



Rocky Mountain Chapter

GCSAA

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America



Volume 59 No. 1 January/February 2023



Photo Credit: Carey Hofner, The Club at Cordillera

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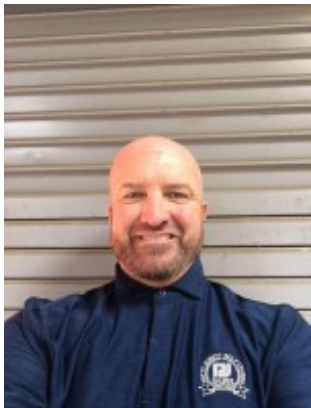
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President's Message

by Jeff Wichman, Superintendent, Patty Jewett Golf Course



The year was 1995 and I needed a job with benefits. The seasonal position, with the Colorado Springs Sky Sox Baseball Club, that paid a whopping \$3.75 per hour, wasn't paying the bills. So 'Plan A' for me, was to become a Colorado Springs Firefighter, until I realized that I do not do so well with blood. While working at Sky Sox I watched a golf course being built, which was directly behind the stadium, the former Springs Ranch Golf Course. I thought that looks like a very cool and easy job, mow the grass and play golf! So, I looked in the local newspaper, in their classified section, and I saw a posting that the Broadmoor

Golf Course was hiring. Then I applied and got the job as the East Course Irrigation Technician. I learned quickly that it was not as easy as just mowing grass and playing golf. Fast forward 28 years and here I am, the Superintendent of Patty Jewett Golf Course. Additionally, I am the RMGSA President. In my wildest dreams, I never thought life would take me here. There were two individuals who were instrumental in my professional career. The first is my Uncle Mark Leasure, who was the stadium manager for the Colorado Springs Sky Sox Baseball Club and he hired me at the young age of 16. In the golf course industry, Pat Gentile, City of Colorado Springs Golf Manager, gave me many years of assistance. Thank you, Pat, for all the years of guidance.

The turfgrass professionals listed below are your RMGCSA Board of Directors for 2023:

Immediate Past President/Special Events – Paul Sibley, Walnut Creek Golf Preserve:

Thank you for your years of volunteering on the BOD: Looking forward to seeing you at the RMGCSA chapter hospitality event in Orlando, FL at the Miller's Ale House. 5:30pm – 7:30pm Open Bar/6:00pm-8:00pm Dinner/7:30pm-8:00pm cash bar.

Vice President/Communication-Reporter – Kevin Kallas, Saddle Rock Golf Course:

Kevin is the editor of the Reporter and is always looking for articles to share with our membership. Please reach out to Kevin, it can be a difficult and sometimes stressful position at times.

Secretary-Treasurer/Conference Committee – Aaron Fankhauser, Rolling Hills CC:

Huge thanks to Aaron for finding Steve Sarros replacement. Tim Davis has accepted the role as conference chair and can't thank him enough. Aaron and Tim already held a conference committee planning session at Rolling Hills Maintenance Shop on December 16th. Save the date for November 13-14th, 2023 at the Denver Marriott West, Golden CO. Thank you to the conference volunteers: Steve Sarro, Paul Sibley, Dave Wilber, Jack Robbins, Kenny Troutman, Sam Reznicek, Jason Aerni, Travis Abitz, Dan Hawkins, Daniel Robbins, Tim Palko, Scott Ellis and Griff Rainford. Thank you so much for volunteering on this committee.

Golf – Jake Jacobs, Flatirons Golf Course: Jake heads up this committee and already has three tournaments that I'm looking forward to playing in. If you would like for your course to host an event, PLEASE reach out to Jake.

Education – Jeremiah Stumpf, Broken Tee Golf Course: We will continue to offer the online the RMGCSA pesticide training classes. Jeremiah and his committee will also be working on organizing more in-person education events as well.

Membership – Bill Tanner, Rio Grande Club and Cole Miller, Cherokee Ridge Golf Course:

Unique to this committee this year is Bill and Cole co-chair on the committee. Bill is hitting up all the Mountain folks and Cole tackling the Front Range.

