



Hole #2 at the Colorado Springs CC  
Photo Credit: Assistant Superintendent Taylor Gebhart

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# President's Message

by Paul Sibley, Superintendent, Walnut Creek Golf Preserve



As I look back on 2022, I can't help but think of all the hard work that the Board Members put in to make it a successful year. I would like to thank you, the membership, for giving me the opportunity to serve as President. I would also like to thank Jeff Wichman, Kevin Kallas, Kyle Merritt, Aaron Fankhauser, Jake Jacobs, Mitch Savage, Cole Miller, Griff Rainford, Drew Hunter, Taylor Gebhart, Tim Davis, Lance Johnson, Steve Sarro, all the members who volunteered on committees, the RMEGI board, and our Affiliate

Members for all the work they put in to make it a successful year. A big congratulations to Jeff Wichman for being elected as President for 2023. There has been a lot of innovative discussions on the future of the association and I know Jeff will lead us in a great direction.

As we moved through the year there was a lot of emphasis placed on the value of your membership. Aaron Fankhauser and the Education Committee came up with new educational opportunities that focused on non-turf related topics, collaborating with the Mile-High Chapter of the Club Managers Association to allow RMGCSA members the opportunity to join in on their seminars, as well as continuing the virtual pesticide classes. Steve Sarro and his Conference Committee worked hard on a fantastic line-up for the Annual Conference with diversified speakers on Turf and Non-Turf seminars. Mitch Savage and the Legislative Committee, along with the Colorado Golf Coalition and Coloradans for Responsible Pesticide Application (CRPA), lead the fight against Senate Bill 22-131 which sought to restrict pesticide use as well as allowing local governments to "regulate the use and application of a pesticide...if the use was not used for the production of agricultural products". RMGCSA members were present to provide testimony in opposition of the bill in front of the Colorado Senate Agricultural Committee and, along with industry experts, were successful in defeating the bill.

Monthly outings were also successful this year. The Memorial Tournament had a great turnout which raised record monies for RMEGI. The Board created a new dual format for the Annual Tournament that brought in more members that didn't want to compete for the trophies. We are always looking to create a better experience and turnout for all outings. None of these outings could have been successful without the support from our Affiliate Members as well as the courses who hosted. Big thanks to all of you. There

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Walnut Creek Golf Preserve  
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Cherokee Ridge Golf Course  
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Bill Tanner  
Rio Grande Club  
[bill@rgcresort.com](mailto:bill@rgcresort.com)

Jake Jacobs  
Flatirons Golf Course  
[jacobsj@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:jacobsj@bouldercolorado.gov)

Joe Kunze  
City of Arvada  
[kunze.joe.r@gmail.com](mailto:kunze.joe.r@gmail.com)

### **Affiliate Liaison**

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Colorado Golf & Turf  
[drew@cologolfandturf.com](mailto:drew@cologolfandturf.com)

### **GCSAA Delegate**

Tim Davis  
Legacy Ridge Golf Course  
[tdavis@cityofwestminster.us](mailto:tdavis@cityofwestminster.us)

### **Class C Ex Officio**

Taylor Gebhart  
Colorado Springs Country Club  
[tgebhart7@gmail.com](mailto:tgebhart7@gmail.com)

# President's Message Continued

are always opportunities to host an event so if you are interested, reach out to any board members. With the help of Dave Phipps and the GCSAA, we were able to implement facility BMP seminars that help Superintendents create BMP plans that are facility specific. A separate seminar at the Annual Conference was added for the sole purpose of allowing members to sit down with Dave and set up their own facility plans. If you were unable to make the conference and you want to set up your facility plan, reach out to Dave Phipps and he can guide you through the process. It is easy to get the plan started and vital that we get as many facilities in Colorado set up.

In closing, I would like to thank Gary Leeper, Eric Gustafson, and the entire IMI Group staff for all the work they put in behind the scenes to make this association great. They all have been a great asset throughout my tenure on the board and should be recognized by the entire membership for their efforts.



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# Superintendent Spotlight

by Tom Dimberio, Superintendent, Colorado Springs Country Club



## **Describe your facility**

Colorado Springs Country Club is the only member owned and operated club in Colorado Springs. It was built 1954 on an old dairy farm. We are a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. We host a wonderful 18 holes of golf along with other country club amenities.

## **What makes your facility unique?**

The biggest challenge we face is water production. Our water window is 12- 15 hours per day. At 600 gpm. Daytime watering is always frustrating.

## **What do you think the biggest challenge you've faced at your facility?**

The biggest change in the industry for me is the equipment. Everything is high tech. Its great to have so many computers and the ability to achieve more but with that comes very expensive purchases and repairs. Love those old triplexes.

