

Off The Fringe

What's in Store (and What's Not in Store) 10 Years Down the Road?

By Craig F. Zellers

Things in the golf industry that you're NOT LIKELY to see in the next 10 years:

- A week that goes by that you're not reminded about the smelly ballwasher fluid on hole No. 16.
- An architect that refuses to redesign a Don Ross or Alistair Mackenzie original.
- *Poa annua* that personally cares about your employment status in the middle of the summer.
- Equipment operators who throttle down the mower before pulling into the shop.
- The USGA regulating golf ball distance and golf club manufacturing.
- A self-contained, self-flushing, self-cleaning, self-powered, self-circulating ball washer. (Heck, they're available today, and they're called caddies).
- A general manager or pro who has successfully maintained a bentgrass/*Poa* green cut at one-eighth inch in the middle of summer.
- A golf pro showing up at 5:30 a.m. to go out with the crew to see what changing a cup is all about.
- The USGA adopts a resolution encouraging all 50 states to modify the USGA spec green and name the result after that state, as in New Jersey-Style Green.
- A 16-year-old golf car attendant at Any Course USA who has never dented a golf car or burned rubber trying to do a burn out.

■ A group of sunburned GCSAA employees saying, "I don't think we're in Kansas anymore"

Things in the golf industry that you are LIKELY to see in the next 10 years:

- An equipment operator that puts gasoline into the diesel tank.
- The head chef at the exclusive club who believes that all 500 members belong because they love Friday night pasta feeds more than golf.
- A seed manufacturer gets sued for royalty fees by somebody.
- An 8,000-yard golf course played on the pro tour.
- The GCSAA adopts a new educational pursuit for superintendents that has nothing to do with CGCS and PDI.
- An inspector will show up from one of the following agencies unannounced: Agriculture Department, Fish and Game, OSHA, Jimmy Hoffa official search team (just making sure somebody's reading this).
- A superintendent that oversees all vacuuming of his artificial greens.
- The American Society of Golf Course Architects changing the pattern on their sport coats.
- A superintendent that actually visits all 700 exhibitor booths at the national show.

Zellers is a Toro Golf Irrigation sales representative for Turf Star in California. In a previous life, he was a superintendent.

A Carolina Milestone

ASSOCIATION POSTS RECORD REVENUES AT ANNUAL SHOW. IS IT A SIGN OF GOOD THINGS TO COME?

If the golf industry is still hurting, it certainly wasn't apparent late last year in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Superintendents in the Carolinas topped \$500,000 in gross revenues for the first time at the annual conference and trade show of the Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association (CGCSA).

"Reaching that milestone of a half-million dollars in revenues is clearly healthy for our association, but I think the figure is also a good indicator for the golf industry as a whole," Chuck Borman, Carolinas GCSA executive director, said after the show. "Golf has endured some challenging times in recent years, but I think we have all learned some valuable lessons as a result and the game will be stronger for it in the long run. Support of the kind that we enjoyed this past week tells me that business confidence is coming back."

The four-day event honored the 50th anniversary of the CGCSA and attracted about 2,500 attendees and a record 202 individual companies that bought exhibit booth space during the conference and trade show. Superintendents also filled a record 1,220 seats in education seminars.

Paul Jett, host superintendent for the 2005 U.S. Open in Pinehurst, N.C., said the association's 1,700 members benefited greatly from research support offered by turf-grass departments at Clemson and North Carolina State universities.

Rob Roy, superintendent at The River Club in Suwanee, Ga., won the 2004 Carolinas GCSA golf championship, shooting a 1-over par 73 at The Dunes Club, ranked by *Golf Digest* as one of the 100 best courses in America. The golf championship attracted 336 golfers, another record.

Shades Of Green

■ OPINION

The following tribute is dedicated to the men and women who are the keepers of the green and guardians of the game of golf. Thank you, one and all.