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GCSAA Delegate

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Class C Ex Officio

Clinton Edger
CommonGround Golf Course
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President's Message Continued

Scholarship – Aaron Fankhauser, Rolling Hills CC: The Legacy scholarship award offers education aid to the children and grandchildren of RMGCSA voting members. An annual award of \$2500.00 to two applicants will be funded by the RMGCSA and administered by the Board of Directors of the RMGCSA. Also is the Rocky Mountain Environmental Golf Institute Memorial Scholarship award. The scholarship award is to recognize outstanding students at an accredited institute of higher learning who are planning careers in golf course management. An annual award of \$2000.00 will be funded by the RMEGI.

Government – Joe Kunze, City of Arvada: Joe and our Lobbyist Jennifer Cassell with Bowditch & Cassell Public Affairs will continue to keep us updated on all the potential pesticide regulations. Gold Day at the Capitol April 2023 is a great way to share our story and have conversations with legislators and staffers.

Assistant Superintendent Rep – Clinton Edger, Wellshire Golf Course: Clinton and his committee will organize and host Assistant's Outing Tournament with keynote speaker, promote Assistant Superintendent Certificate Series, and the benefits of the Annual Conference.

Affiliate Rep – Drew Hunter, Colorado Golf and Turf: Drew is returning for his second year and acts as the liaison between the board and the affiliate members.

Chapter Delegate – Tim Davis, Legacy Ridge Golf Course: Tim is the liaison between GCSAA and the RMGCSA. Tim will also vote on our behalf for any national elections and bylaw changes at the direction of the board of directors.

Golf Alliance – RMGCSA, CPGA, CGA, Club Managers – Gary Leeper: Continue to work with the coalition and promoting the Superintendents in the RMGCSA.

Thank you, Mark Krick ,City of Lakewood, who is my past president council. Always appreciate his calm demeanor and words of wisdom.



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New and Improved GCSAA Programs & Offerings

by David Phipps, GCSAA NW Regional Field Staff Representative

With another season in the books, I reflect on my first year as your GCSAA NW Regional Field Representative — back in 2012. What stands out to me is the increased value GCSAA has offered its members since I joined. The value of a GCSAA membership has never been greater. As you read through my following comments, I think you will agree. I hope you will consider taking advantage of these GCSAA offerings and increasing your knowledge and value as a golf course superintendent, assistant superintendent, or equipment manager.

Not in any particular order, here is my list of new and improved GCSAA programs that I encourage you to take advantage of.



First Green at Indian Peaks Golf Course

The First Green

The First Green began in Seattle, Washington, in 1997 as a program to increase the awareness of the golf course management profession and to provide opportunities for children to visit the golf course and learn STEM education. In 2018, GCSAA officially adopted the program and began promoting it across the country. The state of Colorado has been a First Green shining star in hosting multiple field trips. Mitch Savage, CGCS, has stepped up to be the First Green liaison and is eager to assist Rocky Mountain members in hosting their first field trip. Other First Green veterans include John Feeney at Estes Park and Jeff Wichman at Patty Jewett. Both would be very happy to assist as well!

The Equipment Manager Membership

In my opinion, this by far has been one of GCSAA's most valuable new offerings in the past ten years. For only \$95 a year, the equipment manager will have access to all of GCSAA's educational offerings, including specialized EM-focused seminars. The Equipment Manager Certificate Program (EMCP) has been developed to challenge your equipment manager to obtain certificates that will test their knowledge and skills. Topping off the EMCP, GCSAA has implemented the Certified Turf Equipment Manager (CTEM). The CTEM designation is the highest recognition that can be achieved by a turf equipment management professional. Your peers developed this certification under the guidance of a professional psychometrician.

The Assistant Superintendent Membership

Preparing the assistant superintendent for the next level has never been more important than today. GCSAA has

New and Improved GCSAA Programs & Offerings

developed the Assistant Superintendent Certificate Series (ASCS) to help fill that gap and prepare the assistant superintendent for their next step. The ASCS contains four competencies: agronomy, business, leadership and communication, as well as environmental stewardship. Upon completion of the ASCS, assistants will become eligible for a scholarship to the John Deere Green Start Academy! Also, by completing the ASCS, one of the requirements for the Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) will be satisfied!

