

BY CLARK THROSSELL, PH.D.

# DR. THROSSELL'S **TOP 10** **MUST DO'S** AT GIS

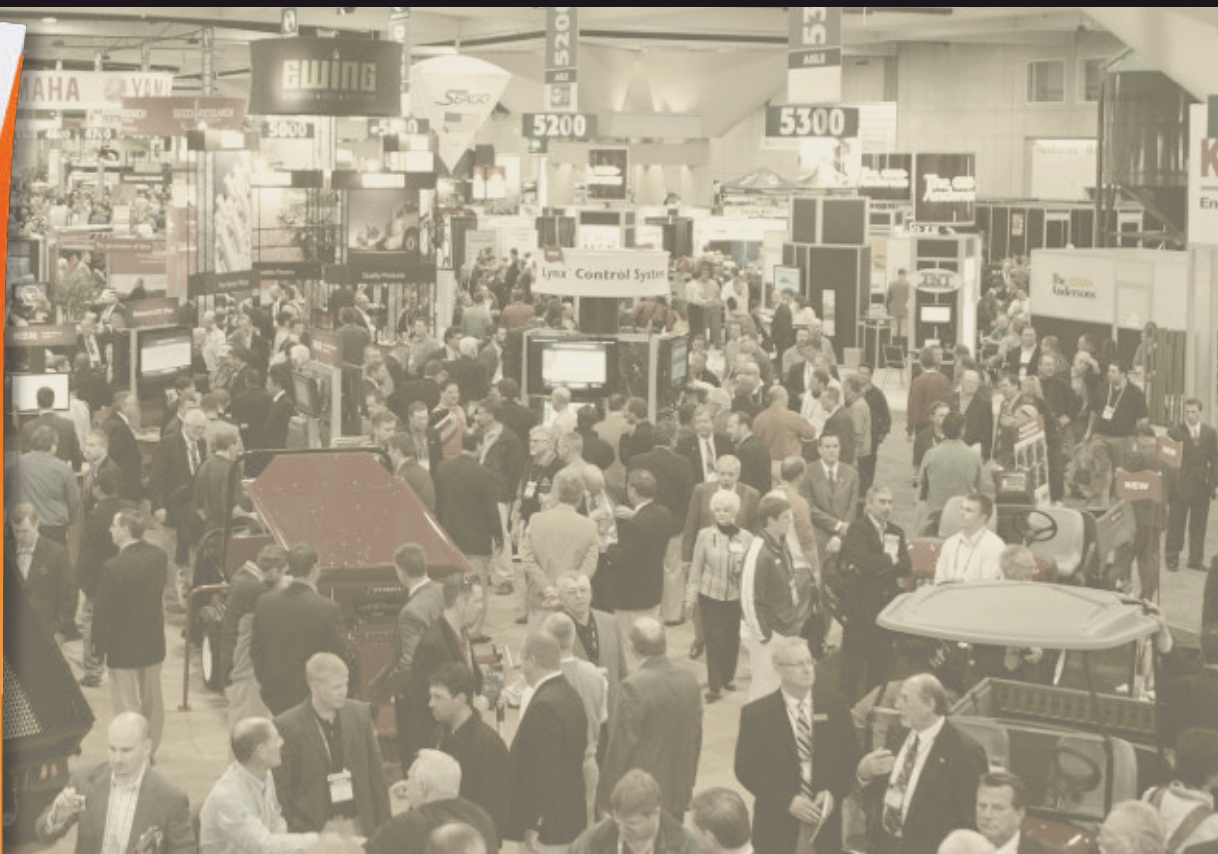
If you want to get the most out of your GIS experience, these 10 events are a must

**THIS GIS WILL BE MY 23RD TIME ATTENDING THE SHOW.**

My first show was 1987 in Phoenix early in my career as a professor at Purdue University. These last 9 years I've attended as the director of research for the GCSAA. Dave Kopec, Ph.D., University of Arizona, and I started teaching the Irrigation Water Quality seminar in 1990 in Orlando and have taught it every year since, and we will teach it in 2011.

Time goes fast at GIS, and you need a plan of attack to make sure you experience the most important sessions and events. After 22 years attending GIS I have figured a few things out and wanted to help you cut the clutter and direct you to My Top 10 Must Do's at GIS.

A disclaimer: I'm biased toward agronomics, and I admit it. I enjoy learning the latest and greatest from the top turfgrass experts in the world. And it is agronomic knowledge that makes superintendents valuable to their employers. Granted, you may spend only a small portion of your day on agronomics, but agronomics are the foundation for all that you do in your profession. So, with my disclaimer about agronomics out of the way, give my Top 10 Must Do's at GIS a shot. And let me know how it went.



1

## Lessons Learned Come in All Forms

USGA Green Section Session;  
Friday, Feb. 11th, 10 a.m. - noon

FYI — make sure your flight home is after 2 p.m. on Friday so you can stay to the end of this session. This is a can't-miss session for me. The turf tips from the USGA agronomists are on-target, practical and provide solutions to improve the golf course. The pictures shared at the session are always eye-catching and are worth at least a thousand words. The commentary and humor from the agronomists on golfers, the golf industry and golf maintenance practices are worth the time spent. An added bonus is the opportunity to join your colleagues in honoring Dennis Lyon, the 2011 USGA Green Section Award recipient. Dennis is Director of Golf for the City of Aurora, Colo., and a champion of public golf and public golf courses. *(Editor's note: For some insights from Lyon on his time as president of the GCSAA, check out "A view of the top" on page 36.)*

2

## Agronomic Solutions: The Latest and Greatest in Turf Management

Tuesday, Feb. 8th, 1 - 3:30 p.m.

For those needing their agronomic fix, this session is agronomics at their best. Five speakers will cover a range of topics that offer something for everyone. The presentations are focused on solutions, not data. This is a chance to learn from the best, and I'm particularly excited to learn from David Minner, Ph.D., Iowa State University and Lane Tredway, Ph.D., North Carolina State University. Dr. Minner has figured out a sound strategy to convert existing cool season grass fairways to low-mow Kentucky bluegrass while keeping *Poa annua* in check. Dr. Tredway has jumped in with both feet to tackle one of the most frustrating problems on putting greens — fairy ring. Lane and his colleagues have made great strides in understanding this disease and how to control it. Drop in and learn a new trick or two to gain the upper hand on fairy ring.

