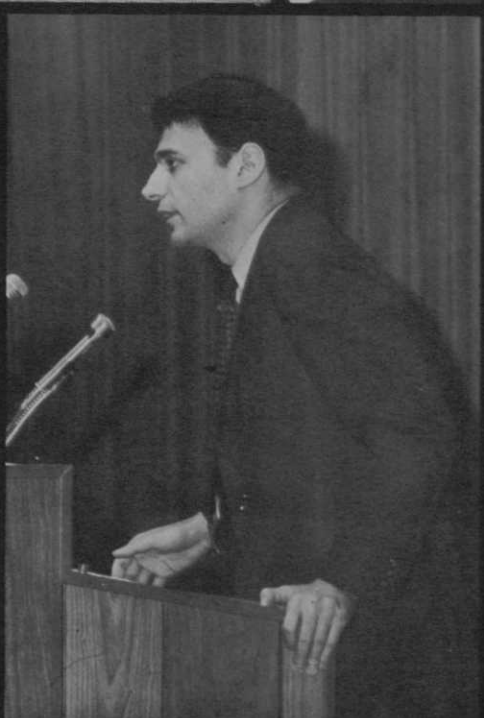


# GCSAA CONFERENCE IN REVIEW



A record number of superintendents and exhibitors, and informative educational seminars produced another successful turfgrass conference and show

by JERRY A. OLSON

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The largest gathering of golf course superintendents ever indicated the success of the 43d annual Golf Course Superintendents Assn. of America International Turfgrass Conference and Show held in Cincinnati February 13 to 18. Over 1,300 GCSAA members, plus wives, exhibitors and greens chairman brought the total registration to over 4,000.

The conference was centered around the keynote speaker, consumer advocate Ralph Nader. Nader's effective informal speaking style and his charismatic appearance lent credence to his talk on the threat this nation faces from environmental pollution. "It is not a question of can we afford to clean up our pollution," Nader told the 1,600 seated listeners, plus another crowd of 750 standees, "but of can we afford not to. If we would spend one dollar on pollution prevention now, it would save spending \$100 for cure later. What will it cost if we don't clean up our pollution?" Nader asked the audience.

Although Nader did not discuss in detail the relationship of the golf course to its environment, either favorably as areas of open space, or unfavorably as contributors to the pollution problem, he did discuss the relationship of property taxes to golf courses. Nader denounced country clubs that discriminate while receiving property tax exemptions. He added that the kind of action needed to meet and solve this issue can be found in some of the approaches suggested by *GOLFDOM* Magazine on how golf clubs can improve their community relations. ("21 Ways to Build Golf Course/Community Relations," June, 1971, p. 28). The problems are not insurmountable if they can be approached this way. Nader feels that

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the solution to the pollution problem lies in two areas: Greater legal rights and representation for individuals to sue companies that pollute; and developing an economic set of sanctions which would make it more costly to pollute than not to pollute.

General comments on Nader's speech centered not on what he said, but on the selection of such a broad general speech on pollution to an audience that was expecting criticism focusing on practices within the golf industry. GCSAA officials expressed disappointment over the broadness of Nader's speech. It had been hoped that controversy could have been generated, so that the industry could examine its practices. Regardless of this criticism of Nader's speech, his topic on the general dimensions of environmental pollution cannot be ignored.

Following the keynote speech, the session continued with the theme directed toward environmental problems. One point overemphasized by several speakers in the opening session was their alarm at the path the nation is taking on certain chemicals. One speech empha-

sized too much the relative toxicity of aspirin and alcohol versus chemicals used on the golf course. This type of analogy tells us nothing about the toxicity of chemicals used on the golf course. All chemicals, even table salt, are dangerous if used incorrectly, the speaker concluded. Speakers in the opening session frequently characterized or labeled opponents of the use of chemicals as "instant" ecologists or emotionalists. This labeling muddies the issue. The golf course superintendent, by the very nature of his profession and responsibilities, is an ecologist—or he should be. What the speakers should have done, instead of saying we have nothing to fear from these chemicals if used correctly, is to offer sane approaches to the problem: How can the superintendent influence favorable legislation, and the use of alternative chemicals if some of the traditional ones are banned?

Perhaps the highlight of the educational side of the conference was the response to the session on golf cars. This is the first year that a whole morning session has been devoted to this area, and the speeches as well as the reaction of the audi-

ence was interesting. The speakers were leading golf car manufacturers and most noticeably refrained from any "plugs." There were very few empty seats in the 1,600-seat auditorium as the session progressed.

Highlights from the session included this statement by a golf car manufacturer that was echoed by other manufacturers. "I am recommending (to clubs) that the service maintenance of golf cars should be under the supervision of the golf course superintendent," the speaker said. "I am also recommending that the superintendent's annual operating budget be increased by a substantial amount to help you cover the cost of providing this service and to be able to afford a better job of maintaining your fairways and greens."

