



Conference Comments and Questions

By Monroe S. Miller

Joe Baidy Did A Good Job!

It has been interesting watching Joe Baidy grow into the job of GCSAA president. Now that his term is over, I can say I think he did a good job on our behalf.

Joe has been sort of a blue collar president and director. He isn't the smoothest guy to ever hold the job; he isn't the most articulate president we've had and he isn't really an accomplished speaker, either. And he doesn't dress like he just walked out of the pro shop. "Cool" isn't an adjective I would use to describe him.

Rather, he's a practical, good-natured, down-to-earth man who has been truly and sincerely committed to his responsibilities. He laughs easily and works hard and has a load of common sense. At a time when we have a White House resident known as "Slick", surely that isn't what GCSAA needed at the same time.

In his time, Joe Baidy was in the right place for us. He seems to have been the right person exactly when we needed him.

I served on a Baidy committee his first year on the board of directors, and I served on a committee during his presidency. The personal growth of the guy impressed me. I saw, after seven years, a man who had obviously worked on things he knew needed improvement — pronunciation, for example. He was, during his presidency, pretty savvy when compared to his rookie year.

The man is likeable, proud and pragmatic. I especially like his feeling for our history, as shown by the new historic preservation committee he initiated. He might, if the truth be known, be closer to the typical golf course superintendent than anyone we have had in a while.

He believes in education — he has a four-year degree in turfgrass management from Penn State. He is outgoing,

unassuming and I'll bet his golf course is in top notch condition. So, my hat is off to you, Joe. Stick with us; you still have a lot to give. Thanks.


Is GCSAA Conference "FOR SALE"?

The GCSAA conference and show this year reminded me a little bit of the Olympics. *Shotz Beer*, official sponsor of the *US Olympic team* and *Happy Holstein Golf Course Compost*, official sponsor of the official GCSAA Show Floor Rest Rooms sound too much alike for me.

The decision to put the touch on manufacturers to buy food, booze and rain gear for certain GCSAA members is a bummer, downer, outer and loser. I hope the first year of the practice is the last.

Although it wasn't obnoxious commercialism, it did border on being crass. I am a little surprised the manufacturers went along. But let's fact it — whatever money was spent by sponsors of various conference events will ultimately be paid for by the customers. And it seems to me a little rude to expect a member from a smaller facility who may not be able to attend the national meeting to have to contribute to the purchase of an expensive duffel bag for a tournament player at one of the jazzy Monterey area golf courses. Anyone who can afford to play in the tournament can afford to buy his own duffel bag (or whatever the freebies actually were).

Similarly, why should those of us who choose to pass on the CGCS deal have to buy lunch for those who want to participate? I thought it was hilarious that the CGCS luncheon was packed this year compared to any previous year; it only proves that CGCS members love a freebie meal! If the luncheon was important to that crowd, it seems they could afford to buy their own food.



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The same was true for the banquet and show. It had a sponsor and yet I paid \$75 to attend. As near as I can tell, the sponsor bought the booze. Same deal — if you are thirsty or want to get a shine on, pay for it yourself.

The simple objection to sponsorship is that too much is spent on too few for what are clearly marginal purposes. We ought to be able to buy our own food, booze and golf gear.

Beyond that, the trend toward more and more commercialism leaves a bit of a bad taste. Not everything should have a FOR SALE sign hung on it.

Finally, I really don't see the value to manufacturers. Later in the year I am going to quiz 1995 GCSAA conference attendees I know about "who sponsored what?" My bet is most won't remember or care.

The money spent on sponsorship would do more in an expanded research support role, something that would benefit everybody in our profession.

All I ask, however, is that Jacobsen keeps those great freebie hats coming our way each year!

Is Conference Out Of Reach For Too Many?

I don't care how much money you have, \$143 (plus almost another \$20 in taxes, etc) is too much to pay for a single hotel room. But that was the going rate for the headquarters hotel and others like it in San Francisco in February. I doubt it will be better anywhere else very soon. The cost could well be the factor that closes conference down for some GCSAA members in the future. I would be surprised if it wasn't.

The whole scene is expensive — food, transportation, seminars — you name it.

I'll argue until the last word that the experience is worth

what it costs to me and the club I work for. You simply cannot get that kind of information and product exposure anywhere else. If it wasn't worth it, I wouldn't go.

But that doesn't matter much if the employer simply doesn't have the resources to pay what conference cost.

Do I have an answer? No. I have thought about shuttles to and from the hinterlands where the hotels and motels are cheaper. But buses aren't free, and they consume a lot of time in heavy traffic that is inevitable in big American cities where we meet. How sensible is it to spend conference time as a commuter? Not very.

Others have suggested regional GCSAA conferences, but the diversity of the gathering is what makes it such a rare and good experience. You would lose that at regional affairs.

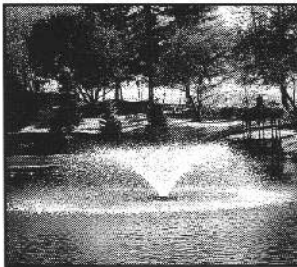
Last year I tried the less expensive hotel on the GCSAA list and it was an unmitigated disaster. Others who did the same experienced the same. This year I accepted only the headquarters hotel to avoid a similar situation.

But there are smarter people than me out there who might have a solution or a series of things that taken together could reduce the cost. It needs to be looked at before the great GCSAA conference is accused of being elitist.

Someone suggested a look at the budget percentage spent on conference this year compared to five years, ten years and twenty years ago to see if costs really have gone up. Good point. And the same individual asked me to explain the record breaking numbers that attended this year's meeting. I cannot do that, either.

But my instinct still tells me that the cost is getting so high that there are those who want and need to go but cannot, just because it costs too much. 🙄

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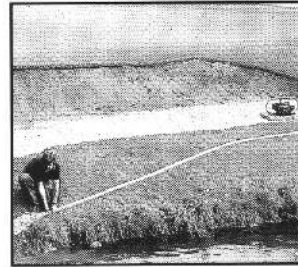
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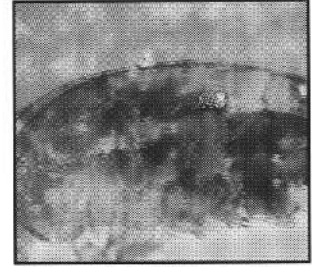
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