The Certified Golf Course Superintendent Program

The new, modernized CGCS program is here! GCSAA has kept the program's integrity while streamlining the process to fit today's hectic life. Gone is the laborious portfolio, replaced by a communication and leadership component as well as a more subjective golf course attesting process. Since the rollout in 2022, GCSAA has seen a marked increase in participation and completion. So why not go for it? The CGCS designation is the most widely recognized in the golf industry and the highest recognition that can be achieved by the golf course superintendent. For any of the certificates or certifications, please visit GCSAA.org and see Certifications & Exams under the Education tab.

The GCSAA Conference and Tradeshow Feb. 6 – 9, Orlando, Florida

We have rebranded the Golf Industry Show to become the GCSAA Conference and Tradeshow – giving the event a stronger relevance to the golf course superintendent. We have listened to the membership and have condensed the show into four action-packed interactive days for the superintendents to discover, learn, test, demo, connect and grow. Registration has been geared toward providing information for every member, offering specific experiences for each class of member by offering specific opportunities on each day to help you navigate the week.

Don't forget about the GCSAA Golf Championships! This pre-conference event offers four challenging contests over three days for all golfers, from the average hack like me to the more proficient low-handicapper like Aaron Fankhauser. Events include the Four-Ball, Scramble, Classic, and National Championship. I have never participated but have been told that it's the best networking experience out there.

If you are looking to add to your step count during the week, then look no further than the Health in Action 5K sponsored by Syngenta. This, I have participated in, and can tell you that it is best to train a little beforehand.

So, let me challenge you. If you have an assistant that you would like to see improve his/her position within your staff, first, let's be sure they are GCSAA members, then let's encourage them to take the ASCS. The same goes for your equipment manager. This is our fastest-growing member classification, so don't let them get left behind. Please feel free to reach out to me directly for any membership assistance. I also want to challenge you, the superintendent, to take advantage of any of the aforementioned. Especially First Green. This program is dear to my heart, and I will always try to be available to attend any field trip.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you, the Rocky Mountain membership, for making my job so enjoyable these past ten years. I can't say enough how much I appreciate all of you. It has truly been an honor getting to know you and serve you. As I look forward to future travels to Colorado, please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions or concerns.

Wishing you all the best in 2023!

David Phipps

GCSAA NW Regional Field Staff Representative

503-407-0749

Tournament of Champions

by Carey Hofner, Superintendent, The Club at Cordillera



The journey from a gloomy snowy state of Colorado to a beautiful sunny state of Hawaii to volunteer for my first PGA tournament, is nothing to take for granted. After eight hours of travel I arrived at what I called a “working vacation” and it was well worth the adventure. At this year’s Sentry Tournament of Champions taking place at the Kapalua Resort’s Plantation Course there was a special effort to attract as many women volunteers as they could. I am currently employed as Superintendent of the Valley Course at The Club at Cordillera, which is operated by Troon Golf. Troon is very supportive of women in the industry. We had

approximately ten women volunteers that ranged from the spouses of the agronomy staff, assistants, sales reps, to a teaching pro, and a couple of superintendents. Most of us ladies were on teams in the bunkers, a few were data collectors and I was part of the fairway dew removal crew. Our mornings started between four and six in the morning, depending on when the first tee time was. The dew removal crew could not get started until about a half hour before tee times. In the meantime we did some special projects to help spruce up the course or help out around the shop by cleaning the break room for the Kapalua Staff. After we wrapped up our morning jobs, breakfast was served which was really heavy on the rice and spam. During break we had the opportunity to explore the island, watch some golf and participate in water activities. I will mention my boogie boarding skills are definitely not up to par as a few wipeouts ended with face plants into sand. Afternoon shifts started with another lunch full of rice and other Hawaiian dishes followed by divot duty. Divot duty was my favorite part of the day as I was able to interact with the crew, ask questions about different plants and how their operation functioned. One of the crew members was showing me where to find local fruits and when they are best to eat when ripe. I attempted to pick some liliko'i (passionfruit) and speed up the ripening process but I failed miserably, and instead of sweet and fresh it tasted like bitter grapefruit. We finished evening jobs around five, with an exception of Wednesday which ran a bit longer and traveled back to the Condos for dinner.

I was extremely fortunate to get a tour of the facility with Andrew Rebman, Director of Agronomy, at the Bay Course. He spoke about future renovations, which was eye opening on some of the challenges they are facing with permitting. As we made our way around the course Andrew was very engaging. He explained how the architect will be using the views as much as possible compared to the current layout and design.