Another fine speech was on the golf car and the legal responsibilities of the club. As the number of golf cars increase, so will the number of accidents and the number of lawsuits. Although many accidents are caused by drivers, the club may be liable for improperly designed car paths or improperly maintained golf cars. One fine solution to solving the accidents

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#### POLLUTION IS A FORM OF SILENT VIOLENCE

A highlight of Ralph Nader's hour long talk at the GCSAA Convention was on environmental contamination as a form of violence. "Pollution is silent violence," Nader said. "It is a silent encroachment that does not generate the concern and action as other forms of violence that we can see or feel with our senses. We react quickly to things we can sense," Nader said, "because they register in our minds. However, over the last 100 years there has been extensive industrialization. Man has outsmarted himself. He cannot sense or react to this silent violence that is just as serious as a fire or any other crime or disaster. We accept pollution and defer our reactions towards solving the problems. We must stop selling our country short," Nader said. "We

have the technological know-how. Pressure must be brought to bear on using this know-how towards solving our problems. We predicted we would put a man on the moon 10 years before we accomplished the feat. We've been giving the auto industry deadlines for 20 years and they keep deferring them. Halting pollution is a two pronged attack," Nader said. "You must first stop polluting, and then move to clean up what is already polluted. What good does it do to clean up Lake Erie if the same practices that got it polluted in the first place are still in effect? The public must view an assault on the environment as an assault on human beings; they cannot be separated. The young people growing up are children of a polluted environment. We must not

pass along the problems we have created to their generation. If we do, they could become psychologically adapted to a poor environment and also take no action. While we may become psychologically adapted, we are not physiologically adapted to a poor environment."

The most significant renovation in the present system must be in adopting national standards Nader believes. Otherwise companies will play states against states. "State pollution laws are ineffective because companies keep states from enforcing these laws," Nader said. "They use a form of environmental blackmail. They threaten to pull out of the state causing unemployment and a loss of revenue, to a state with less stringent pollution laws."



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was this statement: "We strongly recommend that your board of directors, when appointing various committees each year, should appoint a safety chairman and committee to be concerned with safety in the showers, on stairways . . . as well as how to drive a golf car. It is important to study accidents getting ready to happen."

The sessions on "Men, Machinery and Management," as well as the technical sessions, provided fine suggestions for improving the personal and professional status of the superintendent.

On the show side, the manufacturers and superintendents were in accord that this was one of the finest shows ever. Most exhibitors felt that superintendents were taking more time this year to stop in at individual booths and become acquainted with both the people and the products. The mechanical trap rakes caused by far the greatest interest in any single equipment line. Their performance on steeply-banked, deep traps will be closely watched by superintendents. Big sales in this area may not be realized until an evaluation can be made of their versatility to the trap terrain of individual courses.

One manufacturer offered "short" courses and films on its training center for mechanics. This was received very favorably by superintendents and may be picked up next year by other manufacturers. Automatic irrigation manufacturers were pleased with the response and enthusiasm generated by superintendents.

The site for 1973 is Boston and the date is January 7 to 12. There was some criticism among superintendents about placing the show at a site which will undoubtedly be having cold, bad weather and timing it just after the holiday season. As long as the principle of having different sections host the show continues, the problem will always develop, such as two or three years in a cold spot in a row, followed by two or three years in a warm climate in a row. A solution would be to alternate the show sites annually between warm and cold climates. This would allow the golf

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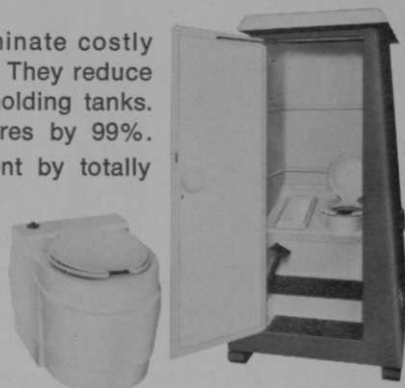
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tournament to be played at the convention site at least every other year.

Another comment on the Boston show was the fact that exhibits would be held on two floors, instead of in one big hall. Although this might create a second-class image such as the Professional Golfers' Assn. is trying to overcome with their two tent system, I don't think this argument is valid in view of the attitude and attention that superintendents gave manufacturers this year. They are spending more time seeing everyone, and not just concentrating on some of the "giants'" booths.

The smoothness and success of the show can be credited to the hard work done by the GCSAA executive committee. The educational sessions started and ended on time. Although several competitors were placed side by side and some manufacturers had to hide in the shadows of bigger exhibitors or in remote corners, the intense attention exhibitions are receiving from superintendents should eliminate these problems almost entirely in future shows. □

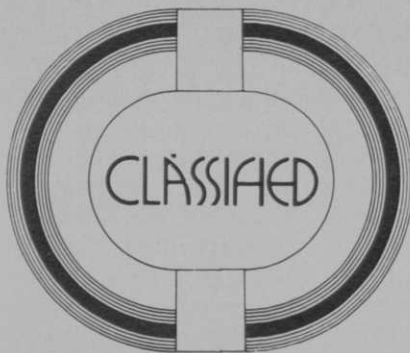
#### **VANDALISM** from page 91

cross-country skiing and snowmobiling in particular. Ice skating on the club lake or pond, under controlled access conditions, might also be considered. Sledding also, as mentioned previously, can be destructive and costly. It need not be, however. When the ground freezes solid and a heavy layer of snow puts the fairways to sleep for the season, advantage could be taken to involve the young people in the life of a golf course. Any layout with a decent hill can become a winter paradise for the family sledding crowds.

Vandalism, possibly today's most difficult problem for superintendents will always be a source of frustration and destruction.

The percentage of dollar impact on maintenance cost will always include a share for vandalism.

Meeting the vandalism problem head on with specific preventive measures is a necessity. It might also be wise to look into long-range planning as a way of cutting down the overwhelming percentages. □



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