

Education Conference and Golf Industry Show

By David Brandenburg, Golf Course Manager, Rolling Meadows Golf Course

The GCSAA Education and Conference and Golf Industry Show (GIS) are in the books and from my prospective and GCSAA's it was a success. The education conference sold 5,272 seats for the 116 paid seminars showing a 13% increase from the 2010 show in San Diego. Attendance between GCSAA and the NGCOA was up 4% with 14,781 and qualified buyers were up 11% to 5,552. I did notice the show floor was busy until the final hour unlike previous years with the three day format when exhibitors could set up bowling alleys in the isles the final afternoon.

The golf industry show is still big but smaller than in the past with 551 exhibitors spread across 180,000 square feet (4 acres) of exhibit space. I do not think the show will ever reach the glory days of 25,000 attendees and 981 exhibitors covering 300,000 square feet (6.8 acres) of trade show space but GCSAA seemed pleased with the numbers given the ever-changing economy.

The Golf Industry Show was created in 2005 in Anaheim when the superintendents (GCSAA) joined up with the golf course owners (NGCOA) to share a trade show while offering independent educational conferences. In 2007 the club managers (CMAA) joined to offer a full spectrum show. The CMAA never quite fit in to the big show due to many of their members having no golf course affiliation and many of their vendors being exclusive to the high end club atmosphere.

The three way marriage was probably doomed from the start but it ended after the 2010 show when GCSAA and

NGCOA cancelled plans to go back to New Orleans in 2012 due to low attendance and member feedback after the 2009 show.

Our relationship with the NGCOA as a partner seems secure although GCSAA is by far the biggest player as far as trade show space, educational offerings and attendance. Other association partners that have joined us include the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA), the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA), the United States Golf Association (USGA), the National Golf Foundation (NGF), the International Golf Course Equipment Managers Association (IGCEMA), and supporting partner the Society of Golf Appraisers (SGA).

The GCSAA Education Conference offered 116 seminars that attendees paid for while included in the conference package were 23 sessions with 79 different topics and 91 expert presenters.

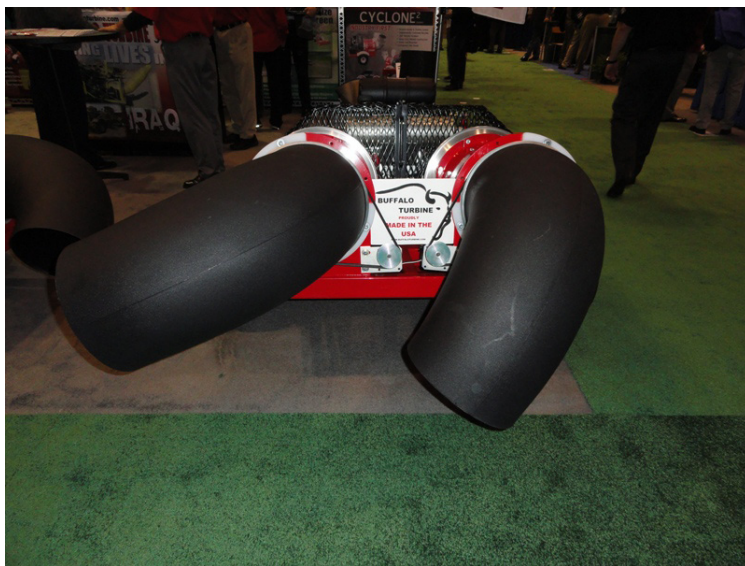
Following is a recap of the sessions I attended and a short take home message from each.

Career Hot Topics with Peggy Greenwell, Accessibility Specialist, US Access Board presenting ADA Accessibility Guidelines and Dr. Sam Sampath, Regional Specialist for the EPA presenting NPDES Pesticide General Permits.

Greenwell discussed how changes to the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) have led to rule changes by the Department of Justice (DOJ) with help from the United States Access Board.