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Change Can Be Scary

by Steven Schommer, Superintendent, Indian Peaks Golf Course



Change can be scary. No, not the flat, round coins in your pocket. Unless you consider where that change has been (hint: don't ever put money in your mouth – ask me why sometime!). The change I'm talking about has to do with your career.

There are many different facets to change in our profession. Changing irrigation practices, fertilization programs, cultural practices, hiring policies, equipment needs, etc. The list is long. There is one big, scary change many of us don't even contemplate. That is changing courses or employers.

I had been with the City of Denver at several of their courses over the last ten years. Most recently, I had been the Superintendent at Willis Case for more than the last five. I felt secure there, having learned the course, what worked well there and what did not. The City of Denver offers lots of support and with eight golf properties, lots of shared equipment, opportunities to grow and most importantly, many good people. I thought I would be there for the remainder of my career. So I thought...

Indian Peaks recently posted for the position of Superintendent. While I was not really looking to change jobs, I occasionally look at job postings and wonder if there would be a job that would be as good as Denver, but with other perks. This position caught my attention for one main reason. It is just 5 miles from my house. I have worked most of my golf maintenance career at courses 20 plus miles from my house (100 miles when I was at The Broadmoor). The commute seems to get longer each year and I didn't see any down side to applying to a job just down the road from me. Long story short, I worked through the process and was offered the job at Indian Peaks. I am thrilled to be able to work there! This change was not expected and is scary, but it is also exciting. I've heard the staff there knows their business and I hope to learn much from them. I start there January 9th.

Many of you don't know me or know me well. I have spent most of the time I've been in golf maintenance devoted to my wife, children and whichever course I'm employed at. I have not spent much time at RMGCSA events over the last 6 or 7 years, as I have spent much of it with my family. I'm very glad I took this approach as I now have a wife (Kerri) of nearly 26 years, and two wonderful boys, Luke (16) and Ben (15), both of whom are turning into fine young men. But as my kids grow up and don't need me around as much, and as my wife increasingly tells me to get out of the house and play some golf, I find I am going to be able to spend more time at outings, education events and conferences. Stop by and say hi! Knowing more of you is a change that is not so scary!



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Affiliate Angle

by Josh Dejong, Turf and Ornamental Representative, Target Specialty Products



What is your current affiliate company and your position? How long have you been in this position?

Turf and Ornamental Representative for Target Specialty Products and have been with Target a little over a year.

Where are you based out of and what territory do you cover?

I'm a Colorado Native out of Eaton Colorado. Work Eastern Colorado, Wyoming, Western Nebraska, also working with turf managers in Kansas, Montana and Texas

What are the responsibilities of your company to our industry, and how is your company involved with RMGCSA?

To provide cutting edge technology for plant nutrition and plant defense systems in turf grass with Turf Fuel. Providing RMGCSA with education support, well also being a working partner.

What might we be surprised to know about your company?

Target is a division of Rentokil the world's largest pest control company. Target has a team primarily focused on helping support the golf industry.

Did you go to college? If so, where and what major did you graduate with?

Being the youngest of 5 children growing up on a dairy farm working 24/7 college was not an option until I got into the turf industry. Have always taken as many classes and short courses as possible and I read a lot. Wrapping up a Turf Management from the University of Georgia.

How and when did you begin working in the golf industry and what do you like most about it?

I started in the Turf Industry in 2009 coming from construction and agriculture. Turf is the most unique industry of networking professionals ready and willing to help each other succeed.

Tell us a little about your family, and what hobbies or activities you participate in when you are not at work?

My wife is a nurse, and we have 3 children that keep me very busy with their activities. I volunteer at church and school as well as board member for CSFMA, RMRTA and EAPRD. I also still work weekends for a large landscape company keeping up on my equipment skills and hauling heavy equipment. Any extra time enjoy working on our home and always trying to grow new plants in the yard.

What are the biggest changes you have seen in the profession since you began your career? Or, what are the most important changes that the company has seen the past 5-10 years?

The demand for quality playing surfaces under any conditions. Also staffing and training of staff. Working with new and old technologies. I was surprised how many younger crew members have never driven a manual transmission.