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# 3

### Expanding the Boundaries of Ultradwarf Bermudagrass

8-hour seminar on Monday, Feb. 7th

If you had problems growing creeping bentgrass greens in the transition zone or in the northern part of the warm-season zone in 2010 — and who didn't? — this seminar is a must. You will be in good hands with Mike Goatley, Ph.D., Virginia Tech and Chris Hartwiger and Pat O'Brien, USGA Green Section agronomists in the Southeast region leading the way. The high quality putting surfaces provided by ultradwarf bermudagrass plus the expense and problems with growing creeping bentgrass in such challenging climates should make you think about a conversion to ultradwarf bermudagrass. Ultradwarf bermudagrass putting greens in the southern transition zone and the northern part of the warm-season zone are the answer. Trust me, they are a better fit agronomically than creeping bentgrass and perform their best from mid-spring to mid-fall when most rounds of golf are being played. Mike, Chris and Pat are the experts to get you started. Please be sure to preregister for this seminar to guarantee your seat.

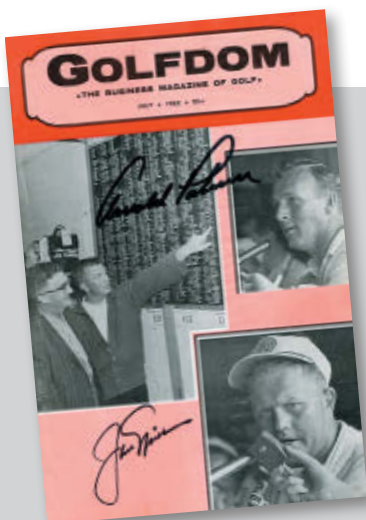
# 4

### Exploring Golf's Carbon Footprint: Part Two

Monday, Feb. 7th, 3:30 - 5 p.m.

This is round two of a popular session from last year. The session was a hot topic then, and may well be again this year, because carbon footprints and the carbon economy are in the news nearly every day. Plus, many golf facilities have been approached by companies wanting the golf facility to assign its carbon credits to that company. The company will then aggregate the carbon credits from numerous golf facilities and sell the aggregated carbon credits. Distribution of proceeds from the sale of the aggregated carbon credits varies by company. The more you know about the subject, the better decisions you can make on behalf of your facility. Take advantage of this session to become more familiar with carbon sequestration science, presented by James Baird, Ph.D., University of California-Riverside, carbon markets, presented by a speaker to be announced and the Top Ten Energy Efficiencies for Golf Facilities, presented by Andrew Staples, Golf Resources Group. Andy's presentation will stimulate you to think about ways to save money on energy at your facility.

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### GOLFDOM GIVEAWAYS: PINEHURST TRIP, AUTOGRAPHED ISSUE

(# 2181) will be the place for any superintendent looking to take a minute and check in with his or her favorite magazine in the industry.

The most exciting thing at the *Golfdom* booth this year will be the chance for one lucky superintendents to win an all-expenses-paid trip to the first ever *Golfdom* Summit at Pinehurst Resort. This ultra-

exclusive event takes place later this year and will only be offered to a select number of superintendents (see Page 63 for more details).

Second prize? A one-of-a-kind autographed copy of the July 1962 issue of *Golfdom* magazine, signed by Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. This would make for an incredible addition to any golf fan's

memorabilia collection.

We'll also have copies of the magazine, new and old, so if you missed an issue, stop by. We also invite you to say hello to our new editor-in-chief, Seth Jones. Seth will be at the booth interviewing movers and shakers in the industry over both days (check out the *Golfdom* blog, <http://www.golfdom.blogspot.com/>, prior to the show for the schedule), and if your timing is right, he'll probably ask to interview you, too.

While it didn't make Dr. Throssell's top 10 (we'll have to invite him by this year and change his mind), the *Golfdom* booth



The really cool part of this seminar is the opportunity to try the gadgets and gizmos out yourself while on a golf course.

*There is nothing better than a test drive before buying.*

*Continued from page 20*



5

### **Chapter and Turf Program Hospitality Rooms**

**Too many to list and you know when and where they are**

Make a pact with a couple of friends who are not members of your chapter to visit the hospitality room sponsored by each of your respective chapters. It's a great way to meet new people, learn about the golf industry in another part of the country and sample the food. Remember the importance of replication when sampling the food (the scientist in me never sleeps). And be sure to drop by the hospitality room of your favorite university turf program. It is a great chance to catch up with friends and stay in touch with the happenings on campus.

6

### **Diverse Multi-Course Owner Business Models Provide Distinct Career Paths**

**Monday, Feb. 7th, 10 - 11:30 a.m.**

Over the last few years I have had the opportunity to interact with the top agronomic officers from the leading multi-course companies. It has been an eye-opening experience for me. The level of agronomic and economic sophistication is something to behold. Attend this session and challenge your preconceived notions about multi-course companies and learn from the best: Jeff Spangler, Troon Golf; Brian Bielecki, Billy Casper Golf; Steve Merkel, Landscapes Unlimited; and Robert Waller, Marriott Golf.

7

### **Gadgets and Gizmos: How to Best Use Measurement Technology**

**8-hour seminar on Tuesday, Feb. 8th**

I took this seminar a couple of years ago and it was great. Doug Karcher, Ph.D., and Mike Richardson, Ph.D., both at the University of Arkansas, are fine teachers and explain the principles behind the gadgets and gizmos. The explanations cover why some gadgets and gizmos work as advertised and others don't. The really cool part of this seminar is the opportunity to try the gadgets and gizmos out yourself while on a golf course. There is nothing better than a test drive before buying. Please be sure to preregister for this seminar to guarantee a seat.

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# 8

## NGCOA Educational Sessions

Tuesday, Feb. 8th, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Remember when I wrote that I was biased toward agronomics? I still am, but this is the exception that proves the rule. The National Golf Course Owners Association offers a full day of fantastic education focused on the business aspects of golf facility management. You don't have to stay for the full day, pick one or two of the sessions to attend and learn more about the business side of the golf industry. I am a believer in the more you know, the more valuable you are to your employer. This is a great opportunity to expand your knowledge.

