

Golfdom Duz N'awlins

**Is golf business
or pleasure? The
GCSAA show proved
it can be a lot
of both.**



Editor's Note: The Golfdom crew worked night and day (and night) to bring you the most comprehensive GCSAA show coverage.

Thankfully for you, we've left out names to protect the not-so-innocent. Here's how Golfdom sums up the GCSAA show:

Bad business

Golf's becoming more of a business — that's all we hear these days. With management companies coming in and adding bean counters where there hadn't been any before, golf courses are now supposed to be corporate profit centers instead of playing fields.

If that's the case, why are so many superintendents not given the financial information, in a timely manner, that they need to do their jobs effectively? Raymond S. Schmidgall wants to know. Schmidgall, a professor in the School of Hotel, Restaurant & Institutional Management at Michigan State University, was appalled at how many superintendents in his budgeting and forecasting seminar don't get prompt financial reports from management.

"This information will help you watch your costs more closely," Schmidgall said, after getting little response from superintendents when he asked how many got their reports in under 10 days. "How can they expect you to do your budgets if they don't get you the tools you need in a timely fashion?"

No one in the room had a good answer. Schmidgall just shook his head. A controller in a former life, Schmidgall urges superintendents to become friendly with the financial people at clubs so unrealistic projections don't destroy their budgets.

"It's a good idea to cozy up to these people so they will help you formulate a realistic budget when the time comes," Schmidgall says. "It can't hurt to have friends who are accountants."

Say, isn't that ... ?

Edward "Ted" Horton, vice president, resource management of the Pebble Beach Co., warned superintendents against having a management style that is too hands off. To illustrate his point, Horton told superintendents the story of a wedding he attended for one of his employees when he was with Winged Foot CC in Mamaroneck, N.Y.

An employee at the course was getting married and invited Horton, his supervisor, to a big Italian wedding at his house. Horton, honored to be considered almost family, attended the wedding.

Since Horton knew how much the man earned, he wondered to himself how the employee could throw such a large party. The answer struck Horton as he gave his dancing feet a break in the backyard.

"As I plopped down into a chair, I looked to my right and saw a big, heavy stone bench," Horton says. "It looked familiar, so I squinted at it a little more. Sure enough, there were the initials WFCC carved right into the stone. Then I glanced around the garage and saw a lot of tools labeled the same way.

"This guy probably never bought a tool in his life — he just borrowed them from us."

"There's an old saying in my line of work: Donald Ross made golf architecture a profession. Pete Dye made it an art form and Jack Nicklaus made it expensive." — MIKE HURDZAN, GOLF ARCHITECT

WITH HURDZAN FRY

Bloodied but unbowed ...

In the aftermath of one of the most curious GCSAA Board elections in years, director candidate Jim Nicol, CGCS, says he was "really disappointed but still committed to helping my profession."

Many felt that Nicol should have been tapped for an appointment to a director slot. Instead, new president Scott Woodhead, CGCS, selected Bob Maibusch, CGCS, MG, of Hinsdale GC in Clarendon, Ill.

"I still plan to be involved in (national) committees and active in our public relations programs, but I'm done with running for the board," said Nicol, superintendent of Hazeltine National GC in Chaska, Minn.

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Turn out the lights, the party's over . . . Is a party truly a party if it isn't shut down? "Animal House's" Bluto Blutarsky probably doesn't think so – and neither do we at Golfdom. Accordingly, our shindig at Patout's Bourbonvieux, we partied until enough beads had been thrown to stock a fashion accessory warehouse. But late in the evening, a woman came out onto the balcony and rather tersely announced that the party was over. Judging from the reaction we heard on the show floor the next day, it was a success.

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Overheard on the trade show floor

- "I just learned the dang computer and now these fools think I'm going to run my irrigation system with a Palm Pilot."
- "You know it's a new millennium in the turf business when companies selling drainage pipe have multimedia presentations in their booths."
- "Everyone's standing around at this thing talking about PDI, and I thought it was some kind of new bentgrass."
- "We went to dinner with this owner and the bottle of wine he bought probably cost more than my plane ticket to get here. I think I need to work for someone like that."
- "The way for Golfsat to get my business is to buy my club a new maintenance facility to house that fancy hardware. Seriously, has Golfsat ever seen a superintendent's office?"
- "That company brought every piece of equipment it manufactures to the show — except the one I wanted to see."
- "Don't go to the show on Saturday. Salesmen will be pulling people out of the aisles like a Tijuana storekeeper. Anyone you really want to see is going to be on Bourbon Street in the evening anyway."

Don't try this on your bald spot

Envision that bald spot on your head as your new bentgrass green. Joe Duich used that analogy at the Tee-2-Green distributor breakfast to explain, in part, why superintendents are noticing more ball marks on their new greens.

Here's how Duich, of bentgrass fame, explained it: If a guy has a bald spot on his head, he can cover it by combing some longer hair over it. But, if he's wearing a crew cut, he's out of luck. Apply this to bentgrass greens which are now

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"ANYONE who can demonstrate competencies should only be considered good stewards of our profession and have the opportunity to advance, regardless of their academic achievements." – GEORGE

HAMILTON, SENIOR LECTURER AT PENN STATE UNIVERSITY, IN HIS STATEMENT ABOUT THE PDI DEGREE REQUIREMENT DURING THE GCSAA TOWN HALL MEETING IN NEW ORLEANS

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"Our vertidrainers may not be as fast as James Bond's new BMW, but we put holes in the ground faster than he puts holes in bodies." – MARINUS REINCKE, CHIEF ENGINEER FOR REDEXIM CHARTERHOUSE, ON THE COMPANY'S NEW 7007 VERTI-DRAIN

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being mowed so close to the ground — like the crew cut — that every ball mark is apparent. The leaves of the turfgrass plants aren't long enough to cover it, not even if you take a ball repair tool and dig around and try to stretch the turf.