Do you regularly attend RMGCSA meetings or events, if so why are they important?

Yes, the networking for turf managers is one of the most overlooked help you can get. Also, someone has to help teach me how to golf I feel sorry for the assistants that got teamed up with me this year.

You know a lot of people in our industry. What are they saying are the biggest obstacles to overcome for them to be successful?

Staffing.

You get to see many facilities and properties. What is an interesting new or innovative practice you have seen?

This is one of my most favorite parts of my job. I really enjoy seeing people's shops and the different equipment. Repurposed and home-made equipment is my favorite thing I like that thinking outside the box. Turf managers that take the time to show me their course is so much fun getting to see the different practices and changes they make to help with the game.

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Legislative Update

by Mitch Savage, Superintendent, CommonGround Golf Course

RMGCSA Advocacy at the State Capitol

With continued guidance and support from RMGCSA lobbyist Jennifer Cassell, advocacy efforts at the Colorado State Capitol on the golf industry's behalf are in full swing. Recently, the RMGCSA's government affairs team attended and provided testimony at the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee meeting on February 15th for the presentation of the DORA Pesticide Applicators Act sunset report. Discussion and testimony at the meeting centered mostly around requests for amendments to recommendations in the DORA report.

At the hearing, Mitch Savage (Director of Agronomy, CommonGround Golf Course) provided a brief statement in support of the DORA report and its recommendations. Most notably, the report recommends that the CO Pesticide Applicators Act be renewed and extended for a period of eleven years and recommends that pesticide regulation be enforced by one state-led agency (CO Department of Agriculture). While discussions continue regarding other particular recommendations, the Senate Agriculture Committee ultimately took action to draft a bill based on the DORA report. A draft bill is forthcoming with the co-prime sponsors being Sen. Dylan Roberts and Sen. Kevin Priola and most other Senate Agriculture committee members cosponsoring.

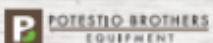
The RMGCSA government affairs team and coalition will continue to advocate on behalf of its members throughout this process and will notify individuals if particular action alerts arise.



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Director's Corner

by Bill Tanner, Superintendent, Rio Grande Club

Hello. I hope this article finds everyone safe and healthy after the holiday season. Much needed time with family and loved ones is a good battery recharger. Although, a little more snow cover and moisture in the San Luis Valley would be nice.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Bill Tanner and I am the superintendent of the Rio Grande Club & Resort. This is my second stint at the position. The first time was from 2008-2015. Poor management and lack of ownership support led me to seek greener pastures. So, I moved to Colorado Springs, got married for the first time at age 45, and took a few other positions in the golf industry. I worked for Redstone Golf, a Colorado Springs based construction company and helped build a short-game practice facility and a four-hole, par-3 practice course at Valley Hi Golf Course, partially funded by the First Tee of Colorado. Then, I took a position helping Mark Hassell at King's Deer Golf Club in Monument. Gary Shinderle, owner of then Golf EnvioSystems, offered me a position in sales. I was not in the position for very long, but I did get to visit some of you at your courses and that was an eye-opening experience. Now, I am back at the Rio Grande Club & Resort.

Back to a new beginning. That is what this time of year is all about, right? I love this time of year. The time of the New Year's Resolution. "Eat healthier", "exercise more", "spend more time with the family", or whatever, we have all made them, broken some and kept some. It is a way for us to reflect on ourselves and try for growth. I have a couple of resolutions this year. The first is being a part of this board of directors.

Previously, being in the southern part of the state felt like being on somewhat of an island. I did not utilize the connections within the chapter very well. It is the main reason that I wanted to become more involved this time around. I am truly looking forward to serving on the board of directors and being the co-chairman of the membership committee with Cole Miller.

Second, I am going to embrace technology. I am a self-proclaimed technological dinosaur. I still use my At-A-Glance ringed calendar for my yearly agronomic plan. I write daily in my Franklin Planner. I don't use a tablet. I check my email and do menial tasks on my computer, but I have yet to embrace the plethora of tools available. Not only tools to help manage my turfgrass, but manage life in general. I have recruited a few of my younger, well-versed co-workers (and some of the employees in my department) to help me with this. One thing I have wanted to do is start a blog. I know this is "old hat" for quite a few of you, but consider the source. Wish me luck.