# 9

## GCSAA Bookstore

Open throughout the GIS

I love bookstores and libraries, but I admit I am more of browser than a buyer. The GCSAA bookstore is well stocked with many titles so browse away. The bookstore is usually in a place where you can find a little peace and quiet, and that is always a nice thing to escape to after some time spent on the trade show floor. And unlike me, consider buying a book or two to add to your personal library. When you are at the bookstore, please tell Margo, a GCSAA staffer who works the bookstore, hello for me. Margo is one of my favorite people. Margo is a fan of books, bookstores, libraries, travel and off-beat stuff, just like me. Plus she has a great sense of humor and a great outlook on life.

PHOTOS COURTESY: GCSAA


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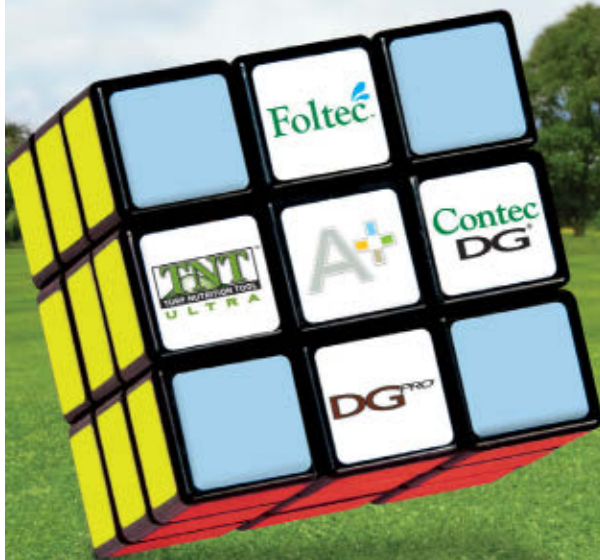
**10**

**The Trade Show**  
 Wednesday, Feb. 9th and  
 Thursday, Feb. 10th  
 from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

The trade show is a can't-miss event. I like the trade show for the networking and the opportunity to see friends. The products are great, and I especially like the opportunity to learn about the products from the experts at the different companies. And I always get a kick out of seeing what the "must have" promotional trinket of the show is and who has the coolest method to get potential buyers in their booth. Personally, my vote goes to the booths with extra padding under the carpet. ■

*Clark Throssell, Ph.D., earned his M.S. from Penn State University and Ph.D. from Kansas State University, both in turfgrass science. He led the Purdue University turfgrass program for 15 years before leaving to join GCSAA as Director of Research. Since November 2010 Throssell has been self-employed and can be reached at [clarkthrossell@bresnan.net](mailto:clarkthrossell@bresnan.net).*

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# ORLANDO ON THE CHEAP

**T**he GCSAA's Golf Industry Show is an important trip for every superintendent. It becomes even more important in tough economic times.

The 2011 show finds its way back to Orlando, a popular destination for the event. Orlando alone offers 176 public and semi-private golf courses in its metro region, equating to more than 548 miles of golf goodness. Add in several major theme parks, several water parks and the second largest convention center in the country, and it's easy to see why Orlando is such a popular destination.

*Golfdom* caught up with Seth Kubersky, the art and culture columnist for the Orlando Weekly and author of "Universal Orlando 2011"; Sara Moore, vice president of marketing for All Star Vacation Homes; and Chris Sorrell, superintendent at Eagles Ridge Golf Club in Curwensville, Pa., and a self-proclaimed "cheap travel expert" for some practical tips on traveling to Orlando next month (the show runs from February 7th through the 11th).

## **Split a room? Share a condo.**

You want to be close to the Orange County Convention Center and you want to have a nice room. That means you're booking a room through GCSAA, and that's not cheap. The Rosen Centre, for example, is booking at north of \$200 a night. Even if you get a fellow superintendent to split a room with you, that still adds up quickly after a week.

"In the I-Drive area, around the convention center, honestly there's not much wheeling and dealing," Kubersky says. "If you're with the convention, they typically offer a rate and that's as good as you can get."

Is the company no longer paying for your annual trek to the GIS? Let these three experts help you out.

**BY SETH JONES**

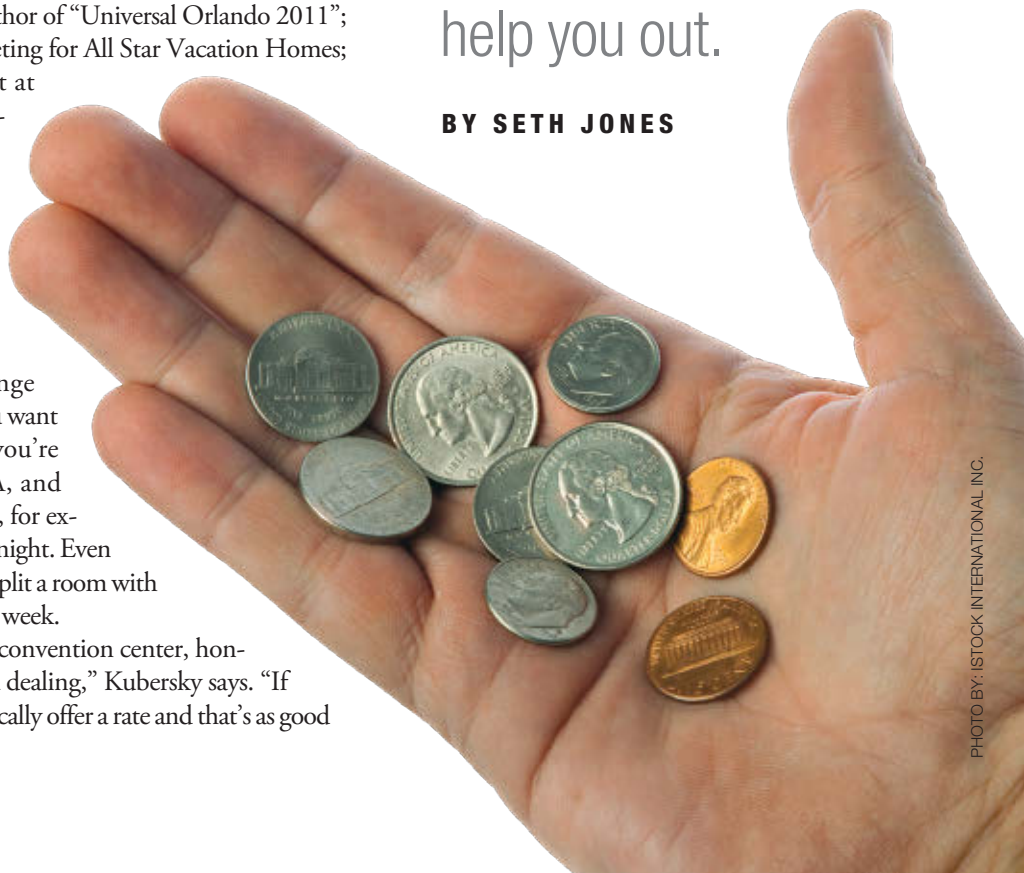


PHOTO BY: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.