## **What do you like about your team?**

What I feel is one of the most Important assets to this club is the team we have. We work with each other and for each other. May it be the Executive Chef, GM, Golf Professional, F and B Manager and all their staff- we are all friends that respect each other and Care for each other. It really is a team effort to be so successful.

## **What are you getting right at your facility?**

What I feel we are doing right here at the facility is the ability to hire and retain such quality individuals.

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

I've been in the business for 25 years. I was attending college for a business degree but did not know what I really wanted to do with it. That's when I was playing a round of golf on a lovely October day and just realized the beauty of the course and deemed it my next choice of education. I finished that semester then enrolled into a turf management program and never looked back. What a great office to have every day at work!!

## **What is your favorite hole at your club?**

My favorite hole on the course is number 12. It's a par 3 that was renovated the first year that I worked here. The design added a water feature, lake, beach sand traps and a new tee complex. After spending numerous amounts of hours growing it in, this hole is by far my favorite.

## **How do you spend your time when you're not working?**

When I'm not working, I spend time with my family and 2 German shepherds. We love walking, going to college hockey games, golfing, some traveling and of course an evening pours of some great bourbon.

## **Shorts or Pants?**

I love wearing shorts but when the cool mornings in the fall come it's great to gear up with Foot Joy rain pants over the shorts.

## **Who is your favorite sports team?**

Favorite sports team is the MINNESOTA VIKINGS! SKOL!

## **Tell me a little about your family?**

I've been married for 18 years to an incredible wife, Mary Ann. She and I respect each other's occupation even though we don't understand what takes place in each other's jobs. She's a nurse practitioner and I really don't like the medical field and of course being a superintendent, she doesn't care for grass! Go figure! I also have an equally awesome daughter, Katlyn. She is an elementary teacher in the Denver school district. Within the next year there will be a son-in-law, Will.



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# September Challenge Recap

by Griff Rainford, Salesman, Helena Agri-Enterprises

On September 20 the RMGCSA held its September Challenge at Saddle Rock Golf Course. The RMGCSA would like to thank Harrells for sponsoring the event. Huge thanks to Kevin Kallas and his turfgrass professionals' team for providing us with amazing course conditions.

58 golfers took part and the results of the tournament were as follows:

Closest to the pins:

#5 Andy Roth – A-1 Organics.

#8 Josh Evans – Southridge

#14 Dave Brown

Winners:

1st - Drew Hunter – Colorado Golf and Turf and Collin Hanson – Colorado Golf and Turf – 65

2nd – Dave Brown and Jake Jacobs – Flatirons Golf Course – 66

3rd – Jim Taylor – Winfield United and Larry Burks – Grand Elk – 66

Challenge Results:

1st – Tyler Gillette – Buffalo Brand Seed

2nd – Dave Brown

3rd – Brian Temple – CPS

4th – Kristopher Jagers – Flatirons Golf Course

5th – Drew Hunter – Colorado Golf and Turf

6th – Dustin Tomlinson – Eaton CC

7th – Andy Roth – A1 Organics

8th – Scott Lyons – Potestio Brothers



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# Best Tournament Ever Recap

by Taylor Gebhart, Assistant Superintendent, Colorado Springs CC

On the 10th 'Best' day of October, 84 players prepared and entered Colorado Springs Country Club for the 2022 Best Tournament Ever, and it lived up to the name once again this year. With fall colors showing themselves and exceptional playing conditions, each team brought their 'best'. The crisp and fresh air also brought some "crispy" costumes as well, featuring Tacos, hamburgers and a colonel with Sanders; collegiate rivals from Michigan, OSU & Notre Dame; and a Run-DMC rap battle on turf. The RMGCSA would like to extend a huge thank you to Superintendent Tom Dimberio, Assistant Superintendent Taylor Gebhart, General Manager Kevin Sanger, along with the entire Agronomy and Food & Beverage teams, for hosting such a wonderful event. From entrance to exit, each staff member did a phenomenal job. The property lived up to expectations as well! Another huge thank you is extended to the tournament sponsor, Potestio Brothers Equipment. Everyone appreciated your support! Now....for the important stuff...Thank you again to all of the players and teams who competed!

Congratulations to the winners, losers and top 3 teams who competed today with costumes and all!

