

## TALKING TO MYSELF

**S**o, Pat, what did you think of the GIS in San Diego? It was fine, Pat.

**Fine? That's all you got, Mr. Critical?**

It was fine. As always, it was a good business platform for us. We were busy as hell. We had lots of great face time with readers and advertisers. We launched our new app. We rocked our hot pink golf shirts and had fun.

**What about the location?**

San Diego is great once you get there. Everything is pretty self-contained and the weather was at least decent. It was fun and relatively problem-free. Most exhibitors were happy and felt like it was a good investment.

**What about lower attendance and "qualified buyers"? Aren't you going to bluster about how the metrics were down?**

No, everyone expected it to be down and the numbers were pretty much what I thought they would be. I think the numbers were 15 percent lower than what the GCSAA had hoped for, but realistically 13,000 isn't bad for a West Coast show. Not everybody likes to fly that far, money is still tight and some people skipped this one to keep their powder dry for Orlando in '14. The numbers will jump up a couple of thousand for Florida because of the concentration of courses within driving distance and the whole Disney/family thing.

**So the trade show is going to grow again and come back?**

No, idiot, the show is not coming back. Trade shows in general are eroding, there's no indication courses are going to get flush again anytime soon and, other than the networking, there's no must-attend reason for supers to go every year. Education is cheap and available close to home and, thanks to the Internet, any product on the globe is just a Google search away. Mostly, the biggest companies in the industry are beginning to question the size of the investment, particularly considering there are a zillion other ways to achieve their marketing goals.

**Like what?**

Have I not mentioned our new app?

**You said the show was fun. What was memorable?**

Kissing Dennis Lyon on the top of his bald head (see the video on the GCI site). Having people pimp the life-sized cardboard cut-out of me in our booth. Seeing our brand new assistant editor, Katie Tuttle, jump into her first big event with gusto. Swapping Zontek stories with a bunch of other old farts. Watching people's eyes light up when we showed them the new GCI app. Experiencing a great turnout at the Aquatrols booth for our TweetUp and social media awards. Getting positive feedback from tons of people that makes me think we're doing things pretty well with the magazine and all of our digital stuff.

And, as always, seeing good friends. That's the best thing about the show.



**Pat Jones**  
Editorial director and publisher

**What stunk about the show?**

First, time compression. The window to talk with people, see booths, attend meetings and learn new stuff is just too short.

Second, having way too many nice young people come up and say, "It's an honor to meet you, Mr. Jones." Good god, when did I get so old and respectable?

**Respectable?**

Okay, just old.

**Shall we wrap this up now by asking what grade you'd give this year's show?**

Have we written enough words to fill up the column space?

**Pretty close!**

All right then...I'd give this year's show a B. Not bad under the circumstances, nothing terrible happened and people seemed happy enough. It didn't blow me away and it didn't suck.

**A stunning endorsement...**

Did anyone ever tell you you're a crappy interviewer? **GCI**

## GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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