Sure, you could share this pool with 500 other people. But why not consider booking a place with your own private pool — and for less money?



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So superintendents are stuck paying for a pricey hotel room? Not so, according to Sara Moore, vice president of marketing for All Star Vacation Homes ([www.allstarvacationhomes.com](http://www.allstarvacationhomes.com)).

"We host many professionals coming down for conferences. There are a lot of benefits including and beyond cost-savings, when a group of colleagues come together to rent a condo," Moore says.

Besides just being cheaper than a hotel room, Moore says, there's the added benefit of your own kitchen to prepare meals, free parking in your own garage, added space to relax and in some rentals, your own private pool or access to the local golf course.

Moore says All Star Vacation Homes are all privately owned vacation homes, but they're treated like hotels with a full-time guest services team.

"We have two- and three-bedroom condos adjacent to the convention center for \$124 a night. We have larger three-bedroom condos in the same community, over 2,000 square feet, for only \$209 a night," Moore says.

Moore says that renting a home is something that is just now catching on with American travelers, but has been popular with international travelers for years.

"For people attending conventions, it's great, because it allows for extra space to store things and for a place to actually get away from the convention," she says.

Chris Sorrell, superintendent at Eagles Ridge Golf Club in Curwensville, Pa., will be taking advantage of a three-bedroom timeshare that he scored at a "friend price" of \$79 a night.

"My parents, wife and my girls are all going with me, and we're all staying there together," Sorrell says. "The place has a kitchen, so we'll be able to make our own meals. Staying at a timeshare makes for significant savings for those of us who have to travel on our own dime."

### **Convince a newbie to join you**

Safety in numbers, right? It also helps bring the cost down. One extra body brings the cost of a room or rental car down for everyone.

So who can you convince to join you on your 2011 GIS-on-the-cheap trip? A rookie, a newbie, a turf student. Why? Because if they've never been to the GIS before, they get in for free. That's right, they just need to be a GCSAA member to take advantage of a one-time free GIS registration.

Now your intern thinks you're doing him a favor, when actually the intern is helping you out. (One note: this deal isn't available online. Your rookie will have to mail or fax their registration in. Sorry, rook.)

### **Plan carefully**

The truth is, if you book your own travel, there's a good chance you can save a few dollars. Even if your travel

## WE'RE GOING TO DISNEY WORLD!

If you're mixing business and pleasure this year for the GIS, you're in luck: the week of the Golf Industry Show is smack-dab in the middle of the slowest time of the year for the big parks like Disney World and Universal Orlando. In fact, possibly the slowest day of the year at Disney World is the Tuesday of the GIS.

"It always changes, but based on historical trends, on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the busiest, Tuesday, Feb. 8th will be a 1," Kubersky says. "If you go to [www.touringplans.com](http://www.touringplans.com), they have all sorts of statistical data on this. The week-end of the 12th and 13th, the parks will only be at 30 and 40 percent capacity. It's really not a bad time of the year to be in Orlando."

Kubersky does expect it to be busy at the theme parks the weekend of Feb. 5th and 6th because of Super Bowl XLV (which will be played on Sunday, Feb. 6th at Cowboys Stadium in Arlington).

"The only other place that compares to Orlando in terms of 'wow' factor for a convention is Las Vegas, and that's a lot less family friendly if you're bringing the wife and kids along," Kubersky says.



agent finds you a great deal, there's always a price to pay that agent for getting you the deal. If you could get that same deal yourself...

"If you have a travel agent that you are comfortable with, and has served you well in the past... a good travel agent can be your best friend," Kubersky says. "If the most important thing is the price, you can probably do a little bit better researching it yourself. But if you're looking for peace of mind, a travel agent is still the safest way to go."

Kubersky does say that because Orlando is such a heavy tourist destination (48 million visitors a year!) that there generally is good competition for low airfare. If you're coming from the Los Angeles area, look into Virgin Airlines, which just started flying direct flights to Orlando for as cheap as \$99 each way.

But don't wait until the last minute. Even though February is a slow time for Orlando, most of the cheapest flights are booked at least two weeks in advance.

Sorrell says he scored a great deal to San Diego last year via careful planning on Expedia.com.

"My room, rental car and flight were all booked together for \$600," Sorrell boasts. "But I did plan ahead and booked it in advance, like in November."

Sorrell says he also budgeted for cheap meals all week, which brings us to our next tip...

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### Focus on dinner

It's OK to have a nice dinner. You're on a trip, you've got some good company — go grab a steak with some friends from your chapter.

But that dinner bill is a lot easier to swallow when you've gotten by on the cheap for breakfast and lunch.

"Hotel complimentary breakfasts are your best friend," laughs Kubersky. "I recommend you eat a good breakfast before you go."

Check to see what your hotel offers. And if you managed to get a good breakfast in — maybe even a breakfast buffet,

which aren't uncommon on I-Drive — consider hitting the convention center with a granola bar or energy bar stashed away. It's typically such a busy time at the convention center, all you'll have time for is something quick anyway.

Sorrell recommends eating poorly for lunch at fast food places like McDonald's. "One week of bad eating is not going to bite you in the ass," he laughs.

Once you're done for the day, reward yourself with something good. Orlando has a lot to offer.

