an effort to get closer to my parents who still live in Battle Ground, Washington, all these years later, I took the superintendent position at Galena Ridge Golf Club in Kellogg, Idaho. Galena Ridge is a John Thronson design, which was unfortunately built right in the middle of the recession and barely managed to open the existing nine holes of awe-inspiring mountain golf. In a phone interview, I was told, "We hope to do it



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soon,” when I inquired about the timeline for building the second nine holes. Here we are six years later, and still there is no firm date on when the other holes will be built. It’s bittersweet to sit in our booth each February at the Spokane Golf Show and hear a steady stream of people sing our praises who love the course so much, but who, like myself, desperately want a full 18-holes to play. Fingers and toes are crossed that the owner will greenlight the remaining hole construction soon, as I can’t sit here for too much longer making half the wage I worked so many years ago, with it now being so very hard to earn.

Along the way, I’ve met many incredible people in the industry — both growing grass and on the “Dark Side” of selling all the products we need to do our jobs well. I’ve worked maintenance operations at three US Opens, two PGA Tour events (I guess I should volunteer at a LIV Golf tournament to be sure I’m well rounded), traveled the country playing some of the best and worst courses to be found and amassed enough hilarious and sad professional and personal stories that they could easily fill a book... which is where this writing is trending so to stay on Lori’s good side I best wrap this up.

I love golf...the chase of the perfect swing and flushed contact...I play hard at it and have gotten my handicap as low as a plus 2.7, including two holes in one and personal low rounds of six-under for both nine and 18 holes.

I love maintaining and improving golf’s playing surfaces for people to recreate on...while currently sparring with bad soils, a small budget and staff, and with herds of disrespectful elk, to produce the best conditions possible on a day-to-day basis.

But more than anything, I love meeting other people like me, who are addicted to this confounding game through play and work and sharing life with them. What a crazy fun and dysfunctional

family we are!

Indeed, speeding by those golf courses in the family car so many years ago, who could’ve imagined the twists and turns in life this great game of golf would provide me? The journey continues...

Stahnke Retires

continued from page 1

Upon graduating, Stahnke was assistant superintendent at Medinah C.C. in Medinah, Illinois. After 1.5 years, in 1981 she went back to graduate school at Texas A & M University for her master’s degree in turfgrass with Dr. James B Beard. From Texas A & M, she moved to Lake City, Florida, to teach in the school of golf course operations for four years and then moved on to become area agronomist for the TruGreen Co. in Menominee Fall, Wisconsin, for two years.

Her career path from there led to becoming a sod farm manager in Atlanta and then circled back to earning her PhD in Turf with Dr. Bob Shearman at University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1989, with a move to Washington State as Turf Extension Specialist in Puyallup, Washington, where she remained for the next 24 years. Retiring from WSU-Puyallup in August 2013, she began instructing at Walla Walla Community College that same fall.

We commend Stahnke for her longtime devotion to the turf industry! Over the years, Stahnke has made a difference guiding many students down the turfgrass path. She has been active in industry programs and assisting with research, and over the last several years helped to set up and moderate the annual Inland Empire GCSA pesticide seminar. She is active in the Crop Science Society, one of three representatives from the United States on the International Turfgrass Society’s Board of Directors, and has been a co-organizer of the GCSAA Collegiate Turf Bowl since 2000.

Now that Stahnke is retiring from Walla Walla Community College, she will hopefully have more time to enjoy the many activities in the Pacific Northwest, including walking and hiking. And when the weather is one of those drizzly wet days in the PNW, she just might be reading mystery and fictional books.

2021 and 2022 have both been years of retirement for so many in the industry, in our region. We wish Gwen Stahnke and all who retired our best, but more so, we offer all our thanks for making a difference.



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Fall Meeting continued from page 1

and the Musser award, one of the most prestigious awards for young turfgrass scientists. Dr. Jespersen's research focuses on abiotic stresses in turfgrasses, including heat, drought and shade stress, working to understand how plants respond to challenging environments. His research interests include cultivar evaluation, identification of tools or products that may improve stress tolerance, and understanding the underlying molecular biology of stress tolerance mechanisms.



Chas Schmid, PhD (left), is a research associate in the turfgrass program at Oregon State University where he conducts applied turfgrass research and teaches undergraduate and PACE courses. Dr. Schmid

