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The Scoop from Dallas
Here's our report of what went down during the 72th GCSAA Conference and Show.
By Golfdom Staff

Fungicide Frustration
The battle over disease resistance heats up as scholars scramble to figure out what's really going on.
By Frank H. Andorka Jr.

Keeping a Mow Profile
Nobody has yet invented a fairway mower that combines the ultimate in production and quality of cut — but manufacturers are trying.
By Larry Aylward
Learning Curve

Manufacturers say superintendents need to be better educated about slow-release fertilizer.

By Larry Aylward

cover story

BY BRUCE ALLAR

Not all golf courses are under the gun to prepare for the pressures of "lights, camera and action." But we asked a few superintendents to share their secrets for small-screen success.

About the cover

Tony Roberts photographed an ABC cameraman filming Mark Calcavecchia teeing off during the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic at PGA West in La Quinta, Calif. Roberts photographed golfer Joe Durant, the winner of the tournament, on these pages.

News with a hook

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If season-long surfactants lasted all season, we’d be selling one.

It’s a nice idea.
Sounds great in a sales pitch. And if we were the kind of company that didn’t mind selling soil surfactants that we couldn’t guarantee, we’d have one in our line. But the fact is “season-long” surfactants don’t work well and we’re not that kind of company.

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- **Money** because if you apply a “season-long” surfactant more than once a season, you’re paying more than a season of Primer would cost.

Primer was specifically formulated to work effectively and uniformly for one month. “Season-long” surfactants are not, so simply making more frequent applications of the product is not the answer.

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Circle No. 106
A FEW WORDS FROM THE PUBLISHER

Faithful readers will recall that I always return from the GCSAA show with my pockets stuffed with illegible notes on matchbooks and cocktail napkins (a typical example: “Call Muglyfrump ASAP about new gibblymintroul!”).

The problem is not my ability to take notes. The problem is that every time you turn around at the show, someone is placing another drink in your hand, and (say it with me now) beer and journalism just don’t mix. However, with the help of a former CIA cryptologist, I deciphered enough of my scribbles to deliver this report on the big show.

D as in Dreadful

In our show preview, I characterized Dallas as “dull” and “hard to get around.” In hindsight, I realize that those descriptions didn’t do the city justice. After spending a week there, my revised assessment is this: Dallas sucks.

Sure, there were a few positives. The shuttle system was so speedy that – even six weeks later – there are probably a few attendees still enjoying a never-ending ride around the city. And wasn’t it cool that they designed all of those great downtown restaurants and bars to look like boarded-up buildings and vacant lots? Oh, and the weather – I can’t get enough of that delightful combination of cloudy, wet and cold.

A friend of mine summed it up perfectly: “The best thing about Dallas was seeing it gradually shrink in my rearview mirror on the way back home.”

D as in Dollars

Curiously, the same factors that made Dallas a little slice of hell for attendees made it heavenly for exhibitors. Lousy weather and the daunting prospect of getting back on the shuttles kept people on the show floor in droves. Even the final half-day – which historically has been a good time for exhibitors to catch up on their reading or learn how to knit – was busy. I didn’t talk with a single vendor who wasn’t happy about the strong, steady traffic at the show.

Hmmm … maybe this ironic success will inspire the association to consider other locations comparable in climate and atmosphere to Dallas. Like, say, Fargo.

Pretty Darned Impressive

After nearly two years of debate and recent claims by opponents that the measure would be defeated, the bylaws changes behind the GCSAA Professional Development Initiative passed handily. Say what you will about the pros and cons of the delegate voting system, but passage by 75 percent to 25 percent is a mandate by anyone’s yardstick.

The committed superintendents on both sides of PDI should be commended for their efforts. The intensity of the discussion is the sign of a healthy profession.

The question now is how GCSAA and its leadership use the mandate to implement the program and achieve the stated goals. The bylaws vote was not the end of the process; on the contrary, it was only the beginning.

More on Walter

Finally, I was grateful to all of those in Dallas who shared memories about the life and death of Walter Mattison (see “Flagstick,” February). Here’s the one that moved me most:

An unknown individual showed up at the memorial benefit tournament held in Walter’s honor and handed organizers a check for several thousand dollars. He wasn’t in the golf business and had never even actually met Walter. He explained that his daughter was in a church group with Walter and that Walter would unfailingly call after every meeting just to see if the girl had arrived home safely. In short, he had been deeply touched by a man on whom he’d never laid eyes.

Pat Jones is the publisher/editorial director of Golfdom. He can be reached at 440-891-3126 or pjones@advanstar.com
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Retired superintendent Paul R. Latshaw should thank the golf course gods that he married a woman who was raised on a farm. Phyllis Latshaw, Paul’s wife for 37 years, lived and labored on a dairy farm in Liberty, Pa., while growing up. She recalls performing chores before and after school, as well as working on weekends.

So Phyllis understood why Paul, who hung up his work boots in February after 37 years as a superintendent, had to work 15-hour days and weekends when he was tending turf at some of the world’s most famous golf courses, including Oakmont, Augusta National, Riviera, Congressional and Winged Foot.

“The cows don’t know that it’s Saturday and Sunday,” Phyllis says. “Neither does the grass.”

But Phyllis did more than understand why Paul had to work so hard in his quest to become one of the nation’s preeminent superintendents. She provided Paul with unwavering support in his career goals. She gave him love in its truest form — patience, devotion, support and humility.

Her tolerance for Paul’s vocation was often tested. For instance, Paul and Phyllis would make a date for a Sunday-afternoon drive. But Paul, who had gone to work in the morning, would phone Phyllis shortly before he was to meet her and tell her that he would have to stay at work for the entire afternoon. Phyllis was sad when this happened, but she never read Paul the riot act.

“I knew he would rather be with me doing something fun,” she says. “It was frustrating, but I understood.”

Ever since Paul began his career in Jackson, Mich., in the early 1960s, he would come home from work for dinner and then return to the course in the evening to work a few more hours. Phyllis and Paul B., the couple’s young son, often accompanied Paul in the evening.

“That was my recreation,” Phyllis says. “We couldn’t go to the movies or anything like that because he felt responsible to his job. If I didn’t go with him, I didn’t see him.”

Phyllis was a teacher for 15 years in various towns where the Latshaws lived. But she didn’t complain about Paul uprooting her career and the family to move to places like Oakmont, Pa., or Augusta, Ga.

“Paul’s the kind of guy who wants to be on top,” Phyllis says. “I always wanted him to be happy and successful, and I would do whatever I could to make that happen. It was important for me to see him happy.”

Phyllis confesses that being married to Paul before he retired was like being married to her father, who also worked long hours to support his family. She didn’t see either man very much.

Maybe Phyllis gave in to Paul and his demanding career. Maybe she should’ve insisted that Paul work less and stay home more. Maybe she should have demanded that Paul take her to the movies.

But Phyllis doesn’t see it that way. Despite Paul’s long hours, she maintains he was a devoted husband. She believes that Paul didn’t just let her and Paul B. join him at the course at night as a gentlemanly gesture — he wanted to be with them. That’s why Paul also invited Phyllis to the annual GCSAA show and made her his secretary when he became superintendent at Wilmington CC in the early 1990s. That’s why Paul took Phyllis with him on trips around the world.

In his illustrious career, Latshaw hosted four Masters, two U.S. Opens, one PGA Championship and one U.S. Senior Open. He was one