"Around I-Drive, Pointe Orlando has a number of nice restaurants, great steakhouses, B.B. King's Blues Bar," Kubersky suggests. Another area he suggests is an area called "Restaurant Row" that is about a mile from the Orange County Convention Center on Sand Lake Road. It's here that GIS attendees can go and eat at restaurants that are prototypes of future chains. "Season 52 started there, and there are a number of high-end experimental restaurants that are interesting to people," Kubersky says. "A lot of new eating concepts come from here, restaurants you're not going to see for 5 or 10 years."

And, of course, if you can sneak in a meal at your chapter event or as a guest of a big exhibitor, that makes the next evening's dinner at the experimental restaurant even more affordable.

"I always catch a few free meals from sales reps and product manufacturers," Sorrell says. "And I hit the reception tents whenever I can. I remember last year, Quali-Pro, their reception was great — that was one of the best meals I had all week."

### Avoid taxis

There is an affordable alternative to taxis in Orlando. The I-Ride Trolley ([www.iritdetrolley.com](http://www.iritdetrolley.com)) services the I-Drive Resort area,



The I-Ride Trolley will give you a lift for only \$1.25.



which is exactly the area superintendents will be in at the GIS. The trolley runs from 8 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. daily, and costs only \$1.25 per trip.

"(The I-Ride Trolley) is actually pretty convenient — it runs frequently, it heavily services the convention center and the adjoining hotels, and it can take you all the way to Sea World and Universal Studios in either direction, if you're staying in the convention center area," Kubersky says. "But if you want to go from your hotel to Disney or to downtown Orlando, I'd highly recommend a rental car. Public transportation in Orlando is not great."

Kubersky also suggests you look to see if your hotel offers a free shuttle from the airport, another big taxi expense that could possibly be saved.

### Check in with GCSAA

As show attendance has dipped in recent years, GCSAA has gotten proactive to get superintendents to show with some last-minute deals.

Visit [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org) late in the game to see what deals the GCSAA is offering. As of press time, GCSAA had a "lodging and conference discount package" where superintendents can book a more flexible trip to Orlando, as well as a "cost-saving opportunities" page (<http://www.golfindustryshow.com/show-info/cost-savings.asp>) that went so far as to suggest hotel rooms outside the normal roster of GCSAA hotels, such as Econolodge Inn and Suites for as cheap as \$69 a night.

The site also has a list of restaurants that will provide GIS attendees a special menu for \$20 meals when attendees show their badge. That list includes B.B. King's Blues Bar, which has already been recommended by our local expert! ■



# COOL NEW TOOLS

Here's just a sample of some of the new products superintendents can find on the GIS trade show floor.

**T**he Golf Industry Show is a bonanza for superintendents. In just a few days superintendents can take in specialized educational seminars, see old friends from college, network with international colleagues, listen to golf legends speak and oh, yeah — check out a ton of new hardware available for their golf course.

So somewhere between that Tuesday night Nick Price talk and the Friday morning bermudagrass seminar, don't forget to cruise through the big hall in the Orange County Convention Center to see what new products are out there to help you take care of your course.

plete 90 percent of applications without complicated directions or mechanical adjustments. A 25-cubic-foot hopper keeps operators on the course while still keeping a light footprint on greens. The company says the 1540 TEC gives an accurate, clean and precise spread from ultra-light to ultra-heavy and everything in between, with very few adjustments. Visit Turfco at the GIS at booth # 2740 or online at [www.turfco.com](http://www.turfco.com).

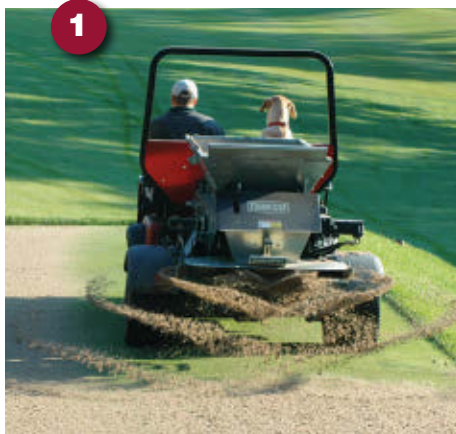


**1 Turfco** introduces what it calls the industry's most advanced topdresser, the WideSpin 1540 TEC truck-mounted broadcast topdresser. Featuring on-board diagnostics, electronic controls and WideSpin technology, the WideSpin 1540 TEC is designed for use with John Deere and Toro turf vehicles. A few mounting brackets and connections turn these trucks into quality broadcast spreaders. Simple, push-button controls on the electronic controller, combined with the unique spinner design allows operators to com-

**2 Earthway Products** introduces the new S15 Spray-Pro ground-driven push sprayer. The S15 is designed for spraying all types of liquids including ice control products, pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. The S15 is a fully assembled smaller version of the S25 Spray-Pro Mark III, and includes an adjustable spray system that makes applications on sidewalks and parking lots easy to manage. The S15 is ideal for areas where the boom sprayer will not go. The S15 does not need gas or battery power. Visit Earthway at the Golf Industry Show at booth # 922, or visit online at [www.earthway.com](http://www.earthway.com)



**3 Zylam 20SG Systemic Turf Insecticide** from **PBI Gordon** is a 20-percent soluble granule formulation of dinotefuran, the latest generation of neonicotinoid insecticides. The company says it is the product of choice when you need "muscle in your tank" for control of turfgrass' toughest pests, including chinch bug, cutworms, mole crickets, European crane flies, billbugs and annual bluegrass weevils. Visit PBI Gordon at the GIS at booth # 852 or visit online at [www.pbigordon.com](http://www.pbigordon.com).



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**4 Club Car** will unveil improvements to its Visage Mobile Golf Information System at the 2011 GIS. The improvements increase the system's ability to help course managers address critical revenue and expense needs while at the same time increasing customer satisfaction. Improvements include a vehicle locator feature, a scorecard e-mail service, real-time pin location updates and more control over food and beverage orders placed from the car. Visage utilizes a combination of cellular, wireless and GPS technologies to create what Club Car calls the "new face of customer experience." Club Car also plans to unveil a premium 8-volt battery at the show. The new battery comes with a 4-year/25,000 energy unit warranty and Club Car's single point watering system that makes filling batteries more efficient. Visit Club Car at booth # 1353 or online at [www.clubcar.com](http://www.clubcar.com).