I can recall the memory of thousands of sunrises and far too many sunsets. In the twilight of dawn I leave my tracks in the silvery beads of morning dew along with the white-tailed deer and wild turkey. I play hide and seek with the barred owl and the red-tailed hawk. I watch in fascination the diving osprey and soaring eagle.

I surprise sunning alligators and turtles as they splash into lakes. I remove any number of serpents from harm's way or from causing harm. I yield the pathways to the grey squirrel and brown rabbit making dashes for cover. I feel frustration at those misguided souls who still call me "polluter." They should come spend a day on my nature preserve.

I am a constant student of my craft as technology and equipment improve. Knowledge comes from my peers and from educators of all disciplines at national conferences, regional seminars and local chapter meetings. Continuing education is my salvation. My fellow superintendents are generous resources for problem solving.

My primary mission is to provide a well-conditioned golf course. To accomplish this, I must be a manager of resources. I am a leader, a planner, a coach and a team player. I am a jack of all trades, from agronomist to zoologist. I am the receiver of the proverbial buck — it always stops here.

Growing grass is only a small part of the job. I am counselor to those crew members needing guidance and disciplinarian to the unmotivated. I am friend and mentor to those who earn my respect. I strive to be fair, firm and consistent, but I am only human. I, too, will make some mistakes along the way.

I try to balance increasing expectations and demands with the reality of the operating budget. Doing more with less is my challenge. Televised golf is both a blessing and a curse. Perception is reality. I strive to please all golfers from scratch to 36 handicaps on the same day.

I am the expert problem solver unless my

A Poetic Tribute to the Profession

BY JOEL JACKSON



THE DIRT UNDER
MY FINGERNAILS
AND THE CALLUSES
ON MY HANDS HAVE
BEEN EARNED IN
HONEST TOIL

practical experience and classroom knowledge differs from the opinion of the naysayers and purse holders. "What have you done for me lately?" echoes in my ears. Reasons and explanations are often dismissed as excuses. I often have as much job security as the next difference of opinion.

I court Mother Nature and often win her favor. Yet I have seen her wrath and seemingly capricious destruction beyond comprehension. I am held accountable for the conditions from her torrential rains and unrelenting drought. I am expected to somehow turn muck and clay into sandy loam. The timing of necessary cultural practices is often held hostage to special event calendars.

I bear red, scaly, cancerous patches on my skin from an ongoing love-hate relationship with the sun.

The dirt under my fingernails and the calluses on my hands have been earned in honest toil. I have dodged more lightning bolts and tasted more rain drops than I should admit. The long hours and lost weekends can exact a toll on family life. Marriages can become fragile and childhoods can be missed without a trace, when work becomes a selfish mistress.

The love of working outdoors is worth these challenges. I thrill to the grandeur of the changing seasons from spring buds to fall frost. I meet some of the most interesting people on earth in my work. I am driven by myself or others to deliver perfection in an imperfect world. No one seems to understand this paradox except those who walk in my shoes.

I am the superintendent.

Certified superintendent Joel Jackson retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.



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Put Into Words

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What does show merger spell for superintendents and owners?

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It's coming. You can hear its heavy footsteps plodding along with a thump, a boom and a rumble.

Its destination is the galactic Orange County Convention Center on International Boulevard in Orlando, Fla. That's a good thing because the most towering building in this sun-splashed city couldn't host this beast of an event.

The event is bigger than it was last year. In fact, some people might think it's becoming colossal.

But rest assured. While it's gargantuan and green, it's not Godzilla. It's the greatest show on turf — the Golf Industry Show, formerly known as the meek and mild GCSAA Conference and Show.

This is the maiden voyage of the Golf Industry Show (GIS), which now combines the annual trade shows of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) and the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA). Two smaller groups, the American Society of Golf Course

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BY
LARRY AYLWARD
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Architects (ASGCA) and the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBAA), have also officially joined the GIS, although they have played roles in the GCSAA Show in previous years. In 2007, the 6,500-member Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) will join the GIS.

