

# Shades Of Green

■ OPINION

**I** remember my first GCSAA Conference and Show back in 1985 in Washington, D.C. The show has long since retreated to the Sun Belt to minimize winter travel hiccups at northern airports. However, many of us extra-nighters in Anaheim last year realized that Southern latitudes are still no guarantee of hassle-free travel in January or February. Getting to the Golf Industry Show is half the adventure.

## I Had a Mona Moment ...

I literally welcomed about 100 people gathered within earshot of the bandstand at the outdoor pool-side Welcoming Reception on behalf of the Florida GCSA. This was my first face-to-face meeting with Steve Mona since his announced resignation from GCSAA. Besides the usual “atta boys” and thank you’s, Steve told me how much he enjoyed, admired and respected superintendents and the opportunity he had to work at GCSAA. The best part for me was when he pledged to make sure that superintendents’ issues, concerns and contributions to the golf industry were given proper notice during his administration of the World Golf Foundation. I have no doubt he will deliver on that promise.

## Oh, the Shark bites with such teeth, dear ...

As chairman of the GCSAA’s EIFG Advisory Council, Greg Norman took a big bite out of the Augusta Syndrome when he told the opening session audience during this year’s Old Tom Morris Award speech that indeed, “brown can be beautiful.” I read where he delivered basically the same message in a Jupiter, Fla., newspaper interview recently. The message is, of course, that golf should focus on being playable, and lush-green color should not be the primary driver. I think most of us in the industry get it. It will take some creative messaging to get golfers, country club members and real-estate developers to buy into that concept. Recent water restrictions in many parts of the country are forcing golfers to face that off-color reality as fairways and roughs brown-out.

# GIS Offers Matchless Networking Options

BY JOEL JACKSON



**IF YOU DIDN'T LEARN  
SOMETHING NEW OR  
MEET NEW FRIENDS,  
THEN YOU MUST  
HAVE BEEN IN A  
DIFFERENT PLACE**

## He had me at chicken manure ...

Norman sealed the deal when I realized we shared a common hands-on experience early in our golf careers; we both spread chicken manure on golf greens. I can respect a guy who isn't afraid to get his hands dirty now and then. Norman's hard-charging style during his tour years hasn't mellowed as he now pursues environmentally friendly course designs. I also liked his inspirational comment, “Your dreams are the blueprints for your reality.”

## Miles of aisles on the trade show floor ...

I loved the easy Wi-Fi access in the convention center. I was able to delete spam and answer e-mails with ease during my wanderings. I heard some folks still complaining about the “lost identity” of the show with all those dishes and tray displays. Hey, GCSAA is still the 800-pound gorilla at this shindig. I consulted the trade show floor plan, and if my map reading skills as an ex-Coast Guard navigator haven't completely vanished, aisles from 100 to 1300 were devoted to clubhouse goods and services. The rest, up to the 5700 block, housed superintendent stuff! Oh, sure there were some dual-interest products in the 2000 zone, like golf cars and utility vehicles, but that's why we merged the three shows in the first place.

If you didn't reconnect with an old friend, make a new friend or a new business contact, learn something that will help you personally or professionally, you weren't in the same place I was.

I hope to see you in the Big Easy next year, even if it isn't easy getting there.

*Certified superintendent Joel Jackson is executive director of the Florida GCSA.*