1st Place: Tyler Gillette and his Buffalo Seeds (Tyler Gillette, Ed Rocket & Eric Strasheim)

2nd Place: Run Turf-MC with Fox & Rom (John Rom, Brian Fox & Aaron Smith)

3rd Place: Robert Gonzalez and the fast food masterminds (Robert Gonzalez, Todd Olouson & Margaret Stanley)

4th Place: The League of Legendary Gentleman (Dan Hawkins, Glenn Samuelson & Tim Dagg)

Last, Laster & Lastest Place: Ethan Howard & Dalton Montgomery

Closest to the Pin Winners: Congratulations to:

#4 - Billy Lafleur - Red Hawk Ridge G.C

#8 - Kris Jagers - Flatirons G.C

#12 - Glenn Samuelson - Country Club of Colorado

#17 - Brad Kujanson - Colorado Springs Country Club

As many of our seasons are beginning to come to a dormant close, Colorado Springs Country Club and the RMGCSA would like to thank every one of the participants who took time out of their schedules to enjoy a day of golf and camaraderie! This was the final golf tournament of the calendar year, and we have many positives to build on while continuing to move into next year.

Hope to see everyone in November at The Annual Conference!



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# Affiliate Angle

by Chad Parron, Sales Rep, Simplot Turf and Horticulture



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

Simplot Turf and Horticulture. Turf Sales Rep since September 2022

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

Based in Denver and cover Colorado and New Mexico

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

We provide Fertilizers, Chemicals, Seed, Sand, Course Supplies. We are 20+ year strong affiliate supporters of RMGCSA. If the association needs something, we are willing to step forward and support them in any way possible.

**What might we be surprised to know about your company?**

Simplot grows and supplies over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the potatoes that McDonald's sells as French Fries.

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

Colorado State University. B.S. in Environmental Horticulture with a Turfgrass Concentration and Business Minor. GO RAMS!

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

I started in Montrose at the Bridges Golf and Country Club. Joe Distefano and Joe Schmidt were great mentors pushing me to pursue a career in the turf industry.

**What hobbies or activities you participate in when you are not at work?**

I enjoy golfing and skiing. Along with playing cornhole and euchre.

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

Attending meetings and events are very important. It is a great networking opportunity for any member, you never know what idea someone might have, the next career opportunity, or friend you might make.

**What would you like other people to know about RMGCSA?**

We are all in the industry to make it better. Don't be afraid to lean on a fellow superintendent or salesman.

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

The labor market. I hear some courses are fully staffed (due to being able to pay a lot) and some courses are understaffed, and everyone is working more to make up for the missing employees.

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

Fraze mowing is starting to take off, especially in the southwest. This can be great for leveling off tee boxes, driving range tees, and used on other areas on the course. This removes a level of thatch and organic material along with weed and poa annua control. Produces a much healthier, faster growing turfgrass. Also promotes horizontal growth instead of vertical growth.

# Annual Conference Recap

*by Jeff Wichman, Superintendent, Patty Jewett Golf Course*

On November 2-3, 2022, The RMGCSA held their Annual Conference at the Denver Marriott West in Golden, CO. There were 211 attendees from around the state in anticipation for some great education and networking. The day started off with Lori A. Hoffner's talk on Living in Extraordinary Times and Why Resiliency Matters. Paul Roberston spoke on Project Management and Lindsey DeFrates presented a talk on an extremely important issue, water, and the State of the Colorado river, reservoirs, restrictions and snow pack. Jennifer Cassell presented the status of the legislation and our coalition won at the State Capital defeating SB 131 by a 6 to 1 vote.

The annual meeting was conducted after lunch with Jeff Wichman honoring Paul Sibley with a plaque and gavel for his service as President of the RMGCSA during 2022. Voting for the Executive Committee was unanimous with Jeff Wichman elected as President, Kevin Kallas Vice-President and Aaron Fankhauser elected as Secretary/Treasurer. Board of Directors are the following: Cole Miller (Cherokee Ridge Golf Course) Jake Jacobs (Flatirons Golf Course) Joe Kunze (City of Arvada). Elected off the floor for two-year terms are Jeremiah Stumpff (The Club at Pradera) and Bill Tanner (Rio Grande Club). Paul Sibley will serve as immediate Past President and Mark Kricker will serve as Past President's council to Jeff.

Following the annual meeting Cory Isom from the USGA (Year in Review) and Jeff Orr (Raindance National Golf Club) spoke about the construction of Raindance, an amazing piece of property and breathtaking course. After a quick break Dr. Tom Nikolai captivated the room with his presentation on The Mathematical Need for the Discriminate Use of Fertilizer and Pesticides in the 21st Century. The closing speaker for the day was Adam Van Dyke (Strategies for Japanese Beetle Control in Turf).

Following day one of the conference, the 5th Annual Cornhole Championship was contested with 32 teams signing up. Thank you Jason Aerni (Simplot) and huge thank you to Colorado Golf & Turf, Drew Hunter for providing \$600.00 in prize money for the event.

