



Past BIGGA Chairman, Dean Cleaver, now administrator for FEGGA, takes a personal look at the GCSAA Show in Dallas

A triumph in Texas

On arriving at Dallas/Fort Worth, it then took a further 10 minutes to drive out of the airport. The size of the airport in actual area was quite amazing, being larger than the island of Manhattan. I suppose that's not surprising, as Texas is larger than France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland and Luxembourg combined.

Dallas ranks among the top cities in the nation for convention and meeting attendees, with more than 3.8 million people attending more than 3,600 conventions, leaving more than \$4.2 billion behind.

I arrived in Dallas on Wednesday, February 14, ready for a busy four days, the GCSAA show is the biggest Superintendents show in the world and attracts 23,000 attendees over the week.

The week had actually started on the previous weekend with their annual Golf Tournament. The tournament was played over three days, with 700 competitors playing over six different golf courses.

Now if you're looking for education, this show certainly offers choice. The seminars and workshops start on the Sunday and run through to the

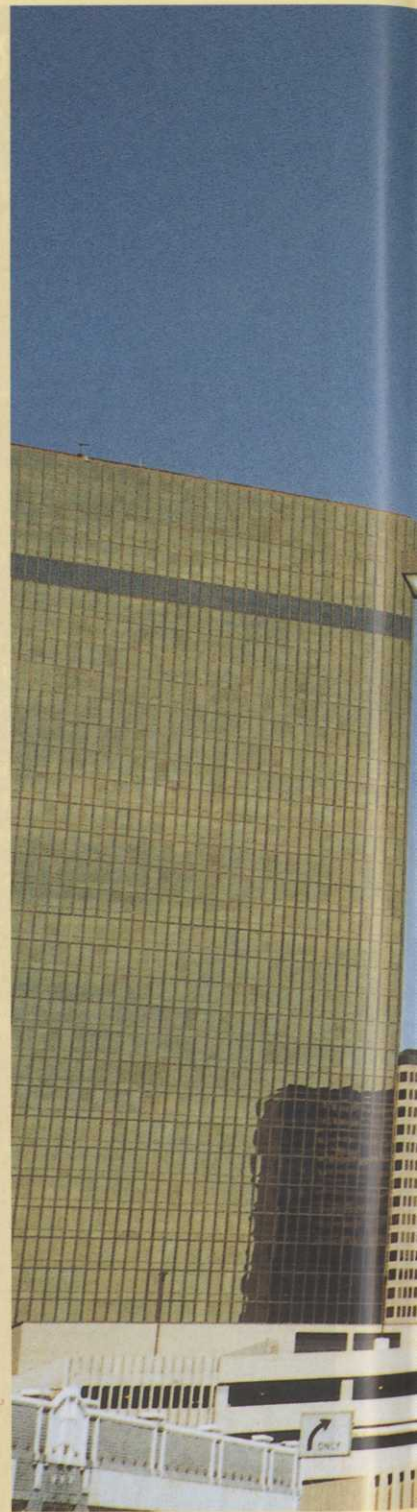
following Sunday. There are a total of 119 seminars and workshops, covering all aspects of golf course management, including agronomy, business communication, golf course management and personal/professional development. There are also discussion groups held during the week and also a complete afternoon session given by the USGA Green Section covering all aspects of their research programmes.

For me the first event was to attend the GCSAA's opening session at the Adams Mark Hotel, this is one of Dallas's premier hotels, and an excellent venue to start their 75th anniversary. The evening was to celebrate lifetime achievements for three Superintendents, also the winner of the Leo Feser award and the National golf tournament. We were also able to view the GCSAA Foundation video, this showed the benefits golf was enjoying through the work of the foundation. The year 2000 saw the foundation raise some \$4.5 million. The evening concluded with the keynote speech given by General H. Norman Schwarzkopf Jr, remembered as the hero of operations

Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

I then moved onto the Rain Bird reception held at the exotic Dallas Aquarium. What a great place to hold a reception, winding your way through the Rain forests sipping a cool beer, eating the finest ribs and meeting with old friends, the perfect end to a very long day. Time I headed back to the hotel.

Thursday saw the opening of the exhibition and anyone visiting the show for the first time will be hit by the enormous size, coupled with the luxurious layout of the exhibition, featuring some 700 exhibitors. The Dallas Convention Centre's expansion for the year 2002 will feature the world's largest 203,000 square-foot, singular column-free exhibit hall in the world.





