

Off The Fringe

What's in Store (and What's Not in Store) 10 Years Down the Road?

By Craig F. Zellers

Things in the golf industry that you're NOT LIKELY to see in the next 10 years:

- A week that goes by that you're not reminded about the smelly ballwasher fluid on hole No. 16.
- An architect that refuses to redesign a Don Ross or Alistair Mackenzie original.
- *Poa annua* that personally cares about your employment status in the middle of the summer.
- Equipment operators who throttle down the mower before pulling into the shop.
- The USGA regulating golf ball distance and golf club manufacturing.
- A self-contained, self-flushing, self-cleaning, self-powered, self-circulating ball washer. (Heck, they're available today, and they're called caddies).
- A general manager or pro who has successfully maintained a bentgrass/*Poa* green cut at one-eighth inch in the middle of summer.
- A golf pro showing up at 5:30 a.m. to go out with the crew to see what changing a cup is all about.
- The USGA adopts a resolution encouraging all 50 states to modify the USGA spec green and name the result after that state, as in New Jersey-Style Green.
- A 16-year-old golf car attendant at Any Course USA who has never dented a golf car or burned rubber trying to do a burn out.

■ A group of sunburned GCSAA employees saying, "I don't think we're in Kansas anymore"

Things in the golf industry that you are LIKELY to see in the next 10 years:

- An equipment operator that puts gasoline into the diesel tank.
- The head chef at the exclusive club who believes that all 500 members belong because they love Friday night pasta feeds more than golf.
- A seed manufacturer gets sued for royalty fees by somebody.
- An 8,000-yard golf course played on the pro tour.
- The GCSAA adopts a new educational pursuit for superintendents that has nothing to do with CGCS and PDI.
- An inspector will show up from one of the following agencies unannounced: Agriculture Department, Fish and Game, OSHA, Jimmy Hoffa official search team (just making sure somebody's reading this).
- A superintendent that oversees all vacuuming of his artificial greens.
- The American Society of Golf Course Architects changing the pattern on their sport coats.
- A superintendent that actually visits all 700 exhibitor booths at the national show.

Zellers is a Toro Golf Irrigation sales representative for Turf Star in California. In a previous life, he was a superintendent.

A Carolina Milestone

ASSOCIATION POSTS RECORD REVENUES AT ANNUAL SHOW. IS IT A SIGN OF GOOD THINGS TO COME?

If the golf industry is still hurting, it certainly wasn't apparent late last year in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Superintendents in the Carolinas topped \$500,000 in gross revenues for the first time at the annual conference and trade show of the Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association (CGCSA).

"Reaching that milestone of a half-million dollars in revenues is clearly healthy for our association, but I think the figure is also a good indicator for the golf industry as a whole," Chuck Borman, Carolinas GCSA executive director, said after the show. "Golf has endured some challenging times in recent years, but I think we have all learned some valuable lessons as a result and the game will be stronger for it in the long run. Support of the kind that we enjoyed this past week tells me that business confidence is coming back."

The four-day event honored the 50th anniversary of the CGCSA and attracted about 2,500 attendees and a record 202 individual companies that bought exhibit booth space during the conference and trade show. Superintendents also filled a record 1,220 seats in education seminars.

Paul Jett, host superintendent for the 2005 U.S. Open in Pinehurst, N.C., said the association's 1,700 members benefited greatly from research support offered by turf-grass departments at Clemson and North Carolina State universities.

Rob Roy, superintendent at The River Club in Suwanee, Ga., won the 2004 Carolinas GCSA golf championship, shooting a 1-over par 73 at The Dunes Club, ranked by *Golf Digest* as one of the 100 best courses in America. The golf championship attracted 336 golfers, another record.