**5 Rain Bird 751 rotors** offers rapid-adjust technology featuring MemoryArc, making it possible for superintendents to easily and quickly adjust watering on greens, fairways or roughs as needed. These simple, top-adjustable rotation settings retain the memory of their part-circle arc setting when shifting between full- and part-circle operations for quick, dry arc adjustments for the life of the rotor. Because the 751 rotors are backward-compatible with every Eagle rotor manufactured since 1992 means that many superintendents can simply drop the new 751 rotors into their existing rotor cases, saving both time and money. Rain Bird says field and laboratory tests have found the 751 rotors to be up to 23 percent more efficient than those offered by the next-closest competitor — with durability that helps the rotors last up to 10 times longer. Visit Rain Bird at the GIS at booth 1400 or visit them online at [www.rainbird.com/golf](http://www.rainbird.com/golf).



**6** A new "starter" herbicide providing post-emergent weed control without the wait, SquareOne herbicide is the latest innovation from **FMC Professional Solutions**. The new product has been registered by the EPA for use on lawns, golf courses, sod farms and athletic fields. Unlike other products that are too harsh on newly seeded turf or require multiple applications, SquareOne herbicide can be applied just one day before seeding or as early as seven days after emergence on most cool- and warm-season grasses. This means weed populations are reduced from the start, allowing for maximum turf density with fewer herbicide applications or the need to reseed the following spring. SquareOne is a patent-pending dispersible granule formulation that features a dual action, optimized combination of active ingredients that works primarily through foliar contact and uptake, but also continues to hold back weed competition until the new turf is established. It is labeled for crabgrass and many small broadleaf weeds, and can be used in both spring and fall turf projects on lawns, athletic fields, sod farms and golf courses. Visit FMC at the GIS at booth # 1815 or online at [www.fmcprosolutions.com](http://www.fmcprosolutions.com).



**7 SonicSolutions** has been designed to keep water features and irrigation ponds clear of algae. Environmentally safe, SonicSolutions uses the resonance of ultrasonic waves to kill algae, yet is safe for fish, plants and other aquatic life. A single unit covers up to 8 acres depending on conditions and uses less than 10 watts. Multiple units can be used in larger ponds. A solar powered model is also available with solar power system sold separately. Visit SonicSolutions at booth # 1009 at the GIS, or contact them at 888-KO-ALGAE (888-562-5423).



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*Continued from page 33*



**8**

**8** **Standard Golf** will introduce several new products at the GIS, including new Junior Tournament flagsticks for practice greens. Similar to the larger flagstick style, the new distinctive fiberglass Junior Tournament rods are designed to taper from a 3/4-inch diameter at the center point of the rod to a 1/2-inch diameter at the tip and ferrule. Standard also releases an aluminum practice green cup, coated with an exclusive chip-resistant Bonderite powder coat. A new beveled edge bottom also makes it easier to insert and remove. Standard will also unveil a unique one-piece hole whitener system that sprays clean white holes in seconds. It requires no assembly and minimizes overspray by focusing the spraying close to the edge of the hole rather than spraying from the center of the cup. A built-in shield also provides added protection against overspray. Visit Standard Golf at booth # 2540 or visit the company online at [www.standardgolf.com](http://www.standardgolf.com).



**9**

**9** At the 2011 GIS, **John Deere** will introduce a new walk greens mower. The SL Walk Greens Mower line's patented Speed Link technology will serve as a huge time saver for professionals, the company says. Features for the three SL Walk Greens Mowers (models 180SL, 220SL and 260SL) include: adjustable height of cut from one point on either side of the mower cutting unit; 70 percent reduction in steps needed for height adjustment; patented front roller bracket to quickly change roller to meet changing conditions; and optional push brush attachment that helps stand up the grass prior to cutting, providing a more pronounced stripe. To visit John Deere, stop by booth # 2001 or visit the company online at [www.deere.com](http://www.deere.com).



# CUT, RAKE AND ROLL

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person, stop by booth # 832 at the GIS, or visit the company online at [www.kocheck.com](http://www.kocheck.com).

## 11 C & S Turf Care Equipment

announce the Turf Tracker Arc, an electric zero-turn riding spreader/sprayer. The Arc takes no gas and no oil, and produces no emissions or noise. The company says the spreader/sprayer can allow superintendents to spread or spray an acre of turf in just ten minutes. The Arc will last all day on a single charge, the company says. Plugging the Arc in at the end of the day will make it ready for work the next morning. For more information contact C & S Turf Care Equipment, 800-872-7050 ([www.csturfequip.com](http://www.csturfequip.com)).



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 A large advertisement for Duro tires. The background is a close-up of a tire tread on the left and a blurred image of a truck on the right. The text is in orange and white. At the bottom, there are three smaller images of different tire types.
 

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# A VIEW OF THE TOP

Former GCSAA  
presidents reflect  
on their past posts  
and the benefits of  
serving the  
association

BY JOHN WALSH,  
CONTRIBUTING  
EDITOR

Since 1926, 74 different men have served the GCSAA as president of the association. When Robert M. Randquist, CGCS, director of golf course and grounds at Boca Rio Golf Club in Boca Raton, Fla., takes over the reigns as president at next month's Golf Industry Show, he'll be the 75th person to proudly hold that title.

While the office of president is prestigious, it also comes with some heavy responsibilities. These men have gone into the office of president and worked hard, taking time out of their lives, to serve their fellow members.

*Golfdom* caught up with four former GCSAA presidents: Dennis D. Lyon, CGCS (president, 1989); Gary T. Grigg, CGCS, MG (president, 1995); R. Scott Woodhead, CGCS Retired (president, 2000); and Tommy D. Witt, CGCS (president, 2001). They reflect on how their time on the board influenced their lives, from learning and honing non-agronomic skills to developing new friendships, many of which last to this day.

# DENNIS D. LYON



# GARY T. GRIGG

# R. SCOTT WOODHEAD



# TOMMY D. WITT



## Becoming president

Certified superintendent Dennis Lyon, head of the golf division for the City of Aurora, Colo., was a local chapter president in 1980 and was elected to the GCSAA board in 1985. He's always been active in committees and committed to the certification program and members' education.

"Any time you run for the board, you should be willing to serve as president," Lyon says.

In 1989, Lyon was the first GCSAA president from a municipal golf course, which was a big deal then.