The solution? Duich said that he, Doug Anderson at the Vintage Club and John Mascaro of Turf-Tec International, collaborated to produce the "Duich Ball Mark Plugger." The device looks like a soil probe and takes out a 1 1/2-inch diameter plug of turf. An employee at your course can use the plugger to remove damaged turf and replace it with bentgrass from the edge of the green or from your turf nursery.

To the bayou for a peek at an aerifier

After a night on Bourbon Street, highlighted by the "Friends of Golfdom" shindig, a small group of journalists approached a morning seaplane ride over the bayou with a sour stomach and more than a little trepidation. After all,

how far do you have you have to go to see a new greens aerifier at the GCSAA Show? Well, in this case, it was the seaplane ride (with a stop to buzz an alligator sunning himself on a muddy bank) to a bed-and-breakfast miles away from Bourbon Street's insanity.

The Redexim Charterhouse contingent also demonstrated its new Verti-Drain 7007, a smaller and more maneuverable version of the popular but huge Verti-Drain aerator. The 7007, which you can walk in front of or ride, gives superintendents an aerating tool they can use on hard-to-reach areas.

TurfNet tags

Kudos to Peter McCormick, the maestro of TurfNet, for his member ribbons. Although some folks didn't need another ribbon adorning their already-loaded conference badges, sporting a Turfnet ribbon was not only telling of a membership in a cool club, but was a good-natured jab at the monopoly the GCSAA has held on ribbons in the past. ■

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Wacked Out

Here are the Top 5 Wacky Things Found at the GCSAA Show (names have been changed to protect the ignorant):

5. Speedy. If you've never seen the fabulous Jim Lipari do The Card Trick at the International Seeds booth or other places during the show, you don't know why you're really in this business.

4. Foot massage booths. I'm certain that more business got done in these spaces than one might think.

3. Stepford salespeople. A few of us were wondering what sort of injustice you have to commit to be dressed up in the same clothes as a bunch of other company types. Knickers obviously are double the punishment. Sadly, knowing something about the product in honor of which you are dressed is not important.

2. Beads. A few select booth dwellers had interesting times on Bourbon Street and were easily recognizable by either their large accumulation of beads worn to the tradeshow or by the embarrassed looks on their faces once recognized at the show. You play, you pay — even in N'awlins. The added-value bonus is that your picture is on the "Look What Happens When Conventions Come To Town" Web site.

1. Unmanned booths. These companies must have decided that they had said enough about their products. Why stand there and be bored and talk to customers? Better to hang at Café DuMonde and rub powdered sugar on your face.

— Dave Wilber



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CHEERS AND JEERS

Cheers to George Renault, CGCS, for chairing a marvelous GCSAA Golf Championship event in Mobile (and for deciding to lighten up and let competitors wear shorts again).

Jeers to the city of Mobile for having the crappiest hotels in the country.

Cheers to Rick Anderson of The Andersons for handling a difficult press event (announcing the Scotts ProTurf acquisition) with wit and grace.

Jeers to the New Orleans police department for turning out the lights a little early on Golfdom's Bourbon Street party.

Cheers to our old friend, Green Section Award-winner Palmer Maples, CGCS, for all he's quietly done for the profession over the years. Cheers also to the USGA for selecting this super super.

Jeers to people who gave a couple of Golfdom's Young Leaders grief for nominating themselves for the program. Hey, you can't be a leader without being confident in yourself.

Cheers to Griffin LLC for putting its money where its mouth is with a \$250,000 commitment to the GCSAA Foundation.

Jeers to GCSAA's show marketers for insisting that attendees had

"I don't mind that he wants to run around the country laying soft-boiled eggs. My problem is that he keeps trying to get them to hatch." – HOUSTON

COUCH, PROFESSOR AT VIRGINIA TECH, ON AN UNNAMED RESEARCH COLLEAGUE WHOSE RESEARCH COUCH FEELS IS "SENSATIONAL"

to be present on Sunday to qualify for the 27-Hole Challenge drawing. Making people schlep around forever to get their cards punched is bad enough. Some people simply had to leave before Sunday and shutting them out of the drawing was bogus.

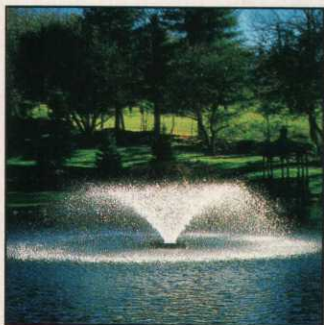
Cheers to Golfdom Advisory Staff member Walter Mattison, CGCS of Widgicreek GC in Oregon, as he battles an unexpected illness. Our money's on Walter to kick its butt.

Jeers to those who continue to tout the "Mormon Conspiracy Theory" in opposition to PDI ("Look, there's Stephen Covey and Bill Marriott behind the grassy knoll!"). Consider PDI on its merits and leave the crackpot stuff to the *National Enquirer*.

Cheers to Jim Nicol, CGCS, for running a candid and forthright campaign for the GCSAA Board. He's the industry's John McCain. (Jeers within a cheers to GCSAA politicians for hanging Jim out to dry.)
– Pat Jones

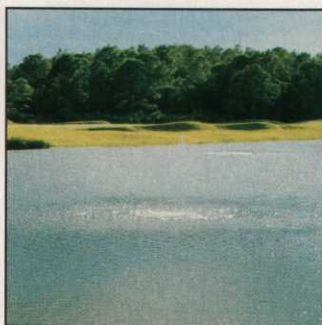
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