

The 5-Minute Guide to GCSAA 2001

Well, it's that time again and you face the daunting task of trying to figure out what the big events and issues will be at the

GCSAA Conference & Show in Dallas from Feb. 11-Feb. 18. You can spend days laboriously going through the 9 million pages of stuff the association sent you or you can invest five minutes to find out the real nitty-gritty lowdown by reading this. Got your stopwatch? Ready? Go!

By Pat Jones,
Publisher/Editorial Director

D as in dull ...

Remember last year in New Orleans? Easy to get around, lots of fun on Bourbon Street, great hotels. Get ready for a city where nothing is near anything else, cab rides cost a fortune and entertainment options are limited.

Also consider this: Dallas' No. 1 tourist attraction is Southfork Ranch, the fake location of a bad TV show that went off the air a million years ago. We love our superintendent friends in the Dallas area, but I'm afraid we already know who shot J.R.

It's the economy, stupid ...

Nobody's quite willing to use the "R" word yet, but the markets stink, money's getting tighter and it's hard to believe that it won't impact our happy little industry. A few examples:

- Marketing spending by many suppliers is being cut back. Look for more modest booths, fewer big blow-out parties and less swag around the show floor. Even if golf sales are still strong, corporate America is anticipating a downturn and getting conservative about spending lots of bucks on free booze and giveaway pens.

- Mergers driven by "economic efficiencies" continue to have a bigger impact on the chemical side of our business than FQPA or anything else. Fewer manufacturers means less investment in competitive research, and choices may

be more limited in future.

- How long will it be before some of the high-end daily fees we've been building like crazy the past few years start to suffer? Will golfers with less disposable income continue to pay \$150 per round to beat their brains out on some ridiculous 7,100-yard track? Face it, we're building too many unaffordable, hard courses that Joe Sixpack won't be playing in tough times.

Predominately Dis-Interested ...

The much-debated Professional Development Initiative will probably pass, but not by the overwhelming mandate that supporters had hoped. The political landscape is roughly divided between those who vehemently want it, those who vehemently oppose it, those who can live with it and those who simply don't care because they're too busy working, raising kids and generally having a life outside of the profession. The last is by far the largest category.

The diamond jubilee ...

It's GCSAA's 75th anniversary! In September of 1926, a handful of committed greenkeepers came together at Sylvania CC in Ohio to create an association. I'm sure those pioneers would be thrilled to find a huge, sophisticated organization with a marvelous education program.

I'm sure they'd also appreciate the historical memorabilia and other tributes that will mark the occasion. However, I'm not so sure they'd appreciate spending a huge pile of hard-earned membership dues to sponsor multi-millionaire Jim Colbert's mediocre efforts on the Senior PGA Tour. Public relations is a wonderful thing, but am I the only one who doesn't think it's right to pay a tour player to promote the industry?

On a happier note ...

This is *Golfdom's* third GCSAA show since springing back to life in 1999. Drop by and see us at booth No. 1923. ■