

I was surprised when I first heard the Club Managers Association of America dropped the Golf Industry Show like a bad habit. But my shock only lasted for about two minutes.

Truth is, the marriage of CMAA's annual trade show with the GIS, which is dominated by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, was like that of country crooner Lyle Lovett and Hollywood starlet Julia Roberts in 1993. That relationship was so odd-ball, you just knew it wouldn't last. Hence, I see why the CMAA is ditching the GIS after only three years as a presenting partner.

In case you've been living under a ball washer, the CMAA said it's leaving the show because the GCSAA decided to dump New Orleans from the 2012 show schedule in favor of Las Vegas. The CMAA said the GCSAA made the decision in spite of an agreement that it wouldn't do so without consent from the CMAA and the National Golf Course Owners Association, the show's other presenting partner. The CMAA wouldn't concede because it said it had contractual commitments that would cost its members more than \$300,000 to break them. The GCSAA said it will save money in the long run by leaving New Orleans for Las Vegas. And besides, the association says many of its members and vendors don't want to go to New Orleans anymore.

But is this really about N'awlins and Sin City?

I was skeptical of the CMAA's role in the show from the beginning. When the CMAA joined the show, I was reminded of a girl I dated briefly in high school. I knew from the beginning I was out of my league. It took her a few months to realize the same.

The CMAA was out of its league at the GIS. It was also a fish out of water. Sorry, but the kitchen equipment exhibitors just don't fit in with the big-booth BASFs of the trade-show floor.

Let's face it: This is the GCSAA's show. It was the GCSAA's show before the NGCOA joined it in 2005 and the CMAA joined it in 2007, and it's the GCSAA's show now. The latter associations didn't merge with the GCSAA's Conference & Show. They joined it and the three of them changed the show's name.

## As the Golf Industry Show World Turns

BY LARRY AYLWARD



WHY DID THE CMAA  
REALLY DITCH THE  
GCSAA AND THE BIG  
SHOW?

This isn't to slight the NGCOA and the CMAA. It's just that the GCSAA brings much more to the show as far as attendees and revenue.

Interestingly, it seems more superintendents have been more willing to let the owners join their party than the club managers. Maybe it's that whole superintendent-club manager relationship thing. I realize that plenty of superintendents get along with their club managers and plenty of them don't. I don't hear many superintendents complain about their owners, though.

When it was announced in 2004 that the owners would join the GCSAA's show in 2005 to create the GIS, only 14 percent of about 200 superintendents told *Golfdom* in a survey they didn't like the idea. When it was announced in 2004 the club managers would join the show in 2007, a whopping 51 percent of about 300 superintendents told *Golfdom* in a survey they didn't like the idea.

The GCSAA-CMAA relationship didn't end amicably. Unbeknownst to the GCSAA, Michael Leemhuis, CMAA president, sent a letter to its members telling them the association was leaving the show. He also gave the impression the GCSAA had pressed the CMAA into doing so because of the N'awlins deal, which the GCSAA denies.

I have a few conspiracy theories about the ordeal, and I'll share one. I wonder if the CMAA wanted to leave the show and was looking for a good reason to do so. And when the GCSAA said it was bailing on N'awlins, the CMAA acted outraged and used the GCSAA's action as its reason to ditch the show.

It all makes for a good soap opera. Who needs the "Young and the Restless" when you have this?

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