The winners are the following

1st place = Robbins/Staats

2nd place = Robbins Team Number 2 (only fitting that team 2 takes 2nd place)

3rd place = Jonas/Taerkildsen

Thank you to all participants and the committee for another great event.

The second day started off with a great presentation by Tom Nikolai (Cultural & Mechanical Update). Thanks for reminding all the turfgrass professionals "manicured turfgrass reduces crime in Detroit."

Adam Van Dyke last talk was (Suppressing Seedheads of Annual Bluegrass on Fine Turf) key points, improvements can be achieved by applying these PGRs in winter ahead of traditional spring programs. Lori A. Hoffner's last talk was Moving into the Future: The Power of Transnormal Leadership. As the saying goes, "the only constant is change". Paul Robertson closed the conference with (Budget Development), everything you wanted to ask but too embarrassed to ask.

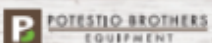
Added bonus this year Dave Phipps from the GCSAA held a workshop (BMP Facility Adoption) This was a hands – on workshop that when finished you will be able to take a completed locked facility BMP back to your golf course and use the information learned to fine-tune the document. After the session, you will be awarded 0.50 Service Points along with 1.0 Education Points for attending the 2022 RMGCSA Annual Conference. Fantastic way to spend one and half days!



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# Director's Corner

by Joe Kunze, Manager of Golf Course Operations, City of Arvada



The Covid-19 pandemic undoubtedly has changed the way golf courses are operating. We have greatly increased efficiency with increasing tee time intervals, hosting less events and limiting multiple tee starting times all while producing a record amount of rounds. The increase in golf rounds from 2020 to the present is the second greatest increase of rounds overall for the golf industry since Tiger Woods won the Masters in 1997. This influx of rounds has also produced an influx of revenue that we should be using to invest in the future of our properties and even more importantly our teams. It is very important when discussing investments that are needed for our properties to be able to speak in terms that our General Managers, Directors, Owners, and Stakeholders. Many of our decision-makers are experts in accounting and business management and not in turf management. It is very important to know what method of

accounting your facility uses whether it is cash based, accrual based, or a modified combination of both of these accounting methods. Golf Course Superintendents should be able to communicate using terms decision-makers can relate to and show what kind of return on investment they can expect. This information should include numbers and show examples of if X is invested, then Y will be the return. This makes it much easier to understand the overall financial benefits of the investment for the facility rather than just speaking in technical terms for benefits of the turf. One of the best ways to invest in your facility with what I believe has the highest return is to invest in your team. They will produce the greatest return on investment. We all know the labor shortages and issues we are all facing so it is more important than ever to be able to keep our current teammates around. We need to communicate to our owners and operators that we need to invest more in our employees. We need to pay them more, provide a wider range of benefits, such as better retirement and health plans, and invest in their future goals. Retaining these extremely important employees saves the operation money on training and onboarding new employees. This time and money can then be spent on further developing the employees to produce a product that will exceed expectations of the player.

Another way to invest in our teammates' futures is to get them involved in our professional organizations. We should be encouraging them to become involved in golf events, educational events and conferences, taking a few hours to contribute on a committee or even to start working their way on becoming a board member. Promoting our organization will not only provide great returns for the member who is becoming involved, but it will add to the value of the organization as well. When everyone contributes, even if it is just a little by going to one event per year or just helping on one committee achieve their goals, you are adding value for all the members of the organization. You will find a large return from this small investment of getting your teammates involved with them learning and networking from this involvement. This will help them strive for and achieve goals for their future that will benefit their families and their own well being.

When it comes to working towards getting an investment approved for a capital improvement project such as an irrigation system replacement or bunker renovation, do not just focus on the cost of the project. There needs to be focus on the return of the project as well. For a few examples, explain how many gallons of water will be saved, how much electricity will be saved in the pumphouse, how course conditions will improve and how this will add value to the property. Explain how many man hours of picking rocks, pulling weeds and moving sand to proper places will be saved and how this improves the experience for the player as returns on a bunker project. The numbers will be the convincing factors that will get your projects and plans approved.

There's no doubt that our positions have been evolving over the last few years. We are having to become more of business managers on top of our agronomy obligations and figure out what projects and investments will have the greatest return. We need to communicate and budget accordingly to invest in our teams and also our properties so that they can continue the successful trends that we are currently experiencing.