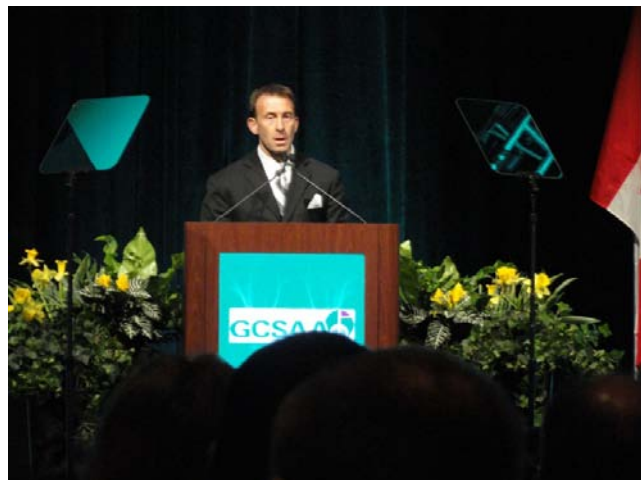
The GIS Hotel Headquarters "The Peabody".



When one blower is just not enough!



Above: Dr. Frank Rossi at The Answers on The Hour



Above: GCSAA CEO Rhett Evans



Above: Pete Meyer from National Golf Graphics talks flags with Colin Seaberg



Above: Old Tom Morris Award Winner Nick Price at Celebrate GCSAA



Outgoing GCSAA President James Fitzroy addresses the membership at Celebrate GCSAA



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Existing facilities are somewhat left alone but new or re-modeled facilities have to follow more stringent guidelines and specifications. Most of the rules for the golf course itself are common sense. For instance if you build a tee complex with multiple tees one tee should be accessible to handicapped golfers. If you build a new rain shelter it should be able to accommodate golf cars and curbed cart paths should have regular access points.

Greenwell used the phrase “readily achievable barrier removal” quite often during her talk. A golf course or any facility open to the public should over time remove any barriers that keep handicapped individuals from using all areas of the facility.

The DOJ has not issued a rule on any requirements for courses to have a single rider golf car or accessibility to sand bunkers but that is expected in time.

Sampath presented information on the Clean Water Act and how it could affect applications of products to bodies of water and their banks. At the time of his talk the final thresholds and rules were still being formulated. Golf Courses could be affected through aquatic weed applications or mosquito control applications. The proposed 20 acre threshold for aquatic applications or 20 miles of bank seem like a lot but multiple applications to the same property count as a total not individual thresholds. For example 4 treatments to a 5 acre pond or 1 application to a 20 acre pond are the same and both reach the proposed threshold.

From these two speakers it was clear government is huge and it takes years and many fingers to make rules to go along with the laws that are passed. The old School House Rock episode on how a bill becomes a law oversimplifies the process quite a bit. Members will need to consider these two developing issues when considering changes to their facilities.

Exploring Golf's Carbon Footprint: Part 2 with Dr. James Baird, University of California – Riverside, Andrew Staples, President of Golf Resources Group and David Miller, Iowa Farm Bureau.

Dr. Baird's presentation “Update on Carbon Sequestration Science” started with climatic information showing the planet is warming up followed by how little affect humans have on greenhouse gases. There is a need for more research but golf courses seem to sequester more carbon than we produce through the use of inputs and fuel usage. Different varieties and species sequester carbon at different

rates and surprisingly there is a limit to how much carbon can be sequestered in a turf stand.

Andrew Staples's talk “The Top Ten Things a Turf Manager Should Know to Reduce Energy and Carbon” gave a insightful look into using less electricity, fossil fuels, manpower and water to save budget dollars and reduce a facilities impact on the environment.

David Miller topic “U.S. Carbon Markets Status and Opportunities” covered the possibility of selling carbon credits on the open market to companies that produce excess carbon. Because individual golf courses or farms do not produce a lot of credits on their own they join co-ops to aggregate

their credits into amounts that could be sold on the open market. In the end without the passage of “Cap and Trade” legislation there is not a market for carbon credits at this time.

