

A large photograph showing two men shaking hands at a trade show booth. The man on the left is older, with grey hair and a mustache, wearing a black turtleneck. The man on the right is younger, with grey hair and a goatee, wearing a blue jacket over a white shirt and a green lanyard. They are standing behind a dark table with some brochures. In the background, there are green and white panels.

Da 'BIG' Show

It may be shrinking because of the economy, but the **Golf Industry Show** still packed a punch

BY GOLFDOM STAFF

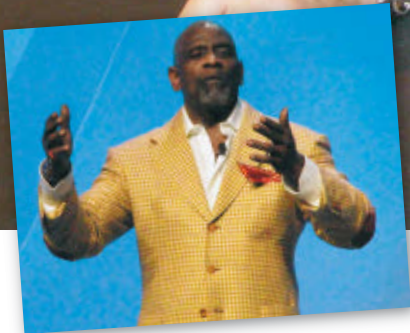
more crowded. In fact, Christopher S. Gray Sr., superintendent and general manager of the Marvel Golf Club in Benton, Ky., and a *Golfdom* contributing editor, could've sworn the aisles were narrower, considering the constant congestion he was running into. But the GCSAA says the aisles were as wide as they normally are.

There were fewer social events at the show than in years past, but there was still plenty to do, considering the abundance of nightlife in the nearby Gaslamp Quarter. During the day, the *Golfdom* staff was running to cover seminars, press conferences and other activities to bring you this report:

Homeless, but not hopeless

"Every time I see the movie 'The Pursuit of Happyness,' I'm absolutely amazed. How did those people spend \$70 million to tell a story about what I did with nothing?" jokes Chris Gardner, who

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A small inset photograph of Mike Ditka, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a yellow patterned suit jacket over a white shirt. He is standing and gesturing with his hands while speaking.

A lot of golf course superintendents didn't make it to the Golf Industry Show last month in San Diego because their courses and clubs couldn't afford to send them in this tough economy. Not to rub it in, but they missed a good time in one of the nicest cities in the country and a good show at the San Diego Convention Center. No worries, though, you can read about what you missed right here.

For the record, attendance was 16,156, including 7,029 qualified buy-

Mike Ditka shakes hands with Mark Salisbury, certified golf course superintendent of Starr Pass in Tucson, Ariz. Ditka appeared at the BASF booth and drew a huge crowd for autographs. (Below) Chris Gardner makes a point during his keynote address.

ers, during the two-day trade-show portion of the event held Feb. 8-12. But that was down from the 17,151 who attended last year's show in New Orleans, which was down from the year before because of the Great Recession. Booth space square footage dropped from 257,900 in New Orleans to 204,300 in San Diego.

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, however, expressed delight with attendance because it was expecting about 15,000. The aisles on the show floor certainly appeared

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penned the same-named rags-to-riches autobiography on which the 2006 blockbuster was based.

Delivering the keynote address at the GIS Feb. 11, Gardner took conference-goers on an emotional ride — with a crowd of thousands roaring with laughter one minute and solemnly reflecting the next. Gardner says his autobiography strikes a reverberating chord because it reaches out to every dad who also has to be a mom, every mom who also has to be a dad, and everyone who refuses to let his dream drift away. It was a best seller for nine straight weeks.

Gardner took GIS attendees on his journey — from the streets of San Francisco to Wall Street stockbroker to the New York Times Best Seller list to the silver screen — with Will Smith and his son Jaden playing Gardner and his son Christopher Jr.

Gardner — now a multimillionaire and CEO of Gardner Rich LLC, a Chicago-based brokerage firm — says the most important thing he's done in his life is be there for his son and daughter, Jacintha. And they, in turn, are always here for him, teaching Gardner as much as he's passed on to them.

"I'll never forget the one day during all of this hoopla that my daughter really put me in my place," Gardner recalls. "Will Smith's name had just come up as the perfect actor to play me in the movie. Don't get me wrong. I love Will Smith. I'm a big fan of his music and movies. But when I think of Will Smith, I think 'blockbuster' and 'outer space.' My book of memoirs was all about inner space.

"When I shared my doubts with Jacintha, she turned to me and said, 'Poppa, Will Smith played Muhammad Ali. ... If he can play Muhammad Ali, he can play you!'"

One awesome hound!

Milly, 1-year-old blue Weimaraner owned by Kyle Erdige, golf course

Illinois superintendent Dan Dinelli (center) is flanked by Derek Settle (left) and Keith Rincker of the Chicago District Golf Association during a boat cruise of the San Diego harbor sponsored by Valent Professional Products.



superintendent at Hickory Hill in Oneida, N.Y., was selected Dog of the Year during the show. The seventh-annual Dog of the Year contest was sponsored by LebanonTurf. Voting was conducted among superintendents and others at the show. Milly was chosen from among dogs that appeared in LebanonTurf's 2010 Dog Days of Golf Calendar. In recognition of the honor, LebanonTurf will donate \$3,000 to the Central New York Superintendents Association and \$500 to Erdige.

Extrovert or introvert?

