

News

CONVENTIONS & TRADE SHOWS

Texas hosts biggest GCSAA show ever

CONVENTIONS &
TRADE SHOWS, 9

TURF INDUSTRY, 10

ASSOCIATIONS, 10

FOUNDATIONS, 12

LEGAL ACTION, 12

CERTIFICATION, 12

REGIONAL, 14

COMPANIES, 14

"Adapt or die: that's Butz' law of economics."

So said the controversial former secretary of agriculture during his keynote address at the 49th International Turfgrass Conference and Show held by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America in San Antonio, Tex., February 14-16. Appropriately, the association itself had adapted to the changing golf business climate this past year by reorganizing its administrative staff and putting Jim Brooks in charge of the annual trade show.

The result was that the originally allotted floorspace in the San Antonio Convention Center was sold out, then expanded and sold out again. Obviously, there is no lack of interest in the green end of the golf business. Some 195 exhibitors displayed golf course maintenance equipment and supplies during the convention, which attracted some 5,500 golf superintendents and other turfgrass managers.

"Leisure is the great growth area in the years ahead," Butz said. "We have established the principle of the 3-day weekend in America, and the 35-hour workweek is now the goal of the unions," he added, projecting an increase in outdoor recreational activities, such as golf, as people acquire all of the material things they desire and have more free time.

Butz was the first of about 40 speakers during the conference. This year's educational program was divided into seven sessions: management, public golf

owners/operators, research, thinking superintendent, turf management/ north and south, and weather.

The annual GCSAA business meeting held during the conference resulted in a new national association president, George Cleaver of Chestnut Ridge Country Club, Lutherville, Md.; a new vice president, Charles Tadge of Mayfield Country Club, South Euclid, Ohio; and new directors: David Holler, Gulph Mills Golf Club, King of Prussia, Pa.; James Wyllie, Lambton Golf and Country Club, Toronto, Ontario; and Melvin Lucas, Garden City (N.Y.) Golf Club.

Two educators and a twice-retired golf course superintendent were honored during the conference by the GSCAA Distinguished Service Award, the association's highest honor. Dr. Roy L. Goss, turf specialist at Western Washington Research and Extension Center Washington State University was recognized for "his turfgrass research specific to the Pacific Northwest, including his unprecedented work with turfgrass varieties."

Dr. John C. Harper II, extension agronomist at Pennsylvania State University, was honored for "his unusually active role in Pennsylvania turfgrass organizations and for his well-known role as an adviser who is available, willing, and

knowledgeable about local turf problems."

Arthur A. Snyder, CGCS, retired from Paradise Valley Country Club, Scottsdale, Ariz., was recognized for more than 50 years of service as a superintendent. He had helped establish turfgrass research projects, discovered a fine-leaved bermudagrass (A-53), and founded both the Cactus and Pine GCSA and the Arizona Turfgrass Council after his first retirement in 1953.

On Friday, at the end of the conference, superintendents had the opportunity to visit four San Antonio-area golf courses.

First expo a success, say CMAA exhibitors

The success of an exposition can be judged simply by the amount of sales and potential customers generated by the companies that buy booths to display their product. Using this logic, the 57 exhibitors and the Club Managers Association of America seem to have strengthened their rapport following the latter's first exposition. Bill Maddox, national sales director for E-Z-Go golf cars, is one industry representative who felt the show was a financial asset.

"I'd rank it behind the PGA Merchandise and superintendents'

FAR RIGHT: Opening ceremony at the GCSAA show included officials Tadge, Lucas, Cleaver, Ted Smith, Ted Woehrl, Dick Eichner, and Michael Bavier in front row, Holler, Dick Malpass, and Lou Haines in back.

IMMEDIATE RIGHT: Dan Jones, superintendent at Aventura CC, North Miami Beach, received the first GCSAA newsletter editors award from Dwayne Netland (center), associate editor of Golf Digest, and Dave Slaybaugh (right), editor of GOLF BUSINESS, two of the three judges. Jones edits "The South Florida Green" for the South Florida GCSA.



shows, as far as its worth to us, and we probably go to a dozen shows a year. The exposure was excellent and we got a lot of possible leads. If we're invited next year, we'll come back with a bigger exhibit." The response from the managers was equally enthusiastic. The association's show coordinator, Mrs. Karen Watkins, said the show received a "fantastic reception" from the managers.