For the agriculture in-

dustry the vehicle is there when the market returns however the golf industry will need to do some further research and third party verifications before golf can enter the carbon market.

Miller left the group with two quotes; “For society as a whole, there is a very strong correlation between energy use and standard of living. Energy makes manual labor more efficient.” And “For society to prosper, it must grow. The debate cannot become one of maintaining the status quo with less. It must be a debate about how to do more in environmentally and efficient ways.”

The Innovative Superintendent: Cutting Edge Ideas From Your Peers is a favorite of mine each year as all the presentations are from current or former golf course superintendents.

Michael Jones, CGCS, Effingham Country Club presented “Budget Presentation: Successfully Communicating Your Plan” and how to use spreadsheets, time study information, maintenance standards and equipment inventory to justify your budget request to the decision makers. Jones uses a short but effective bound document to present his budget with all the information the board needs.

Anthony Williams, CGCS, Stone Mountain Golf Course gave “Grow Where You Are Planted” a talk on doing the best you can at your current job. By using your abilities to influence people, programs, profit and personal legacy at your club you will maximize your potential and enjoy your position as much as possible.

“For society to prosper, it must grow. The debate cannot become one of maintaining the status quo with less. It must be a debate about how to do more in environmentally and efficient ways.” David Miller, Iowa Farm Bureau



UW-Madison Turf Club Members Jens Arnsen, Dustin Bernau and Joe Betcher man the booth at GIS



Jaime Staufenbeil and Tisa Overman work the Milorganite Booth at GIS.



This Model F3 Mete-R-Matic Topdresser was sold to Christina Lake Golf Course, Grand Forks B.C. in 1962 and used until 1987 when it was traded in.

Chris Sorrell, GCS, Eagles Ridge Golf Club presented “Doing The Most With The Little You Have” and how he has provided the club with good playing conditions on a small budget in a area of low population. With a total 2010 budget of 111,087.68 for a 18 hole golf course including labor Chris stressed the importance of planning, bidding, budgeting and staff relationships to succeed with the tools he has. Sorrell does have the benefit of regular winds that reduce turf wetness and the need for fungicides. He also brews a compost tea to apply to putting greens to decrease fertilizer and fungicide applications.

Jeff VerCautren, GCS, Rich Harvest Farms gave “Training for the Long Term Employee” and how to hire, train and enrich golf course staff members to enjoy



The idea for the “Vanherraker” came to Jim VanHerwynen in a dream after a day working on spring willow debris cleanup by hand.

their positions while doing exceptional work.

Terry Buchen, CGCS Retired, Golf Agronomy International presented “Travels with Terry: Ideas for Equipment Modification” taken after his regular feature in Golf Course Industry Magazine on how individual golf course mechanics and superintendents have produced low cost modifications to current equipment. Terry’s features gave those in attendance some great ideas to take home including one from James VanHerwynen, CGCS at South Hills Country Club in Fond du Lac showing a modification to the front blade on a sand trap rake to mount leaf rakes to speed up spring cleanup of tree debris. The crew has named the unit the “Vanherraker. (see picture above)

I skipped the annual Chapter Editors Session to sign up for *Golf Turf PTI (Professional Turfgrass Intelligence)* modeled after ESPN's *Pardon The Interruption* and presented by Dr. Frank Rossi, Cornell University and Dr. Roch Gaussoin, University of Nebraska. I had high expectations and was not disappointed and these two leaders in turf taught, argued, entertained, shocked and gave us plenty to think about.

They covered thatch, aerification, soil testing, foliar feeding, bio nutrition and hair gel preferences. I would recommend this seminar as a must see and it gives turf managers plenty to think about the necessity of many traditional activities and how we may be better off returning to the basics. My notes taken a bit out of context include "roots are overrated", "Regular soil tests are not needed", "no more Potassium applications" and "pulling cores increases organic matter".