Effective leadership is critical in any business operation. But what type of personality is required to be most effective? Is an extrovert better than an introvert to head a golf course maintenance crew or entire golf facility? What about the personalities of a superintendent, pro and general manager and how they mesh?

During the first general session at the Golf Industry Show, Brian Little, Ph.D., distinguished research professor emeritus at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, shed some light on the subject of personalities. He started



by asking attendees to rate themselves — on a scale of one through 10, with one being extremely introverted and 10 being extremely extroverted — on 10 personality traits:

- Are you outgoing?
- Are you easily bored?
- Are you optimistic or pessimistic?
- Are you thick- or thin-skinned?
- Are you blunt and straightforward or diplomatically sensitive?
- Do you have a need for excitement?
- Are you a fast-paced person?
- Do you have a high need for social contact?
- Are you spontaneous?
- Are you an introvert or extrovert?

People's scores regarding these 10 traits are a measure of how extroverted they are. Scoring a 54 or less is introverted; 55 to 59 means you may go in either direction; and 60 or higher is extroverted.

Little elaborated about the traits of extroverts and introverts. Extroverts tend to get speeding tickets because of the enthusiasm in which they drive. Introverts tend to do better in school.

The bottom line is both personality types are needed for successful management, Little said.

Bacon, eggs and bad news

It was a good thing Jim Skillings spoke after attendees of the RISE Industry Issues Breakfast finished eating their breakfast. If Skillings spoke beforehand, he would've ruined their appetites. As is, he gave attendees indigestion.

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That's because RISE's Skillings updated attendees with a list of proposed regulations that have the potential to impact the golf course industry. Skillings said RISE has been "sitting on pins and needles waiting for something bad to happen" ever since President Obama took office and the Democrats gained control over both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue.

"And on Oct. 1, something bad happened," Skillings said. "And it has been something bad happening every day since Oct. 1."

That day, the Environmental Protection Agency announced that the public will now be able to review and comment on the risk assessments and proposed registration decisions for new pesticides. But Skillings said the policy violates a federal statute.

"We brought that to [the EPA's] attention, but they don't seem to be concerned about the fact that they're violating federal law," Skillings said.

Skillings also spoke of the EPA's aim to produce water-quality benchmarks for pesticides and pesticide discharge management, among other issues.

Halfway through is talk, Skillings said to the crowd, "You look depressed."

If some of the discussed regulatory issues are passed, superintendents will get busier with a lot more paperwork and have a lot more pressure on them, Skillings added.

Pinehurst in transition

Bob Farren, certified superintendent and director of golf course and grounds management at Pinehurst Resort and Country Club, spoke on (betcha can't say this three times real fast) "Transitioning from Traditional Practices to Sustainable Standards and Practices" during the "You Asked For It ... You Got It! Seminar."

Farren says Pinehurst has reduced the number of highly maintained acres on its eight courses by 10 percent, resulting in a 16-percent fuel savings.

Farren talked about the 1990s when golf was growing and going over the top with conditioning. Since then, there has been an obsession to have finely groomed bunkers and distinctive mowing patterns, among other artificial enhancements.

"We have a near-zero tolerance for natural debris in wooded areas," Farren said. "We try to catch pine cones at Pinehurst on the first bounce. Is this sustainable in the future?"

Farren said sustainability is made up of three key elements, which he calls the three 3 p's: the people element; the planet element and the profit element. "Each of these elements must be part of the critical path of the decision-making process that will lead us to sustainability," he added.

Farren told attendees that Pinehurst's famed No. 2 course will be restored by Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore "to re-establish a more natural feel and playability of the course."

Nik at Night?

If Thom Nikolai weren't such an excellent turfgrass professor, he'd be hosting his own late-night TV show. People love listening to Michigan State University's Nikolai, who also spoke during the "You Asked For It ... You Got It" session.

The audience loved Nikolai's bit on the difficulties associated with getting golfers to lower their expectations on conditioning. Nikolai told attendees he went to an expensive restaurant the night before and ordered a \$60 steak cooked medium-rare. When the waitress delivered his meal, Nikolai cut into the steak and discovered it was cooked well done. When the waitress asked him how his steak was, Nikolai told her it was overcooked. And then he said she told him, "Well, you just have



We asked Kevin Butler, a vice president of sales for UgMO and former Chicago Bears kicker, to fake a field goal at the company's booth. That's UgMO's Carmen Magro holding a soil sensor that Butler's pretending to lay into with his right foot. By the way, Butler was sporting his Bears' 1986 Super Bowl ring.

to lower your expectations."

The entire story was fabricated (we think), but Nikolai made his point!

Goodbye to the CMAA

It was not a memorable swan song for the Club Managers Association of America, which is leaving the GIS after three years. It was a little weird to see the CMAA vendors so segregated from the rest of the show — upstairs by the GCSAA bookstore and merchandise areas. It was like breaking up with your girlfriend, but both of you had to attend the same wedding — only she had a much worse table and not as many people went to see her.

The CMAA didn't seem to leave much of a mark on the GIS Show in its three years. ■

Larry Aylward, Marty Whitford, John Walsh and Christopher S. Gray contributed to this report.