I am looking forward to interacting with the membership of this wonderful chapter by creating more involvement and enthusiasm. Expect phone calls and emails from the membership committee, coming soon. Hopefully, I will find my place in this technological world and use it to become a better manager, communicator and person. Good luck in all of your endeavors this year, personal or professional, and keep those New Year's Resolutions.

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Assistant Spotlight

by Riche Moore, Assistant Superintendent, Aurora Hills Golf Course



Describe your Facility?

Aurora Hills Golf Course established 1969, part of the City of Aurora Golf Division. Nice well kept gem with some of the best greens in the metro area! What I would consider a great confidence building course where you can hit it virtually anywhere and still be able to score. Host to arguably the biggest head scratching hole in Colorado, Hole 10 a 540 yard par 5 shaped like a “L” around a lake.

What do you like about your team at your facility?

The best part of the Aurora Hills Maintenance Team is everyone takes great pride in their work! I couldn't have been luckier to have this crew with my first Assistant Superintendent job. From mowing the rough to greens everyone keeps each other on the ball of what is to be expected for work quality. The hard part is me trying to keep up to lead by example!

What would you tell someone that is interested in getting into golf course management?

The job is extremely rewarding. You hear it from customers and you visually see the fruits of your labor. One day a section of the course is an eye sore the next you complete a project and it's beautiful! I assure you, the multiple early days can get exhausting though I wouldn't trade it for anything else in the world.

How many years have you worked in golf and how did you get started in the industry?

With all my various positions in the industry, I'm proud to say I've invested 15 years into this passion. From the initial workings of starting in the PGM Program at UCCS, back in 2007. Quickly realizing that wasn't the path for me. I made the switch to the “Dark Side.” I was a seasonal at Murphy Creek Golf Course when the US Public Links was hosted in 2008. This is where I started my passion under the guidance of John Magnuson and Kevin Kallas. Initially as a college summer job combined with the ill timing of a poor job market after graduation, I kept learning and performing more tasks in maintaining and running a golf course. While working on my passion I was also busy working on my professional golf career in the Long Drive circuit. Utilizing the best feature of our Career Path of having “two” days in one, I dedicated 5 years of 8-10 hours of work in the morning followed by 4 hours of gym or range time in the afternoon. The flexibility of the job to compete and work simultaneously is what helped me follow both callings of my life! Now on my coming third season as an assistant I can't wait to see where my career will lead!

What is the most rewarding part of being an assistant for you?

What I love most is the exchange of education between staff and myself. Everyone has a different path to get where we are today and learning and understanding their experiences are amazing to help me along my young career. I have the unique opportunity to learn from a tree company owner and arborist. I'm always picking his brain about shrubs and trees.

What's your favorite hole on your course and why?

With being a long hitter many will be shocked. My favorite hole isn't one of the drivable par 4's for me. My favorite is our finishing hole 18! A slight uphill par 4 of 457 yards with native on the left side and the lake on the right. As demanding of a tee shot this is the approach shot is a must! Execute well and have a feasible birdie putt, poor shots test the best scramblers to save par. There are also many great spots to put a hole location to be challenging for a scramble or men's club championship.

What do you do when you're not at work?

I love spending time with the two corgis, Ein and Eragon. Taking them on walks and watching them play is a great afternoon. During the winter I go to D'Lance golf to keep the swing going throughout the off season. I also enjoy entertaining friends for board/card game night.

Favorite Movie?

There are two that I love, Tin Cup and How to Train Your Dragon.

Favorite Restaurant?

Absolute favorite meal is always breakfast and the Big Pig at Doug's Day Diner hits the spot!

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Calendar of Events...

- March 9, 2023** Pesticide Training- Virtual
- May 31, 2023** Assistant's Outing - Homestead Golf Course *Registration Not Open
- June 13, 2023** Memorial Tournament - Plum Creek Golf Course
- August 15, 2023** Affiliate Cup - Keystone Ranch
- September 19, 2023** The RMGCSA Championships - RainDance National Golf Course
- October 17, 2023** Best Tournament Ever - Flying Horse North Golf Club
- October 25, 2023** Pesticide Training- Virtual
- November 13-14, 2023** Annual Conference - Denver Marriott West Golden CO *Registration Not Open

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