Answers On The Hour were short presentations given on the trade show floor. They not only gave some great information it provided tired attendees some time to rest their feet! I sat in on a couple of the sessions and they were worth the time away from product research.

"The Razors Edge: Lessons Learned from the 2010 Growing Season" with Dr. Frank Rossi brought a standing room only crowd as he discussed the challenges of the last year with weather stresses challenging turf managers. Frank felt most of the problems in the north were because superintendents are overall poor users of irrigation systems. We usually have regular rain so our systems are inefficient and "we suck at watering" because we usually have a lot of room for error. Irrigation audits are a must so turf managers no how much water they are applying across the property. Frank felt we needed to use more acidifying fertilizers with ammonium sulfate and iron sulfate as a part of our programs for good low cost results.

He finished with a discussion on the topic of less is more and environmental sustainability will lead to browner golf course conditions. His opinion differed with many as he expressed "For golfers to expect lower quality conditions is stupid". We as turf managers need to get better with the tools we have and use fewer inputs to provide quality conditions in order to attract and keep customers.

The Golf Course Builders Association of America presented "Estimating Costs for Golf Course Construction Projects" and gave attendees insight into how to budget for projects. One challenge they face is golf course managers and owners often want to buy materials themselves at a lower price but often underestimate transportation, unloading and storage costs and hassles along with the loss of soil materials from settling and contamination.

The Society of Golf Course Appraisers gave a frightening presentation titled "Recovering from the Great Recession". I say frightening because after they discussed ways to do more with less and help your clubs recover economically they laid the reality of the golf business on the line with one statement. Over the next three years 8,000 golf course mortgages with 5 to 10 year balloon payments will come due. These loans total in the hundreds of billions and lenders are very skeptical about golf course loans. The bright side is if you have cash to buy a golf course, there will be plenty for sale.

The society suggested golf courses work closely with their current loan provider to try and extend terms or lower interest rates before the course has major problems.

Cheers, Tears and Fears: Hosting a Major Golf Championship was moderated by Ron Whitten, Senior Editor for Golf Digest and featured panelists Mike Davis, Senior Director of Rules and Competitions for the USGA, (Mike Davis was selected to serve as the 7th Executive Director of the USGA on March 2) Stan George, CGCS, Prairie Dunes Country Club, Matt Shaffer, Director of Golf Course Operations, Merion Golf Club and Tom Roy, Executive Producer for NBC Sports. The group highlighted the challenges and benefits of preparing for a major golf championship including how to provide firm and fast conditions. Merion Golf Club offers those conditions all year long, while Prairie Dunes is more of a family club so they increase their tournament conditions for major events.

The USGA Green Section ever popular session titled *Lessons Learned Come In All Forms* highlighted lessons learned by the agronomists traveling visiting golf courses each year. The 9 talks and the highlights from USGA Green Section Award Winner Dennis Lyon will be presented in a future *USGA Green Section Record* e-newsletter.



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The final session of the 2011 GCSAA Education Conference was the exciting *You Asked For It... You Got It* on Friday afternoon. By then many of the attendees were headed home but Wisconsin was well represented by Tod Blankenship, Jerry Kershasky, Steven Schmidt and yours truly to "close the show". This session speakers and topics are picked by GCSAA members during the season leading to timely information.

Dr. Mike Richardson, University of Arkansas started with "Surviving Weather Extremes of Heat and Humidity" as he discussed how the extremes affected photosynthesis and respiration of cool season turfgrasses. Turf managers need to carefully monitor fertility, moisture and perform proper cultivation during stressful times.

Bob Oppold, Vice President, International Sports Turf Research Center presented "Water Problems? Spot Drainage May Be For You" as he discussed how to improve problem drainage areas temporarily without severe damage to the playing surface. Bob presented 4 case studies and the investigation to find the cause of the drainage problem and the solution to fix it.