The exhibits and the association's 51st annual conference drew more than 1,300 club managers February 13-17 at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. Speakers introduced a number of new ideas and topics at the educational seminars, including a new kind of insurance to protect the club against actions by members who consume too many alcoholic drinks at the facility. The group also heard from Mike Hurst, who stressed the importance of new promotions at his 8,000-member Marina Bay Club in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Art Holst, a management consultant who discussed motivation, and Somers White, a former Arizona state senator who sees nonverbal actions as an important communication factor with club board members.

Possibly the primary discussion topic among managers was their role in preventing the elimination of tax deductions for club dues and entertainment expenses proposed by the Carter administration. The National Club Association told the managers that preliminary figures indicate that 1,100 golf clubs will close if Congress approves the plan. Newly-elected CMAA President George Burton was among those persons testifying before the House Ways and Means Committee March 17 asking to preserve the deductions.

The only segment of the conference which seemed to elicit a lukewarm response from the managers was the roundtable discussion among country club managers. "It seemed to lack planning. There was nothing new at all," said W. R. "Red" Steger, club manager at River Oaks Country Club in Houston, Tex.

Here are the key points from some of the presentations made to the managers:

— One of the newest legal concerns of a club's operations is protection against members who cause injury or property damage after consuming alcoholic drinks at the club. Knap Bourne, a safety consultant for Marsh & McLennan, the largest insurance brokerage firm in California, quoted a Santa

Barbara legal newspaper that said 125 such lawsuits have been filed against clubs, restaurants, and taverns.

Bourne said the club that continues to serve already-drunk members are inviting trouble. "If a club member gets drunk at your club and kills someone in a car accident — you're liable. If there's no club policy (on serving alcoholic drinks), and witnesses say he's drunk, no training program for employees, the club member can easily win," he said.

Bourne said protection against liquor liability is available, "but not on a widespread basis." He also said that bills introduced in some state legislatures to protect the establishments have been unsuccessful.

— Hurst, whose club totaled \$4 million in sales last year, told the managers that new kinds of food and promotions "are the things that make the club come alive. If you stand pat without promotions, your sales will decline."

Hurst has staged some out-of-the-ordinary promotions; a pajama party was held on Halloween and a ground hog hunting party on Ground Hog's Day. His menu includes shark, and he hopes soon to include alligator tails. He said members enjoy special activities because they want to be involved with their club and they tell others about them.

"It's based on the psychological insecurity of your members," Hurst said. "Exclusivity is one thing, but it's not enough. They talk because of product involvement. Our members tell their friends about the crazy time they had with 5,000 drunks at a pajama party. He's justifying his reasons for the club."

— Holst, a National Football League referee for 14 years, said managers can make their programs more productive if six factors can be related to their members and employees: comfort, convenience, economy, pride of ownership, durability, and safety. "The more you can relate these features to any benefits (of a program), the more people will buy your program," he said. He also reminded the managers that their goals must meet certain criteria to be accomplished. The goals should be obtainable, challenging, easily measurable, shared with others, written down, and subject to change.

— Somers White, owner of a management and financial consultant firm in Phoenix, Ariz., gave tips about keeping good relations with the club's board of

directors. "Think about what your president wants. Some want ego, some want to change the club. Maybe you adjust; if it doesn't hurt the club, go along. You'll get what you want if he gets what he wants," White said.

White said managers should also realize that about 4 percent of the membership will not be pleased no matter what is done, and these persons should not worry the manager. "We tend to operate on the negatives and forget about the positive." But he believes the sour feelings of those in power should be checked. "People are more affected, more strongly, by what they don't like. Find out what your president and board of directors don't like," said White.

The speaker also has a technique to expedite decisions when board members begin to take extreme views on an issue and can't decide what action to take. They should be given questionnaires about their members and then an independent auditor should poll the members and present findings to the board. White says the poll should convince the board members to follow the action preferred by most club members.

The managers concluded their conference by electing new officers. Whitney Travis, manager of the Stock Exchange Luncheon Club in New York City, became the vice president and Donald Beaver, manager at the Philadelphia Country Club in Gladwyne, Pa., was chosen the new secretary-treasurer.

Richard Daley, Carlouel Yacht Club in Clearwater, Fla., and Raymond Watts, The Houston Club, Houston, Tex., were re-elected to three-year terms on the board of directors. Newly-elected members are Bob Hedges, The Arlington Club, Portland, Ore., and James A. Goslin Jr., Warwick Country Club, Warwick, R.I.

TURF INDUSTRY

National federation is born in Texas

With cautious optimism, a group of turfgrass industry leaders endorsed the creation of a national turfgrass federation at a meeting February 15 during the GCSAA convention in San Antonio. A temporary slate of officers and a committee to write a set of bylaws were chosen.

