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## GCSAA elects new officers, board at annual Conference in Anaheim

Randy Nichols, CGCS, Cherokee Town & Country Club, Dunwoody, Ga., was elected president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) during the association's recent annual meeting in Anaheim, Calif.

Nichols succeeds William R. Roberts, CGCS, Lochmoor Club, Grosse Pointe Woods, Mich., who as immediate past president will continue to serve on the board for a year.

Joseph G. Baidy, CGCS, Acacia Country Club, Lyndhurst, Ohio, was elected vice president.

Re-elected as a director and appointed secretary/treasurer was Gary T. Grigg, CGCS, Naples National Golf Club, Naples, Fla.

Elected as directors were David W. Fearis, CGCS, Blue Hills Country Club, Kansas City, Mo., and George E. Renault III, CGCS, Burning Tree Club, Bethesda, Md.

Appointed to the board was R. Scott Woodhead, CGCS, Valley View Golf Club, Bozeman, Mont.

Woodhead will serve the remaining year on Baidy's term as director. Baidy's director position was vacated when he was elected vice president.

Paul S. McGinnis, CGCS, Union Hills Country Club, Sun City, Ariz., and Bruce R. Williams, CGCS, Bob O'Link Golf Club, Highland Park, Ill., have one year remaining on their terms and will continue serving as directors.

GCSAA officers serve one-year terms, and directors are elected to two-year terms.

16,000 golf course superintendents, turfgrass professionals, educators and suppliers to the golf course industry attended the International Golf Course Conference and Show.

The event offered participants a wide variety of continuing education programs and the latest in golf course management products and services.

A record 631 exhibitors showcased their products and services during the three-day trade show



Randy Nichols, CGCS, was elected president of the GCSAA.

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at the Anaheim Convention Center. The tradeshow covered nearly 184,000 square feet, also a record for GCSAA.

More than 1,300 registrants from 43 countries attended the week's events. Several of the continuing education seminars and sessions were tailored for the international participants.

Another record was set as 2,996 persons attended a record 55 seminars covering a wide range of subjects relating to golf course management, prior to the conference's formal opening session. Johnny Bench, Major League Baseball Hall of Fame catcher, delivered the keynote address at the opening session.

U.S. Rep. James A. "Jimmy" Hayes (D-La.) and Sen. Howard M. Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) addressed a crowd of approximately 500 at the Environmental General Session. The legislators discussed the role of golf courses and their management as they relate to the environment.



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# History and tradition at Bradenton Country Club

By Joel Jackson, CGCS

Photography by Dan Zelazek



Number 16



## Jim Svabek and the Bradenton Country Club

**J**im Svabek and the Bradenton Country Club: A special blend of a man, a club, and a community that care about one another. Jim Svabek is an anomaly in this business.

It is rare to find a superintendent with the kind of tenure that Jim has earned at the Bradenton Country Club. It is a 25-year-long association that has been forged by Jim's hard work, enthusiasm, professionalism, and patience.

**A**  
*25-year  
tradition*

"It has been and continues to be a rewarding challenge to maintain this venerable golf course over the years," he says. "The challenge lies in educating the members about the improvements in turf management and convincing them that these improvements will not change the style and character of the course.

"Sometimes it is a very hard sell to convince them that we only want to improve the health of the turf and make some of our operations more efficient. They are very protective of the history and traditions of the course, and I admire and respect that viewpoint. The reward comes from seeing the members derive more enjoyment from

playing the course when we have solved a problem or made improvements."

The history and traditions of the Bradenton C.C. began some 57 years ago when the club was built. Legend has it that it was a Donald Ross design, but subsequent changes to the course over the years have removed official recognition by the Donald Ross Society.

In the early days of golf in Bradenton, there were four major courses in the area: Bradenton C.C. and Sara Bay which were private; Desoto Lakes, which was the home of the PGA of America before moving to West Palm Beach; and the public Bobby Jones course. In those early days and even until 1967 when Jim came on board, the Bradenton C.C. was on the outskirts of town. Now the club is considered to be part of the inner city as growth has marched south and west to the beaches.

The old-style layout is evident with its parallel holes and short distances from the green to the next tee. Bunkering is conservative and most of the greens still permit the old "bump and run" style of shotmaking. ➔



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Number 5 Green

## *You have to pay attention when you play here*

In 1965, Dr. Archie Meekins, who was a standout amateur golfer and club leader, gained approval to rebuild the front nine greens. His resulting design provided a series of steeply pitched greens that tilt from back to front. In 1966 golf architect Mark Mahannah was hired to rebuild the back nine greens. These had a more modern, plateaued, elevated look and were more moderate in their elevation changes.

Jim commented, “You have to pay attention when you play here! On the front nine you can have some pretty severe uphill, downhill, and sidehill putts, and then you have a different challenge on the back nine. Another problem with the front nine greens is that all the rainfall runoff is directed to the front of the green. The back nine greens design did provide for alternate surface water runoff routes.”

That design difference aside, Jim has one regret about the rebuilding effort. “When they rebuilt

the greens, all they did was strip off the old sod, reshape, add some sand, and rototill it in. It didn’t take long for the organic material to come up and form a 1-1/2-inch thatch layer which I discovered in 1967 when I arrived. Managing these thick, thatchy surfaces is one of my greatest challenges. When we get into extremely wet or extremely hot and dry conditions, we can lose parts of the greens pretty quickly. In wet weather, the thatch holds the moisture too long and we often develop pythium root rot, which is my number-one enemy on the greens. We treat with Koban and Subdue. Since we aren’t solving the root zone problem which promotes the disease, it is a constant battle.”

After a long period of negotiations, Jim purchased an aerifier in 1978. “Aerification of the greens is a blessing and a curse. We are pulling out some of the thatch and adding soil and that really helps, but the spongy greens have tire marks for a