Dr. Zac Reicher, University of Nebraska gave "Poa Trivialis: Where Does it Come From and How to Control It." This pesky plant is a contaminant in seed fields after being grown for winter overseeding in the south. This weak perennial outgrows other cool season grasses in the spring and fall but goes dormant or dead in the heat of August before re-growing in September from crowns and stolens. Reicher's research

has shown the use of Velocity and Certainty can control and eventually eliminate the Poa Trivialis in bentgrass fairways. In bluegrass fairways control can be tricky as the products can damage the desired species under some conditions.

Mark Esoda, CGCS Atlanta Country Club presented "Communication Techniques for Exceeding Expectations While Managing a Budget" and not how to do more with less, but how to do less with less but to do so "strategically". Esoda suggested turf managers use Blogs, Twitter, Facebook or simple e-mail to communicate regularly with members and decision makers.



PGA Golfer Larry Nelson addresses the Prayer Breakfast

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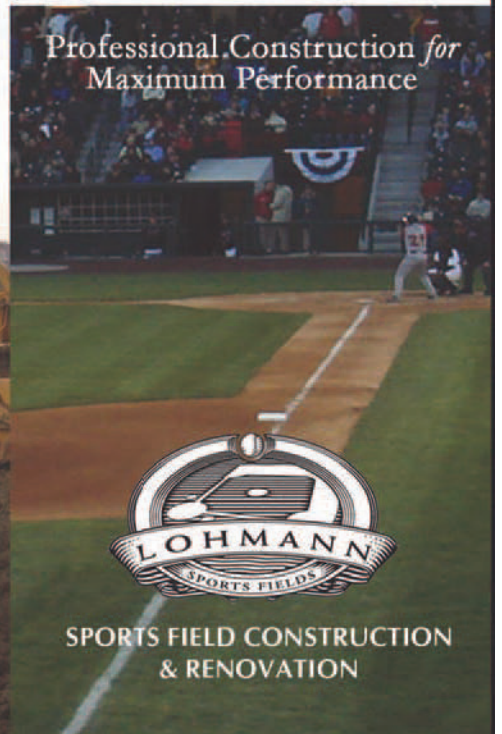
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Dr. Cale Bigelow, Purdue University presented “Understanding Nutrient Fate” and how the 17 elements needed for plant growth interact with the environment. Public perception is that turfgrass is a major contributor to declining water quality and weather that is right or wrong perceptions are reality for many outside the golf industry. Cale discussed the nutrient runoff and leaching studies they are doing at Purdue and how nutrients applied in the proper amounts move very little above or underground. The key is to maintain a healthy turf stand and apply only the nutrients needed to maintain that stand with a thorough understanding of your soil tests and plant needs.

The show is a great place for “rubbernecking” or listening to and meeting stars of the game. Celebrate GCSAA featured awards given by GCSAA and finished with Nick Price winner of the Old Tom Morris Award. The award given to an individual who “through a continuing lifetime commitment to the game of golf has helped to mold the welfare of the game in a manner and style exemplified by Old Tom Morris.” Morris (1821-1908) was greenkeeper and golf professional at the St. Andrews Links Trust Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scotland; a four-time winner of the British Open (1861, ‘62, ‘64 and ‘67); and ranked as one of the top links designers of the 19th century.

Price, who is from Zimbabwe and lives in Hobe Sound, Fla., has won three majors and finished second in two others. He has three victories on the Champions to go with 18 PGA Tour wins and 24 international wins. Between 1992 and 1994, Price won 16 of the 54 tournaments he played in worldwide, the victories including the 1992 PGA Championship, 1993 Players Championship, and both the British Open and PGA Championship in 1994.

Price’s talk was filled with humor from stories from the game and he offered his opinion on golf course conditioning. “Golf is not a game of perfect” he said and we need to get back to skinny lies, bounces and firm conditions so the ball releases through the dry months.