One new feature to the Dallas show was to split the main exhibition from the GCSAA's services, allied Associations and education. This area being called the GCSAA Park proved to be most successful.

The services offered by the GCSAA are considerable, and really are too many to list in this article. However to give you an idea, it takes 90 GCSAA staff to cover all activities at the show.

Being the industries biggest show, it will always be the launch pad for new products. During the limited time I had to view products, I came across the new Toro pedestrian 21" Flex. This machine is fully floating, featuring a cassette type cylinder that drops straight in and out, and cer-

tainly should be a well-received product within the industry.

Rain Bird featured some new products, one being the new remote video display unit (RVDU). Rain Bird claim this as a first within the irrigation industry, featuring a remote visual display capable of real-time field irrigation control. The RVDU further integrates Rain Bird's state of the art, map based central control technology into the superintendent's busy schedule by providing the freedom of wireless visual access and instant system control from the place its matters most—the golf course.

Thursday also sees the GCSAA hold their Golf General Session, this will focus on winners and survivors. Winners of the Old Tom Morris

Award, the Presidents Award for Environmental leadership and the Environmental Stewards Awards will be honoured, and attendees can enjoy a motivational talk from an American hero in the name of Capt. Scott O'Grady.

The Old Tom Morris award is GCSAA's highest honour, and is awarded each year to an individual who, "through a continuing lifetime commitment to the game of golf, has helped mould the welfare of the game in a manner and style exemplified by Old Tom Morris."

This year's winner is Tim Finchem who is the US PGA Tour Commissioner. Recently under his direction the US PGA Tour has helped ensure that Superintendents

receive media attention. Superintendents are interviewed weekly on PGA Tour radio, and the role of the superintendent was featured on a segment of the PGA Tour television show "Get Golf with the PGA Tour" featured last summer. GCSAA fact sheets are now included in PGA Tour mailing to the media and are distributed to the media at all PGA Tour tournament sites.

The afternoon saw many of the national Associations from around the world attend the International Summit. The meeting saw significant changes this year, after a period of dropping numbers. Canada and FEGGA co-organised the event in conjunction with GCSAA, and at this point I should thank Vince Gilies, Joe

A triumph in Texas



Bedford and Don Brenthur who all did sterling work in organising the summit.

The Summit was to look at how best we can all work together to promote and represent golf course management on a worldwide level. It does not take long to realise that despite all our cultural differences, we all deep down have the same beliefs and indeed problems relating to managing our golf courses.

GCSAA had kindly contracted a professional facilitator on the recommendation of both Canada and FEGGA. Tony Nash from Canada was to carry out this duty, and a great job he did to extracting large chunks of information from us all and we finally concluded with a list of priorities to work with over the next 12 months, all in three and a half hours.

A big central point for all International visitors is the

International Resource Lounge. This is a place where all International delegates old and new can meet during the show, whether to share business or a drink. It is also a good place to pick up Association magazines. Translators are also on hand to assist with any translation that may be required.

Thursday evening saw me braving the weather to attend the European Textron reception, this is a clear indication of the amount of Europeans now attending the GCSAA show and conference. It was again nice to meet up with friends old and new, and to share experiences on a much wider scale. With regard to braving the weather, many of us visiting the show from Europe were hoping to experience some nice weather considering the wet period we have had over the last five months. How disappointed we were, just as we arrived, the rains followed and followed and followed. I don't know how much fell during the week, however I do know that during the period Thursday afternoon and Friday morning five inches of rain fell.

Friday evening saw 1,100 people attend the President's Dinner. This has always provided an experience for anyone attending outside America, although in recent years the proceedings are less formal and in my opinion makes for a more enjoyable evening at the end of a busy show. The President's Dinner is held in honour of the GCSAA's President's past year, and anyone who has had the pleasure of meeting Scott Woodward will know what a pleasant man he is and also what a great ambassador he has been for the Association.

The cabaret was split into two parts; the first part held during the meal were the ice sculpturers, who created the GCSAA logo from ice. The second part proved to be something quite special for all rock and roll fans. The band called the World Classic Rockers, was made up of mega rock stars in their own right, stars from groups such as the Eagles, Moody Blues and Toto, this was truly a memorable experience to finish what was a tremendous week - see you in Orlando in 2002.