Earlier this year the respective leaders of the GCSAA and the NGCOA, Steve Mona and Mike Hughes, said they received nothing but positive feedback from their members regarding the merging of their shows.

"In a word, it has been tremendous," Mona, CEO of the GCSAA, said in the summer. "I've learned never to say never and never to say always, but I think the feedback that I've received has been as close to 100 percent positive as any initiative I can think of."

Some superintendents, however, have concerns about the "new" show. They're concerned that it's getting too big. They worry the GCSAA will lose its identity now that it's part of a larger show (even though the organization is the driving force behind the event). They wonder out loud,

"What's happened to our show?"

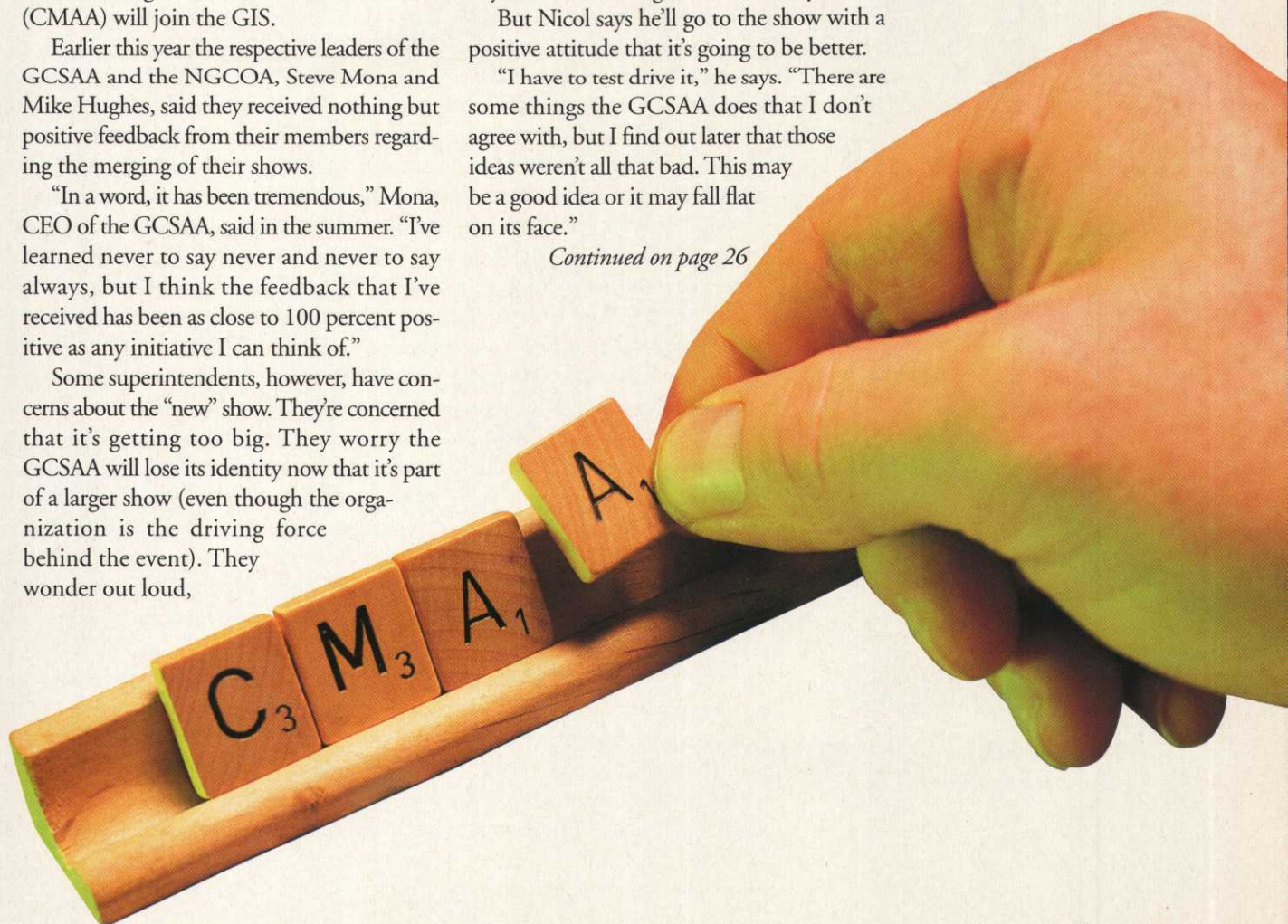
Jim Nicol, certified superintendent of Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn., is concerned about all of the above.