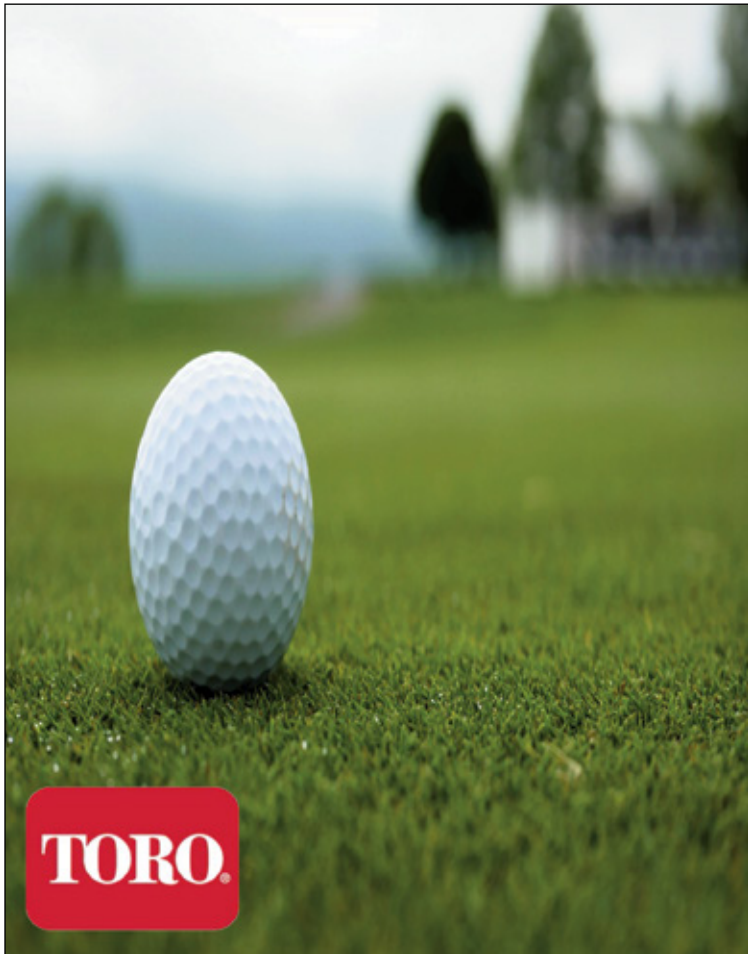
—
Presented by Schmid:
Organic Matter Management Trials at OSU
Best Management Practices for Anthracnose Control

is a South Dakota native who received his B.S. in horticulture and his M.S. in agronomy from the University of Nebraska and his PhD in plant biology and pathology from Rutgers University. His research interests include the management of organic matter in putting greens, the impact of cultural management practices such as soil nutrition and soil pH on anthracnose disease of putting greens, and turfgrass cultivar evaluations.

Peter Kolb, PhD (below), is a favorite regional speaker of the Peaks & Prairies GCSA, whose conference participants learned in 2020 what a rock star Dr. Kolb is in the world of trees. Attendees were actually inviting him on site during his presentation to return — and he did in 2022. Dr. Kolb has been the Montana State University Extension forestry specialist since 1997, based at the W.A. Franke College of Forestry & Conservation in Missoula, Montana.

Presented by Kolb:

Tree Problem Solving – Common Tree Health Issues and How to Figure Them Out
Do's and Don'ts When Planting and Transplanting Ornamental Trees



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Ryan R Callan, M.S., SHRM-SCP (below), of Associated Employers, Human Resources Professionals, is based out of North Idaho and specializes in human resources consulting services, including organizational and psychometric assessments, recruitment and selection projects, conflict resolution, AAPs, investigations, reviewing employee handbooks and job descriptions, unemployment insurance claims, disciplinary issues and termination. Callan also has expertise in surveys and compensation plans and is one of the HR business partners who responds to member hotline calls.



Presented by Callan:

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Registration will be available late August. Click on the calendar event on the home page of iegcsa.org



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June 2022 First Green

hosted by Jeff Gullikson, CGCS and Kalispel Golf & CC, Spokane, Wash.



First Green Pictures by David Phipps. To host your own First Green, contact Dave Phipps, 503-407-0749.

Staff Brought Together for a Common Cause

Rick Hathaway

Rock Creek Cattle Company, Deer Lodge, Montana

(The Perfect Lie, Peaks & Prairies GCSA, May 2022)

I want to share a short story that brought my staff together for a common cause last summer. Our club hosts an annual Wine and Art Festival with proceeds benefitting The Folded Flag Foundation, which supports families that have lost a loved one in the course of military service.

There were a few staff members who were interested in participating in the festival, hoping to sell some of their art. In order to participate, the artists must donate a piece of art valued at a minimum of \$500. On behalf of the employees, I went to the event organizers and asked them if I made the donation piece, would that suffice for any employees who wanted to participate in the festival. They said it would.

So, I was on the hook for a \$500 piece of art. The staff knows I am a bit of a rock hound. So every day for about a month, staff started bringing interesting rocks they would find during the course of their day and leaving them outside my office. I didn't really know what I was going to do with them, but it became a daily ritual for staff to bring their rock of the day to me. From there we would try to identify them and decide if they had any value. All sorts of agates, small geodes, and pieces of chert and jasper were accumulating outside my office.

One day a couple staff were digging a hole and came across a big brown basketball-sized rock that looked layered. I didn't think much of it when they brought it to me. That changed when an examiner on staff looked at it and said, "If that's not petrified wood, you can kiss my butt." Another staff member donated a large 10" tile saw to cut it open.

When we cut it open, it was magical. It turned out to be agatized petrified wood with a perfectly preserved grain structure.



Even the ancient worm holes within it were perfectly preserved. Another staff member, who is a retired tile tradesman, donated a Makita rock polisher to try to make it shine. The rock took a flawless polish.

We decided to cut the stone to look like a 4"x4" piece of dimensional lumber. It turned out perfectly and looked just like one of the old fence posts found throughout the ranch — except it was 50 million years old.

When we entered it as our donation piece, I was nervous that it wouldn't meet the \$500 minimum. When the bidding started, the opening bid was \$1,000. The piece eventually sold for \$2,500 to benefit the foundation.

It was such a memorable experience to get the majority of the crew focused on a common task outside of our normal day-to-day routine. Talking rocks and researching geology to figure out what type of rocks we were looking at became our escape from the dog days of summer. It connected us with the land we are maintaining every day. And, I know for myself and a few others, it gave us a new appreciation for the environment we are working in and how it connects to the geology of southwest Montana and the historic Missoula floods. Going forward we are trying to develop a complete set of tee markers of petrified wood found on the property.

Thank you for indulging me to share my story of last summer.



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