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SPOTLIGHT

Green. It was a novel idea to say the least.

The main thing about the show is that I didn't see or feel any loss of superintendent identity or ownership of the event that some people either feared or predicted. As for our industry partners who help support us at the national level all the way down to the local chapters, I know this combined show concept has to be very welcome from a financial as well as practical standpoint. The future of trade shows was hanging in the balance and this reorganization is a good thing for all concerned. So, on with the show!

Opening Session

Our President Joe Pantaleo did a fine job welcoming our national brethren to Orlando with some Florida golf industry facts, and you couldn't find a more enthusiastic GCSAA Golf Champion than Seth Strickland, who had his dream come true when his childhood golf idol Jack Nicklaus presented him with the winner's trophy.

Then golf legend (and longtime Floridian) Jack Nicklaus took the podium to receive the 2005



Huge logo projected over the dais at the Opening Session.

Old Tom Morris Award. His remarks showed the depth of his intensity for playing the game and for his commitment to golf course design. But I still couldn't find that spark, that personal charisma that would let me warm up to him. I think he is such a private person that only those who work closely with him can truly appreciate his genius. He certainly has earned my respect for his accomplishments, and he did say repeatedly that bringing a superintendent on a new project is a priority of his in order to complete the team needed for bringing a project on line.

His presentation and the Opening Session suffered when they tried to do a taped interview for the Golf Channel and it ran long, causing some people to have to leave to attend other conflicting classes and sessions. But as we all know when you try something new, you learn from your mistakes.

General Session

I had the pleasure of hearing Peter Kessler speak at a USGA Regional Conference in Orlando a few years ago. That golden baritone, broadcaster's voice of his is a gift he uses well. When I last heard him he was the top dog at the Golf Channel; this time he was a former employee and unfortunately he zinged his former employer a couple of times, which I thought detracted from his presentation. But he did deliver some



Networking and socializing are valuable benefits of attending the Golf Industry Show. Photo by Larry Kieffer.



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SPOTLIGHT



Powerhouse was the name of the band at the FGCSA Reception and they put on a great show. Photo by Joel Jackson.

poignant and humorous golf anecdotes as only he can.

It's all about numbers For those bean counters who have to keep score, the 2005 GIS was a measurable success in terms of overall attendance (22,723), seminar seats sold (7,329), exhibitors (826), qualified buyers (8,149) and exhibit space (270,360 square feet). It was a nice rebound from the recent economic slowdown that had the numbers flat or slightly depressed in recent years. I heard a lot of positive comments from folks taking seminars. The push by GCSAA to grade and evaluate sessions and speakers has generally paid off and most everyone gave high marks to their instructors.

One other high number that was typical when the GCSAA comes to Orlando was the over 900 people who attended the FGCSA Reception on Thursday night at the



At last count over 900 people attended the FGCSA Reception at the 2005 GIS in Orlando. Photo by Joel Jackson

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John Johnson (left) was the lucky winner of the Benevolent Fundraiser Drawing. FGCSA President Joe Pantaleo offers his congratulations to John and announced the Benevolent Fund was increased by \$5,100 through the donations at the FGCSA Reception. Photo by Joel Jackson

Rosen Centre Hotel next door to the convention center. Paul Crawford, CGCS made a triumphant return as Reception Chairman by organizing, with the generous help and support of our sponsors. It was a great evening of food and entertainment for FGCSA members and guests. A new conference tradition got a terrific shot in the arm as our Benevolent Fund received more than \$5,000 in donations. Many thanks to Samantha and Greg Kriesch and other board members for manning the Benevolent Fund table. John Johnson from the South Seas Plantation G. C. won the cash prize in the fundraising raffle.

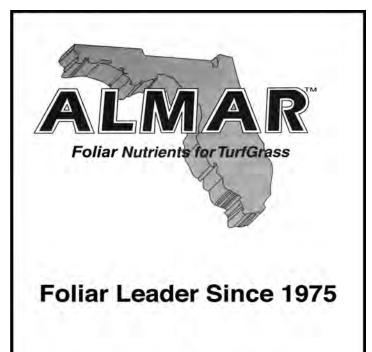
Multiple food and drink stations made wait times for refreshments very short and the tropical island





Several GCSAA staff members accepted FGCSA Reception Chairman Paul Crawford's invitation to join us for some food and fun at the Orlando party. Photo by Joel Jackson

themed decorations provided a festive background for the band Powerhouse from the southwest Florida area, and many in the crowd danced the night away including several GCSAA staff members who were our guests courtesy of an invitation idea from Crawford, "Hey why not invite these folks? They are on the road, working long hours to put on a good conference for us. They shouldn't have to go back to the hotel and order room service at the end of the day. Why not give them an opportunity for a special night out on us as a way of saying thanks for what they do this week and all year?" From the thankyou card they sent after the conference, it was obvious that they really appreciated the gesture on our part. Hey gang! See you next year in New Orleans.



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Building the Green



From piles of dirt on a tarp on the concrete floor of the convention center to a finished green holding a putting contest, the volunteers from the Golf Course Builders Association and GCSAA out did themselves in the five day marathon project. Photos by Larry Kieffer and Joel Jackson.







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Number 1, Par 4, 400 yard, Marsh Creek CC Photo by Daniel Zelazek