The original idea of a national turfgrass federation is attributed to

Dr. Fred Grau, who made the motion for creation of the NTF, thus putting into action an idea formed 25 years ago. Dr. Richard Duble, a researcher at the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas A&M University, did much of the organizational work of this and two previous meetings.

Duble was chosen as secretary-treasurer of the NTF; Gene Nutter of Chem-Lawn as vice president; and Lou Greco, superintendent at Squaw Creek Country Club, Vienna, Ohio, as president. James Watson of The Toro Co.'s irrigation division seconded Dr. Grau's motion for creation and was named to the bylaws committee along with Grau, Dr. James Beard of Texas A&M, and Tom Mascaró.

The desire is to make the federation resemble the Council on Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST), a relatively successful and noncompetitive group representing agriculture. Without actually lobbying, CAST gathers data and polls industry leaders regarding topics of critical interest to agriculture. As a result, government officials consult CAST on agricultural issues.

In a prepared statement, Duble said, "Areas of immediate concern to the National Turfgrass Federation include pesticide restrictions, water use restrictions, energy conservation, land use regulations, and tax laws relating to greenbelt areas."

ASSOCIATIONS

Builders meet, elect new president

The Golf Course Builders of America met in San Antonio during the GCSAA show, and Eugene Brown of Greenville, N.C., turned the title of president over to David Canavan of Culpeper, Va.

At the annual president's dinner, the builders heard two guest speakers. Ronald C. Reeve, technical director of Advanced Drainage Systems Inc., discussed shallow drainage in agricultural operations and how it could apply to golf courses. William Amick, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, told the builders that he expected the golf course construction business to be better in the period 1978-79 than it was in 1976-77 — "But that's not saying much," he added.

Amick expects New England to be the "quietest" part of the U.S. as



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far as course building is concerned, with some projects in the Midwest. The Sun Belt is where the action will be, he said, especially in the west and southwest — where there is a better building economy and more residential developments.

"Country clubs are dead" as far as new construction, Amick noted. "The municipal market is better." He also foresees more resorts being built in the Sun Belt and in the Caribbean — "places where Americans go."

Certainly, Amick said, the immediate future will see more remodeling of existing golf courses and more 9-hole additions. There will be more executive courses built. "Golf courses will be shorter, tighter, and use less land. They will require less time to play and will be better for senior citizens, women, and juniors," he concluded.

FOUNDATIONS

Musser group meets, starts fundraising

The Musser International Turfgrass Foundation voted at its board meeting during the GCSAA show in San Antonio to hire a professional estate planner/fund gatherer. Director Bill Lyons, Lyons Den Golf, Canal Fulton, Ohio, and also a GOLF BUSINESS Advisory Board member, will direct the fundraising effort. New board member Hugh Chronister volunteered a \$1,000 grant as "seed money" from his firm, Harvest Publishing Co. (publisher of GOLF BUSINESS).

The Musser Foundation gives financial grants to turf students. One grant to an Ohio student has resulted in a major discovery of the life cycle of the extremely destructive Ataenius beetle.

The Foundation, under the director of Dr. Fred Grau, wants to expand its scholarship work by broadening its financial base through memorial contributions and gifts.

LEGAL ACTION

Pro-only policy upheld in Chicago

The U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago has upheld a district court ruling which allows golf club manufacturers to sell their "pro-only" lines to pro shops and deny the clubs to retail stores.

The three-man court decided in late February that the Professional Golfers' Association and several club manufacturers did not conspire to keep the clubs out of retail stores.

Attorneys for Morrie Mages Inc., the golf retail store which filed the suit, also argued that certain procedural errors by the district court hindered their attempts to strengthen their case against The Spalding Sales Corp. The attorneys wanted to find the cost of production and profit statements of various golf manufacturers, saying it would show the alleged difference in quality between pro and retail equipment does not exist.

The court denied this request and all others, saying it did not understand how any financial statements would have advanced Mages' theory that the establishment of the pro-only policies would indicate a conspiracy among the two groups.

The court did indicate this case differed from another lawsuit where attorneys for Golf City, Inc., a retail store in New Orleans, are seeking damages from Wilson Sporting Goods Co. This case says the club makers are guilty of price-fixing.

It is not known if attorneys for Morrie Mages will appeal this decision.

CERTIFICATION

Fourteen managers pass CCM test

Fourteen members of the Club Managers Association of America passed their certification test in February, including 10 who work at clubs with golf courses, according to the CMAA office in Washington.