"It's not the golf course superintendents' show anymore — it's the golf show," he says.

But Nicol says he'll go to the show with a positive attitude that it's going to be better.

"I have to test drive it," he says. "There are some things the GCSAA does that I don't agree with, but I find out later that those ideas weren't all that bad. This may be a good idea or it may fall flat on its face."

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Incoming GCSAA President Tim O'Neill, the certified superintendent of the Country Club of Darien (Conn.), realizes that superintendents are concerned that the show is growing too big. While he understands how they feel, his advice to them is don't distress.

"There's a perception the show will be bigger than what it's really going to be," O'Neill says.

For those who believe the trade-show floor will be as infinite as outer space, O'Neill is here to tell you that it will only be slightly bigger than last year. There were 684 exhibitors that covered 240,000 square feet at the GCSAA show in San Diego last year. The GCSAA projects the show floor will grow to 800 exhibitors and about 255,000 square feet this year. "That's not much of a difference," O'Neill says.

Jeff Bollig, the GCSAA's director of communications, says about 21,000 attendees and 6,000 qualified buyers are projected to attend. That's compared to 19,314 attendees and 6,000 qualified buyers last year.

Mark Clark, certified superintendent of Troon Golf & Country Club in Scottsdale, Ariz., who first attended the show in 1980 in St. Louis, says attendees shouldn't worry about the show's growth because it's already big.

"It's so big now that what we're talking about is a pimple," Clark says in reference to the NGCOA joining the event.

John Carlone, certified superintendent of the Meadow Brook Club in Jericho, N.Y., has attended the GCSAA show every year since 1986, and says he has no problem with the owners joining the show even if their presence increases the event's size and scope. "It's a non-issue," he says. "We welcome them."

The bottom line is super-

intendents must get out of the show what they put into it regardless of its size, says Carlone, who plans his schedule ahead of time and jots down the companies' booths he wants to visit.

O'Neill says the NGCOA Solutions Summit, which the owners are calling their educational segment of the show, will provide opportunities for superintendents looking to enhance their careers.

"We've done surveys showing that a certain number of our members aspire to be something more than superintendents," O'Neill says, noting that GCSAA members are interested in becoming general managers and directors of golf. "It's great if our members can take advantage of those educational resources."

Carlone says he would love to own a golf course someday, and he'll only benefit from attending owners' educational segments that provide insight on how to do that.

Nicol says his curiosity will lead him to the NGCOA's show segment. "It's part of our business, so I have an interest in it."

Big brother factor

Nicol believes some superintendents go to the annual show just to play golf. "The show is secondary for them, and the golf is primary," he adds.

Not surprisingly, superintendents believe there could be an Orwellian factor at the show — as in their owners watching their every move. Will superintendents now think twice about blowing off a day's worth of educational sessions to get in 18 holes if they know their owners are watching them?

O'Neill says he's heard the big-brother-is-watching theory from others. But O'Neill says superintendents who bring their owners to the show are only helping their causes.

"The idea is to get your employers there so they can see how complex our business really is," says O'Neill, noting that the GCSAA has encouraged superintendents to bring their employers to past trade shows. "I've brought my employer to the [GCSAA show] a few times, and it has always been a positive experience."

