

**A**s we prepare for a trip to Las Vegas for the Golf Industry Show, I would like to celebrate the bad choices that will be made by many of us in Sin City — from packing uncomfortable shoes to the late-night reload at the casino ATM.

This month we took a look at the ups and downs of the GIS. We asked a few sources for advice on how to keep the GIS successful in this down golf economy.

I thought I'd offer my own take. Instead of advice on what to do, here are a few things GCSAA should correct about its Golf Industry Show and the National Championship and Golf Classic.

► **Tournament is too far away:** I played in my first GCSAA Golf Classic last year in Palm Beach, Fla. I had a great time. The GCSAA and Toro come together to put on a fantastic event, and my hat is off to GCSAA tournament director Jim Cummins and all the people who put together such a great event.

Odds were low on me playing in the tournament this year, I'll admit, because we recently welcomed a newborn baby in the Jones household. I've already been on the road 16 days this year, and adding extra days to the GIS to tee it up didn't seem like a smart choice.

But I did consider it... right up until I Google-mapped the drive from La Quinta, Calif., site of the GCSAA tournament host hotel, to Las Vegas. It's 281 miles, almost a five-hour drive. Yikes!

I love me some Palm Springs golf, trust me, but putting the tournament so far from the convention center — and neglecting the great courses in Las Vegas — is a real head-scratcher to me.

► **Stop nickel and diming vendors:** I heard a complaint the other day from a friend in the industry. You know how some booths at the GIS have the "gun" that scans your badge? Well, technology has caught up, and the scanner gun has become obsolete. This year, badges can be

## Bad GIS Choices

BY SETH JONES



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scanned with a free app on the iPhone.

One problem: There's no such thing as "free" when it comes to the GIS. To use this free technology at the GIS, the GCSAA is going to charge vendors some \$200 per iPhone. And, yes, it's your own iPhone you're being charged to use.

I get it, GCSAA has to watch out for No. 1 and this is their party. And when you have hundreds of vendors, you're not going to keep everyone happy. But GCSAA should remember that even though this is their party, these are also their customers. Free scanners may have paid off better than frustrating vendors with another charge.

► **Loosen the leash on GCSAA staff:** The GIS is a busy week for everyone. But for some GCSAA staffers, it can be grueling hours and not much of a life outside the show.

I remember for the 2008 GIS in Orlando, my *Golfdom* colleague Joel Jackson, executive director of the Florida GCSA, invited the entire GCSAA staff to the Florida chapter party. Classy move.

But within the walls of GCSAA, it caused some consternation. Should the staffers really be out there mingling with members? Could that leave a bad impression?

No. GCSAA should encourage all of the staff to get out there and enjoy a chapter party or two when invited. It's a great opportunity to mingle with the members and learn more about them, especially for those staffers who rarely leave Lawrence.

If you do spot a GCSAA staffer out and about in Vegas, why not offer to buy them a drink? Those guys work their tails off so all of us can have a good show.

That would be a good choice.

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*Email Jones at [sjones@questex.com](mailto:sjones@questex.com).*