

I returned home from the GCSAA Conference and Show with further proof that my once adequate reporting skills have become road kill in the fast lane of the journalistic freeway. Once again, I came back not with well-organized notes and keen observations, but with pockets overflowing with jots and scribbles committed to the back of napkins, business cards and even the majority of my left forearm.

A good example: My "notes" from the interview I did with David Feherty conducted in a darkened parking lot following his uproarious speech:

Question: Wuddu lern fr benn hr tnigt?

Answer: "Hg! No ide bes bladd man u."

However, with help from scientists here at Cleveland's NASA Glenn Space Center using a turbocharged Cray Supercomputer that normally runs the Hubble Telescope, I was able to decipher this and other gibberish-laden notes.

The big letdown

Being a cynical media type, I salivate each year at the opportunity to take free potshots at the show site, the organization, the color of the carpet or whatever. The problem was that everyone loved everything: the city of San Diego, the convention center, the weather, the staff, the education, the golf tournament — no one was whining! What a letdown!

The clear consensus was that San Diego is a great — if somewhat expensive — location for the big show and that the association should go back there as often as possible. The idea of a permanent Orlando/New Orleans/San Diego rotation came up repeatedly. The only problem with this is that the sites have already been contracted for a bazillion years in advance. Thus, we are stuck with Anaheim (ugh) in 2007.

The only beefs we heard

Exhibitors (who are kind enough to pay through the nose to support the whole darn thing) had mixed feelings about the site. The San Diego center is nice, but it's a union shop and the bigger exhibitors were nailed with sky-high labor costs.

One example: The shop steward who hovered around the *Golfdom* booth while we were setting up made it very clear that if we didn't

Jots & Scribbles From San Diego

BY PAT JONES



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have it up and done in 45 minutes or less, he'd be to "help" at \$200 or so an hour. Thus, we broke several land-speed records to get it done, but many exhibitors didn't have that luxury and were dinged with unbudgeted costs.

Beefs, part two

Most exhibitors ended the first day of the show (Thursday) saying, "Wow!" Traffic was excellent, and many suppliers said they had more customers than they could handle. The problem came Friday and Saturday when many attendees apparently opted for outdoor fun, a visit to the Buick Open at Torrey Pines or a trip to Sea World.

That's the negative *ying* of the positive *yang* of having the show in an attractive locale like San Diego. Exhibitors make an enormous investment to be there and can get a little testy when buyers ditch them to go play golf. Don't think this is a serious issue? Just take one look at the implosion of the formerly massive PGA Merchandise Show, and you'll understand why suppliers take trade-show attendance seriously.

Nantz-iful

Just when we were convinced that he was yet another tanned, blazer-wearing talking head with good TV hair, Jim Nantz actually did something that no one in his position has ever done: Put his money where his mouth is. After decades of lip service by major golf media, Nantz not only promised to get more recognition for superintendents on CBS broadcasts during his opening session speech, he delivered immediately with a couple of segments about the GCSAA show and nice props for the Torrey Pines crew during coverage of the Buick Open. Thanks, Jim. As a token of our appreciation, your 2004 *Golfdom* hat is in the mail. Hope it doesn't mess up your hair.

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