Carlone says "it's a sad state of events" if superintendents are worried about their owners attending the show and watching over their shoulders.

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"I've learned never to say never and never to say always, but I think the feedback that I've received has been as close to 100 percent positive as any initiative I can think of."

STEVE MONA,
CEO OF THE GCSAA



PERCEPTION



REALITY

Some people seem to have the perception that all biological products are a little like snake oil or just "bugs in a jug". And frankly, some of them are. We've tested them. We know.

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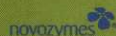
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"It's immature," he adds. "What a superintendent should be thinking about is the good it can do [to have his owner at the show]."

For instance, it's a lot easier for a superintendent to convince his owner that he needs a new piece of equipment when he can show his owner the equipment in person, Carlone points out.

The CMAA factor

When the CMAA joins the Golf Industry Show in 2007, the show floor will grow even more — to about 300,000 square feet. While that figure is a whopping 25 percent increase from last year's GCSAA show, it's still not as

big as it sounds, says O'Neill, who recalls the good ol' days of the late 1990s when the GCSAA show floor alone was about 285,000 square feet.

An obvious reason the CMAA will follow the NGCOA to the former GCSAA show in 2007 is to please the equipment suppliers and attendees of all three of the organizations' shows. Mona says companies that exhibited in the GCSAA, the NGCOA and the CMAA shows find the prospect of going to one show "quite attractive." "Beyond the obvious efficiencies and savings, the fact that so many key decision makers are going to be in the same location is being very well-received," he added.

Superintendents won't argue the economics of the decision, but they wonder if they'll be on the outside looking in at future shows. If courses tighten their financial belts in the future and decide to send only one person to the show, some superintendents believe they'll be low on the totem pole to go.

O'Neill, however, believes a superintendent's presence at the show can't be replaced. No offense to general managers or owners, but O'Neill stresses that most of them don't have the buying experience to purchase a

major piece of equipment for a course.

"It's way more complicated than just going and kicking some tires and figuring out which is the cheapest mower to buy for the club," he adds.

Identity crisis?

Most everyone knows the GCSAA has been determined to pump up superintendents' image among other golf segments, such as pros and general managers. So why would the GCSAA want to take the word "superintendents" out of its show name?

"If [the GCSAA] is so worried about branding and marketing, why is it diluting its name out of the show," Nicol asks.

Carlone understands Nicol's point and doesn't disagree. "But I'd like to see how it plays out," he says. "Let's let a couple of years go by and see if people forget who we are."

Clark says it's more important for superintendents to promote the game itself than it is to promote them. Hence, he doesn't mind the event's new name.

"Without the game, we don't have jobs," Clark says. "I'm all for anything that's going to label or franchise or market golf. I don't think [superintendents] have to be the front-runners. "We're not going to survive in this business if we can't work together as a team with [the industry's other segments]."

O'Neill says the show has always been about change. "This is another evolution of that. We're trying to think about the future and be ahead of the curve on trade shows in what is a tough business and economy for the golf industry."

That said, the last thing O'Neill wants to risk is GCSAA losing its identity against the backdrop of the Golf Industry Show. Hence, GCSAA will not relinquish the items that helped define its show in the past, such as its popular golf tournament, distinct educational sessions and presentation of the Old Tom Morris Award.

Carlone believes the 21,000-member GCSAA will not lose its image, even after the CMAA joins the GIS, because it is the engine that drives the show.

"They're always going to be in with us," Carlone says of the other associations involved in the show. "It's never going to be us in with them." ■



"If [the GCSAA] is so worried about branding and marketing, why is it diluting its name out of the show?"

**JIM NICOL,
SUPERINTENDENT**

Show Floor at a Glance

Superintendents (and owners who have been to the GCSAA Conference and Show in the past) will notice a major difference on the floor of the first Golf Industry Show this year.