"It wasn't an issue, just an evolution of the association," he says. "It's the willingness of the public guys to get involved."

In 2000, R. Scott Woodhead, senior manager of member relations for the GCSAA, was superintendent at the private Valley View Golf Club in Bozeman, Mont., while serving as president. Involved in committees since 1987, Woodhead served 12 years on the Peaks & Prairies GCSA and nine years at the national level.

But Woodhead's route to the presidency was different than most because he was asked to serve on the board in 1993 by then-president Randy Nichols as a result of a vacancy. Woodhead served as a director for five years then moved through board offices.

Tommy Witt, CGCS, director of golf course operations at Northmoor Country Club in Highland Park, Ill., followed Wood-

head in 2001. Witt, who was the superintendent at The Kiawah Island Club during his year as president, was elected to the board in 1994. He served as president of the Lone Star and Central Texas GCSAs before moving to GCSAA committees and board service.

"I've always been involved at the local and state level," he says. "In my first year as a superintendent in Texas, I was asked to serve on the local board, and I enjoyed that. I got into the volunteer tract. Being young, I always was involved in associations to learn and meet people. It became natural."

Gary Grigg, CGCS, vice president and agronomist for Grigg Brothers, was 27 years into his career in 1995 when he became president. He did his due diligence and served on various committees for the GCSAA before running for the board in 1989 while he was superintendent at Shadow Glen Golf Club in Olathe, Kan. In 1992 he moved to Naples National Golf Club. From there, he went to Royal Poinciana Golf Club in Naples where ownership allowed Grigg to complete his presidency and time on the board.

## Addressing the issues

During a presidency, there are usually several issues to be dealt with, and most likely, the president is familiar with them because of his time on the board.

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When Woodhead was president, the big issues were tied to membership-approved standards, i.e., the professional development initiative (PDI). Before the standards were implemented, Class A status required only paying dues and being a member for three years.

The biggest challenge of PDI was to provide members with all the information, so they could make an educated decision, Woodhead says.

"A good portion of my time was the formulation and communication of standards," he says. "Be-

cause membership approval was 75 percent, the GCSAA viewed the standards as a mandate. But some members didn't appreciate being told what to do. We lost a few members along the way, but membership, in general, appreciated it.

"It was a case of documenting their professional development — things they were already doing," Woodhead adds. "It wasn't a case of having to do more

than they were already doing. We can now market the value of hiring Class A and certified members."

"The standards classification leaves an option for everyone who wants to be a member," Witt, who served the following year, says. "They can choose where they want to fall."

Whether GCSAA should change its name and if the association should relocate its headquarters were the two hot-button issues when Witt was president. The board approached the issues by conducting focus groups with members and allied associations, using a combination of member and resource groups and outside professional consultants.

"Rarely can people get 'GCSAA' out of their mouths," Witt says. "It's a lengthy name and a mouthful. I've always thought the name recognition of the association could improve with a name change."

Regarding the relocation, Witt says he'd been told it was challenging to recruit people for upper-level positions in the association, and that it was extremely difficult to get top staff candidates to relocate to GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kan.

"Board members come and go, but executives are there every day," he says. "We were told it was difficult to attract top-level staff to Lawrence. We had a significant amount of staff turnover at the time, and some board members thought that could improve with a new location."

There was one burning issue while Grigg was on the board — looking at moving away from the delegate voting structure. Grigg says a fraction of the board wanted a one-man, one-vote structure. Some thought the board should decide, others thought members should decide. Ultimately, the membership voted to keep the delegate voting structure.

"It's not a lot of fun when there's division on the board, but that's part of having a board," he says.

In Lyon's final president's message, he addressed the environmental challenges

### TRAVEL AND PERKS

Throughout the years, GCSAA board members' travel and perks have been scrutinized and criticized. But several past presidents view that aspect of the job as a duty, of serving the association.

Woodhead attended major golf events where the GCSAA wanted a presence and to industry meetings such as Golf 20/20 during his presidency in 2000.

"Traveling was an eye-opener for me being a kid from Montana," he says. "I was able to see much of the country. Because of some of my travel, I missed some things in my family life and was away from home during major family events. That was my biggest challenge while on the board."

Woodhead says no travel is required while serving on the board, and that family comes first, employer second and the GCSAA third.

"You have to make sacrifices, and many of those came at the expense of my family," he says. "When I became a board member, something had to give. My fly fishing license expired, and I wish I hadn't let that happen."

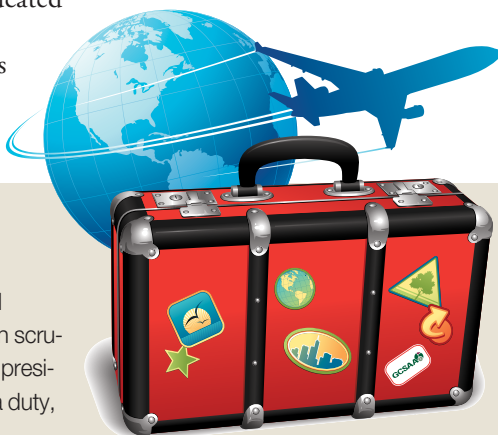
Lyon says he traveled efficiently when he was president in 1989. He traveled over the weekends so he would miss only one day of work.

"I wasn't hanging around for allied meetings," he says. "I did what I had to do and left. Officers travel more now compared to back then. For example, I never went to BIGGA (British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association)."

However, Lyon did go to Australia to attend a superintendent's association event and England for a Ransomes golf tournament. He views that sort of travel as part of the job, not necessarily a perk.

Typically, when one serves on the board, there isn't a lot of travel, says Grigg.

"The president can take what he wants and delegate the rest," he says. "I was in between doing a lot of travel and delegating a lot. Travel is a duty because the president is representing the association. It was nice to go to the Masters and Ryder Cup. We always squeezed in a board meeting at those events." — J.W.





"I've always thought the name recognition of (GCSAA) could improve with a name change," Tommy Witt says.

the industry was going to face in the 1990s. Those challenges are still relevant.

"The price of maximum golf course maintenance may be ecologically and financially too high," he says. "We need to shift from maximum maintenance to optimum maintenance."

