

There were other highlights in Houston. Wisconsin's delegation to the GCSAA golf tournament gave excellent grades to the host of the tournament, The Woodlands. The opening session featured an NFL referee, Dr. Jim Tunney. Tunney, a talented and experienced public speaker, gave an inspiring message that seemed very appropriate for the opening of the conference.

Randy Smith and Jerry Kershasky, again, did an excellent job of organizing and hosting THE WISCONSIN ROOM. Our hospitality program has become more and more popular each year.

The trade show is always one of the most important reasons to travel to the conference. The show was nothing less than awesome this year. The latest in equipment and products were on the show floor to see, and staff people were there to answer questions. This reporter will never cease to be impressed by the distinguished and formidable numbers from the turf industry that come from our state as manufacturers.

Houston isn't very often a travel destination for most Wisconsinites, so the conference gave a chance to see the "boom and bust" town we've read about. This city, the largest in the south, reminded me of some "Rust Belt" cities. Rooms, even floors, of the city's many skyscrapers are vacant. There are 60,000 houses for sale. The boom times from 1973 to 1982 went bust with the oil prices in 1983. Nevertheless, the city made visitors to the GCSAA Conference welcome. The George R. Brown Center was a beautiful place for a conference. And there were interesting sites to visit in free time, despite the miserable weather during the first week of February.

All in all, the 1988 conference was another class act. It is the focus of the professional year for GCSAA. The effort put forth by GCSAA staff was very evident.

No one should have been disappointed. I wasn't.



WGCSA members Jeff Bottensek and Jerry Kershasky.



JoAnn Smith and Pat Roberts, two of the spouses who travelled to the 1988 Conference.



Rod Johnson and Steve Schmidt, two of the members of the GOLDEN TEE CLUB.

LAWN-BOY SOON TO BE "MADE IN WISCONSIN"!

Wisconsin's economy received a boost in mid-January when Lawn-Boy, a major manufacturer of rotary lawnmowers and garden tractors, announced it will move its national headquarters from Memphis, Tennessee to Plymouth, Wisconsin.

Jerome Stumbers, Vice President of Outboard Marine Corporation and General Manager of Lawn-Boy, said Lawn-Boy plans to hire as many as 100 new employees at the Plymouth headquarters in addition to the 200 managers, engineers and technicians to be moved from Memphis to the Plymouth area. Lawn-Boy, a division of OMC, already employs more than 600 people in Plymouth where it owns the factory and headquarters building it acquired from the Gilson Brothers Company in October of last year.

Gilson, long Plymouth's largest employer, went out of the lawnmower

business when it was purchased by Lawn-Boy after a labor dispute and several layoffs. Lawn-Boy has called back about 200 workers who have been getting the plant ready for production. The facilities are located on Plymouth's east side on Highway 57.

It is expected this move will be complete by about March 1. Almost half of Lawn-Boy's Memphis employees will be asked to move to the Plymouth operation.

Stumbers noted that some of the best outdoor power equipment engineers, research and development people and assemblers are located in Wisconsin. Lawn-Boy joins Ransomes, Inc. of Johnson Creek, Jacobsen Division of Textron in Racine, Toro in Tomah, Kohler engines in Kohler, Briggs and Stratton engines in the Milwaukee area, Tecumseh engines (and related equipment) in New Hol-

stein, Grafton and Sheboygan Falls, and Simplicity at Port Washington.

The announcement was made simultaneously at Lawn-Boy's present headquarters in Memphis and new headquarters in Plymouth. Few were happier about this good news for Wisconsin than Governor Tommy Thompson. "Lawn-Boy will be joining a growing number of companies that are beginning to realize that their base operations can benefit from the state's many pluses, including proximity to expanding markets, and good cultural, recreational and educational resources," Thompson said.

Lawn-Boy's products are sold by more than 8,000 dealers in the United States. Sales in 1987 were \$116 million, and the Gilson acquisition is expected to increase sales by 50% this year.