"The show floor will be set up in a way you've never seen before," says Tim O'Neill, certified superintendent of the Country Club of Darien (Conn.) and incoming president of the GCSAA. "It will be set up so it's easier to navigate."

Attendees can navigate seven different "solution centers." The centers each feature educational presentations, displays and physical demonstrations in the same area of the floor. Insiders say the setup provides superintendents and owners with networking opportunities and access to golf course management solutions.

"It will be easier for people to find the areas that interest them the most without walking all over the place," O'Neill says. "There will be activities on the show floor that will hopefully keep people more interested in being on the show floor for extended periods of time."

The seven solution center topics include:

- Green construction, which focuses on the design and construction of various greens. Billed as the trade show's centerpiece, a 6,000-square-foot green will be built on the show floor. Two-thirds of the construction will take place prior to the opening of the show, and the final stages will occur after the show opens. On Saturday, Feb. 12, the green will be complete and playable.
- Agronomics, which focuses on environmental best-management practices at the golf facility, including water management, integrated plant management, wildlife and habitat management, among other things.
- Clubhouse, which will host a series of physical demonstrations, presentations, one-on-one interviews, consultations and displays on the various aspects of clubhouse management.
- Electric vehicle test center, where attendees can test-drive electric golf cars and utility vehicles from various manufacturers.
- Equipment and maintenance, which focuses on building and maintaining the most efficient and effective golf maintenance facility, including planning, budgeting and design.
- Range, an interactive area that features a driving range, putting green and chipping surface, as well as teaching and technique demonstrations. Education sessions will focus on running a range for profit, and discussing various player development initiatives aimed at growing the game.
- Water, which features a variety of physical demonstrations and educational sessions developed in partnership with the Irrigation Association. Activities include a full-scale pump station demonstration, and education on irrigation system components, among other things.

— Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

**Did you know that different peats
can be processed to *look* the same?**

They're Down with It

Owners ecstatic about joining superintendents for the big show

By Anthony Pioppi, Contributing Editor

While superintendents have debated the idea of combining the annual conference and show of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) with the National Golf Course Owners Association's (NGCOA) annual event, the owners are ecstatic about the merger.

"All the guys I talked to about it are really enthusiastic," says Doug Homan, owner of Lake Sunapee Country Club in New London, N.H. Sunapee has been in the Homan family for more than 65 years, and Homan is also the course's superintendent. "It's really a great marriage."

Charles Mozingo agrees with Homan. He is the long-time superintendent of the 27-hole Turkeyfoot Lake Golf Links in Akron, Ohio. His wife Mary is part owner of the course, which her family built in 1925.

"This is a really good idea. It's a chance to go to both shows," Mozingo says, adding that the new format gives owners access to information and equipment not available when

they had their own show.

Mozingo hopes the show will help revitalize the industry and bring owners closer together in an effort to preserve their courses.

Judy Hutt, owner of Shadow Valley Golf Course in Boise, Idaho, sees combining the two events as a chance to knock down traditional divides in the golf industry. "So many times it seems there is a line between the inside and the outside," she says, referring to the pro shop staff and maintenance staff.

Combining the show, Hutt adds, may help with the chilly unspoken rule between superintendents and owners that says, "You don't go on my turf, and I won't go on yours."

"Maybe this will get everybody together," she says. "Maybe it will help erase that in a fun, family atmosphere."

Mike Hughes, the NGCOA's executive director, says he has not come across one owner who has criticized the joint effort.

"I have not heard of a single person who is less than enthusiastic. I think the owners overwhelmingly approve of this," he says.

The NGCOA has about 6,000 golf course owners as members and its show normally draws up to 800 people. The superintendents show averages more than 20,000 attendees.

The agreement with the GCSAA is for five years, but Hughes expects it to become a permanent event especially considering that the Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) is scheduled to become part of the event in 2007.

Scott Hoyt is general manager at Cinnabar



"So many times it seems there is a line between the inside and the outside. Maybe this will get everybody together."

JUDY HUTT, OWNER