

EDUCATION RECAP

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Public Golf Club*



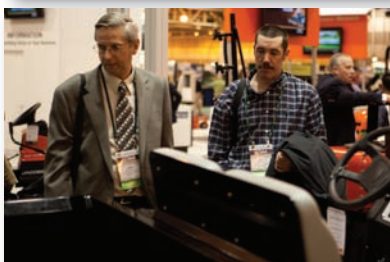
Golf Industry Show is More than a Show

We shall return ...and so we did. The GCSAA made its post Katrina return to New Orleans. Compared to other areas, The French Quarter is considered "high ground" and fared the hurricane well. Other areas of the city did not. Some of our members participated in building a house for a "Habitat for Humanity" project. Those individuals included: John Ekstrom, Les Rutan, Greg Thalmann, CGCS, Derek Settle, Steve Stewart, Fred Behnke, CGCS, Keith Rincker, Al Fierst, Conner Healy, Kurt Sams, CGCS, Ed Braunsky, CGCS, and Joe Etten. Way to represent guys!

New Orleans is always a great venue for the GIS. The hotels and conference center are all within walking distance. The food and music available after a long day on the trade show floor are second to none. The weather is usually excellent. New Orleans is perfect for the short, three- or four-day stay most members enjoy. *Laissez le bon temps rouler!*

The opening session was the usual presentation of awards and elected GCSAA Officers. Our own environmental whiz kid, Dan Dinelli, CGCS, received the well-deserved Presidents Award for Environmental Stewardship. Paul Azinger, Captain of the winning Ryder Cup Team, then took the stage. He had some great "insider" stories about Anthony Kim and Phil Mickleson. His main theme was how he built and managed the team. He was involved in the Ryder Cup selection process to create four Captain picks instead of two. He wanted to get the hottest players on the team. He spoke of the recent problems of the American Ryder Cup Teams not being very cohesive and he was bound and determined to break the mold and find a way to get the American Tour Players to function together as a unit. He adopted a technique matching personality types in small "pods." Rather than pairing different personalities and trying to make them fit together, he matched players of similar psychological profile.

Each pod consisted of three players. The Aggressive pod was Justin Leonard, Phil Mickleson, and Anthony Kim. The Redneck pod was Kenny Perry, Boo Weekly, and Jim Furyk.



The Quiet pod was Stewart Cink, Ben Curtis, and Steve Stricker. Azinger also did another thing that was very unusual; he let his pods pick their own players. His only captain pick was Stricker. He let the players take ownership of the pods by allowing each to make their own choice. Talk about delegation. Azinger gave up control of the only thing over which he had control, his Captain picks. Each pod was given a short list to pick from. He also talked about recruiting the local Louisville population to function as the 13th Man. He wanted to get the crowd into it.

He also talked about how he worked with Mark Wilson, CGCS, and the Staff from Valhalla in modifying the course to give his team an advantage. This translates to the "bomb and gauge" game the PGA tour is famous for. The rough was shortened, fairways widened, and trees were removed to open things up. Zinger really got into his story telling and went 30 minutes over his time limit before he was asked to quickly wrap it up. The trade show floor was calling. I suspect he could have gone on for another hour, and I believe he would have. Azinger stuck around after his presentation for quite

a while to sign stuff and meet people. I wonder if that "pod method" would work with my crew?

The trade show seemed to me to have about the same level of Vendor participation as usual. The floor, facilities, and rooms at the New Orleans Conference Center were clean and

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spacious. The trade show can be overwhelming, unless you have a game plan for exploring it. I always fall back on my systematic, aisle-by-aisle approach. Funny thing, I ran into my old boss, Les Rutan from Crystal Tree C.C., doing the exact same thing. Go figure. Robotic mowers and range picker units were displayed. It seemed like there were a lot of new products that came in jugs. I saw Tim Davis from Shore Acres C.C. down in the Club Managers end of the trade show floor. He said he smelled burgers cooking and followed his nose to investigate.

Of course the education opportunities at the GIS are endless. There are so many seminars, classes, presentations, and other opportunities to learn about our industry. If you walk away without picking up anything new, it's your own fault. There is so much to see and do, yet so little time.

The U.S.G.A. made their presentation "It's All About the Economy!" The theme of this year's program was about saving money in hard times. It featured nine speakers from the Green Section presenting ideas for avoiding the costs of overwatering, preventing the application of too little or too much calcium (or magnesium), saving money on the installation and maintenance of fans on greens, maintaining naturalized areas, using scientific research to evaluate water conditions, reducing the "wow" factor and enhancing playability, using inorganic soil amendments wisely, getting the best value from your mechanic, and keeping bunker maintenance to a minimum.

Stephen Covey, co-founder of the Covey Leadership Center, was the keynote speaker. His compelling presentation was based on his book, "The Speed of Trust". Covey told us that trust has become a critical leadership competency in today's business world. He has demonstrated that trust is no longer considered a soft skill but rather a hard-edged economic driver that can be learned and measured. One of his examples was, if you trust someone, a deal can be reached in a very short time frame. If you don't trust them, research and due diligence, which takes more time and more money, is required. Trust can be created or destroyed. The key is to make trust building a part of team relationships and corporate culture. Trust me, read the book.

As the tired and depleted MAGCS members gathered at the airport for the flight home, we were all glad the GCSAA had the GIS in New Orleans. New Orleans is still trying to rebuild from Katrina, and they need conferences like ours. Granted, New Orleans is a little grittier and older than the homogenized, vanilla shopping mall conference site on International Drive in Orlando. We know it doesn't draw as large a gathering either, because it's not considered a family-friendly venue. But for a conference that's a short and intense stay, it works very well, thank you. Let's hope it's not the last time we visit. -OC



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