The new certified club managers at golf facilities are Bruce M. Goedde, Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club, Menlo Park, Calif.; Curtis J. Heverly, Winchester Country Club, Winchester, Va.; Adalbert K. Hilberth, Lakeside Country Club, Houston, Tex.; Samuel L. Howard, Mid-Pacific Country Club, Kailua, Hawaii.

Stephen B. Padar, Kent Country Club, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Daniel F. Podsednik, Champions Golf Club Inc., Houston, Tex.; John O. Raikkonen, Westwood Country Club, St. Louis, Mo.

Edward Richards, Shady Oaks Country Club, Fort Worth, Tex.; Norman G. Smith, NCO and Officers Clubs, Pope Air Force Base, N.C.; and John Strange Jr.,

Owl Creek Country Club, Anchorage, Ky.

There are 570 certified managers, said Mrs. Velma Benesh, the CMAA's certification secretary, out of between 2,750 and 2,800 managers in the association.

REGIONAL

Claussen heads Oregon owners

Jerry Claussen, owner of the Albany (Ore.) Golf Club and former National Golf Foundation director for the Rocky Mountain region, has been named president of the newly-formed Oregon Golf Course Owners Association.

Owners of 24 other daily fee courses have also joined the association, Claussen said.

The group hopes to gain what they feel would be more equitable property taxes throughout the state, Claussen said. He said Oregon law allows local tax assessors to vary the rates.

The owners will also attempt to gain lower premiums for hazard insurance liability, believing their

economic clout will be stronger as a group, Claussen said.

COMPANIES

E-Z-Go execs buy Club Car

Eight former employees of the E-Z-Go golf car division of Textron, Inc., in Augusta, Ga., have purchased the Augusta-based Club Car operation from Johns-Manville. The newly formed company will be known as Club Car, Inc. — ironically, the same name it had before former Director of Operations Bill Stevens sold it to J-M many years ago.

W. A. "Billy" Dolan, Jr., is president of the company; the other seven men in the management group are George H. Inman, Charles J. Goodwin, Carl Swanson, J. William Wooten, Richard H. Lemon, Sam W. Mays, and R. K. "Randy" Strozier, Jr. Dolan indicates that "plans are to continue operating the business without interruption. We feel the future growth prospects of the golf car industry are bright, and the management group is excited



New Club Car owners are (top row, left to right): Swanson, Wooten, Lemmon, Strozier, and Goodwin. (Bottom row): Inman, Mays, and Dolan.

about Club Car's future participation in the industry's growth.

"We plan to continue marketing our products through the present distributor organization and strengthen their efforts with continuing product improvements and product expansion with additional sales support programs."

Dolan added that the management group has a combined total of "more than 100 years of golf car experience . . . in all phases of manufacturing, engineering, administration, and marketing."

The course was officially opened with an exhibition match between touring Grenelefe pro Andy Bean and PGA Tour players J. C. Snead and Chi Chi Rodriguez.

The new course, par 72, measures 6,743 yards from the championship tees, 6,069 from the regular tees and 5,114 yards from the front tees. Bean says the new course is the "third toughest" he's ever played.

SENIOR GOLF

Association organizes tournaments for seniors

A new golf association for persons 50 and older, The Society of 55 Gentlemen Golfers, has been formed by International Golf & Promotion, Inc., of Irvine, Calif.

Charter membership in the group is limited to 300 persons who are 55 years old or more and 100 persons between ages 50 and 54. Members may play in tournaments scheduled in Palm Springs, San Diego, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Sun Valley, Pinehurst, and Miami. They are also eligible for golf tour packages to Hawaii, Scotland, Spain, and the Orient.

"Every senior golf association in the country we contacted recently had a waiting list," said IPG president Joe Caraway. "The Society of 55 will do a lot more than the others by providing tournaments, golf tour packages, access to pro-am events, and other activities tailored to seniors' needs."

For additional information, write to the Society of 55 Gentlemen Golfers, 17985 Sky Park Circle, Suite H, Irvine, CA 92714, or call 714/979-0140.

ADDITIONS

Pro shop opens at residential resort

A new 3,680 square foot pro shop costing about \$125,000 has been opened at Leisure Village — a 221-acre complex that includes 18 holes and condominiums just south of Fort Myers, Fla. The new shop features a deck that extends over a bass-filled lake. The community's developer is Leisure Technology of Florida.

NEW COURSES

Grenelefe opens second course

Grenelefe Golf and Racquet Club in Cypress Gardens, Fla., opened a new 18-hole course in late February, the second 18-hole facility at the real-estate recreation complex.

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