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# Assistant Spotlight

by Andy Wilfahrt, Assistant Superintendent, Valley Country Club



## **Describe Your Facility**

Valley Country Club is a private, member-owned 18-hole championship golf course located in unincorporated Arapahoe County, founded in 1958 and originally designed by William Bell. Membership has recently been investing heavily in the club, with a complete tennis complex renovation, followed by a fitness center, outdoor dining upgrade, and a new pool. On the golf course, we have completely upgraded the irrigation, alongside dredging and relining of the ponds on the front, in addition to several bunker updates, tee complexes, and cart paths.

## **What are you getting right at your facility?**

We are committed to employee growth and development. Our staff get opportunities to learn and grow in the field. My career has been a testament to that, having been able to gather experience and take on more responsibilities during my tenure.

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

Turf has been a common theme in my career, but I've only worked in golf for four years. I worked for my hometown West Saint Paul parks and recreation department while in high school and spent ten years doing lawn maintenance in south suburban Denver before going back to school to earn my BS in turfgrass science from Penn State. I interned at Flying Horse North Golf Club, a very unique opportunity to be there during their grow-in. I've spent the last 3 years at Valley, moving from Assistant in Training to Second Assistant to First Assistant.

## **What is the most unexpected thing you found yourself doing because you are an assistant?**

The most unexpected thing for me was the amount of time it requires to prep a golf course for play every day. When I first started, I thought the job would be more about growing grass, only to find out the amount of manpower it takes to prep the course every morning is significant. It truly is not about growing grass but more about preparing the playing surface.

## **Mentor or how did you get into the business?**

I've been very fortunate during my time at Valley to benefit from Superintendent Zach Bauer's extensive knowledge and experience. He has encouraged my professional development, sending me to volunteer at Riviera Country Club for the Genesis Invitational, apply to Green Start Academy, for which I was luckily selected, and be active in GCSAA and on turfgrass Twitter.

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

Hole Number 15. It's a 200 yard downhill par 3. I know it's cliché but I've always been a sucker for a downhill par 3. I enjoy this one in particular because I had a part in influencing how the hole is played. When I first arrived at Valley, this hole had a large pine tree blocking the front right greenside bunker and was backstopped by several additional pines. With member approval, we removed four trees in total and widened the fairway and collar. We also expanded the green slightly, resulting in several additional pin locations. Removing the trees now makes it look like the green is completely surrounded by bunkers when in fact the bunker behind the green is actually a greenside bunker on hole 17.

# Assistant Spotlight

## **Favorite movie?**

Tie between There Will Be Blood and No Country for Old Men. Fun fact: these movies were both shot in the same location at the same time.

The scene with the burning oil derrick in There Will Be Blood delayed filming in No Country for Old Men.

## **What's your favorite tool in your cart?**

Leatherman. I use it every day, to the point where it is now custom. The straight blade is nothing more than a ball mark repair tool since it won't cut anything. The serrated blade is a sod knife and will maybe open a bag of fertilizer on a good day. I even shed some weight by trying to use the file as a prybar.

## **Shorts or Pants?**

Pants. I'm a boot guy, and my legs are too long to pull off the shorts with boots look.



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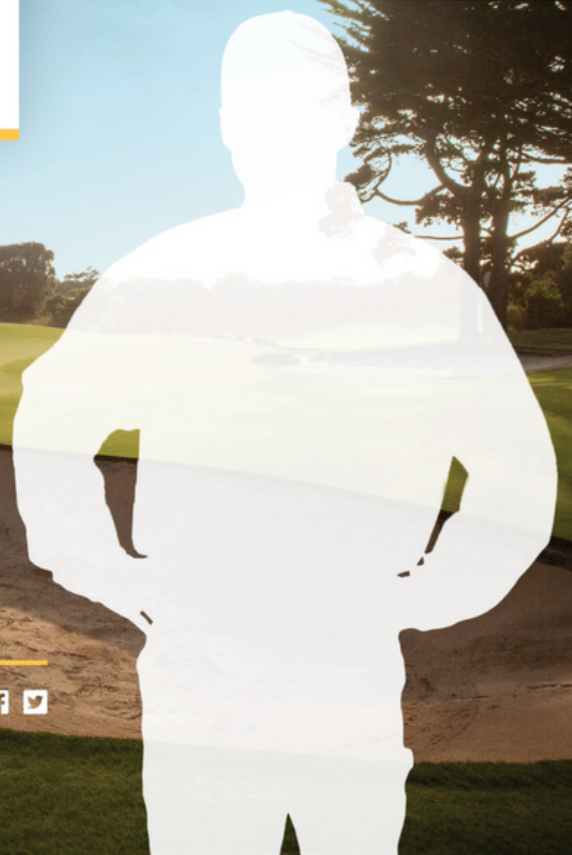
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February 8, 2023

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