In Lyon's last article he wrote as president, he also said superintendents, although often comfortable in a behind-the-scenes role, need to get involved at the highest levels of club decision- and policy-making.

"The positions we hold and the decisions we're entrusted to make are critical to the ultimate success of our clubs," he says. "The bottom line is we're responsible for the golf operation, and we needed to move from the barn to the boardroom."

### Never stop learning

One constant while serving on the board is learning about non-agronomic subjects such as leadership, communication and delegation.

Woodhead's communication skills grew, as well as his ability to see the big picture and realize there's much more to the success of a facility.

Lyon was surprised by the personal growth he experienced as a leader and a supervisor. He developed relationships and a sense of accomplishment, but he also had fun.

"It wasn't my life," he says. "I paced myself and did the best job I could. When my year as president was over, that was fine. Then I got involved with the Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Association and the Colorado Golf Association."

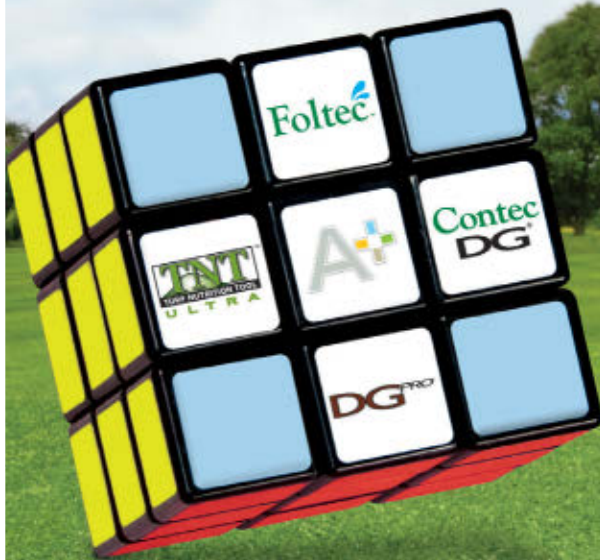
Being on the GCSAA board is a lot like being on city council, Lyon says.

"It helped me have a better understanding of what our elected officials go through," he says. "I learned about consensus building and finding win-win solutions, and to address issues professionally. I continue to use these skills in my job."

Witt learned a lot about himself and how to listen to others and their opinions. He developed strong relationships with

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a number of board members, some of whom are his best friends. How to delegate effectively was the most important skill Witt learned.

"Prior to me being on the board, I judged myself on how much I worked and how many hours I was at the course," he says. "It became imperative to delegate responsibility to those who were on my staff to give them the chance to excel. I couldn't have been on the board without the people who worked with me from 1994 to 2003."

Grigg learned a lot about planning meetings. He's taken that knowledge and put it to good use helping operate Grigg Brothers.

"You need to look at your company top to bottom and take a good, honest look at yourself," he says.

### A look back

Looking back, past presidents see how their service has influenced the association.



*"Those who are afraid should step up and do it."*

— DENNIS D. LYON,  
HEAD OF GOLF DIVISION,  
CITY OF AURORA



"Back in late '80s and early '90s we adopted a philosophy of governance: The president is responsible for the board, and the CEO is responsible for the staff," Lyon says. "We sensed board members were getting very involved with the daily operations of running the GCSAA, so we drafted a philosophy that was different. The board drifted away from that philosophy, but now it's similar to what we had."

For Woodhead, the opportunity to meet and interact with various individuals was the best part of the job. He has fond memories of the friendships he developed with allied members. One high point for him was standing at the podium as president when members approved the professional standards — this after one of the most contentious meetings in 20 years at the GCSAA, he says.

"My feeling was that I was there to serve the GCSAA, and the members allowed me to serve," he says. "I appreciate the opportunity the members gave me to serve them."

As a board member and president, Witt says he knew his job wasn't to call and talk to former CEO Steve Mona every day and occupy the time of the department heads. The GCSAA staff assumed a more active, decision-making role, and it was the job of the board to set policy and for Mona and his staff to execute the policies.

"The year I came on board, we just returned to the committee system," he says. "While I was high on accountability, I had to balance that with my job as a board member and president. There was a time when board members had minor roles in how these things were decided. I favor the committee system, but I didn't want to dictate what the committee was going to do."

Witt admits he could've handled some issues better.

"By the time I got off the board, I'd have tried to find different ways to encourage people to do better or would have done a better job accepting accountability. I could've approached holding others accountable better."

Witt developed speeches and talked about topics he says weren't being presented by other instructors, such as enhancing superintendents' value, the environment in which a superinten-

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dent needs to be successful, developing successful relationships, and the superintendent as a true revenue generator.

When Grigg served on the board during the early '90s, the association was going through an extreme period of growth, gaining about 1,000 members a year, he says. As part of the growth, the association bought land and built a new headquarters.

"It was an exciting time," he says.

Grigg says it's overwhelming to be president, but his education (masters degree in agronomy from Michigan State University) and prior experience helped him a lot.

"I didn't try to build a name for myself," he says. "You grow into the presidency position by the time you've become president. You need the years on the board to grow into it."

### Advice to the young

Younger superintendents can heed past presidents' wisdom so they're better prepared to serve the association should they be elected to do so.

Witt advises that it's essential to have total support of one's employer.

"They need to know it can be an eight- to 10-year process," he says. "It's important to paint a picture to your employer that you have an opportunity to receive training and grow exponentially in a myriad of professional skills, such as organization, leadership and time management."

Grigg also warns superintendents they better have an understanding club and be ready to commit time.

"Some guys lost their jobs because of their board duty," he says. "It's time consuming, and it comes out of your personal time. My wife got straddled with raising kids more than she should have, and all my vacation days were used for my board duty."

Witt reminds superintendents that serving on the board is a balance between work, family and the GCSAA.

"Travel is taxing, but the benefits

of meeting industry peers and learning about the association far outweigh the negatives," he says.

Woodhead recommends superintendents first get involved with the association at the local level as early as they can. Volunteer for GCSAA service or become a voting delegate.

"You have to have willingness to serve

and give back to the profession," he says.

Lyon acknowledges serving on the board is a sacrifice, but those who do so make great contributions to the profession.

"Those who are afraid should step up and do it," he says. ■

*Walsh, a contributing editor for Golfdom, resides in Cleveland.*

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