Wednesdays General Session featured 2010 Old Tom Morris Award Winner Judy Rankin. Rankin had to cancel her visit to the show last year when a family emergency arose. Rankin won the 1959 Missouri Amateur at age 14 and finished as the low amateur in the 1960 U.S. Women’s Open at age 15. She turned pro in 1962 at age 17 and accumulated 28 professional wins, including 26 LPGA tour victories. Rankin finished in the top ten on the money list 11 times between 1965 and 1979 but was

forced to retire from full-time competition at the age of 38 due to chronic back problems. She then embarked on a highly successful career as a golf commentator for ABC and ESPN, which included being the first woman to work full-time on broadcasts of men’s events. She captained the victorious American teams in the 1996 and 1998 Solheim Cups. Rankin became the first player voted into the LPGA Tour Hall of Fame in 2000 under the veteran’s category.

She has won awards from every major golf association including the USGA Bob Jones Award, the Patty Berg award from the LPGA, The First Lady in Golf Award from the PGA of America and was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 2000.

Rankin received an immediate applause when she

stated I am one of the few professional golfers who does not consider themselves an architect. Rankin described what she called the “simple joy of hitting balls at a facility” and thought

courses should “have more respect for the nine-hole golfer”.

Thursdays General Session featured Pat Williams, Senior Vice President and co-founder of the Orlando Magic. The author of 40 books and a 7 year veteran of the United States Army, Williams is considered a top motivational speaker. He and his wife are the parents of 19 children including 14 adopted who range in age from 20 to 34.

Williams discussed the importance of leadership and how some leaders are born but most are made. He stressed the importance of continuing education and to never be satisfied in your knowledge of leadership and/or your profession and hobbies. He thought the best way to exercise and expand your mind was by reading.

The Prayer Breakfast is one of the earliest sessions of the week but well worth the wake up call to share breakfast, music, scripture, camaraderie and to hear a fabulous speaker. PGA Golfer Larry Nelson joined and entertained us this year as he discussed his career in the golf and his journey with Christ.

Nelson did not take up the game until he was 21 after he returned home from Vietnam and said he taught himself golf by reading *Ben Hogan’s Five Lessons: The Modern Fundamentals of Golf*. It must have been a good book as he broke 100 the first time he played and 70 within nine months. Along with his stories from the tour he discussed how although he and his family were regular church goers he had to grow his relationship with God. “Going to church does not make you a Christian any more than standing in your garage makes you a car”.

“Golf is Not A Game Of Perfect”
Nick Price

That is what I saw for the week and when you consider I attended 1 of 116 paid seminars and a quarter of the general sessions the GCSAA Educational Conference offers something for everyone. Power points from many of the seminars can be found on the GCSAA website along with video reports and interviews from the show floor.

Congratulations to the team from University of Wisconsin-Madison took 8th place in the 17th annual Collegiate Turf Bowl Competition won by Iowa State University. The event included 320 students forming 87 teams from 39 colleges and universities. The top ten include Iowa winning for the 11th time in 13 years followed by Purdue (2nd), Massachusetts (3rd), Penn State (4th and 7th), Ohio State (5th), Cal Poly Pomona (6th), Wisconsin (8th), Virginia Tech (9th) and Colorado State (10th).

Congratulations to Tod Blankenship who recently moved back to the badger state to become the Certified Golf Course Superintendent at Trappers Turn Golf Course, for receiving a Watson Fellowship Grant. Blankenship joined Emily Merewitz and Alexander Putman in receiving \$5,000 postgraduate grants by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) as winners of the 2010 Watson Fellowship Program. Blankenship is working toward a master's degree at Oregon State University, Merewitz is pursuing a doctorate degree at Rutgers University, and Putman is a graduate student at North Carolina State University.

The Watson Fellowship is funded by a partnership between The Toro Co. and The Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG). It is named after James R. Watson, Ph.D., a retired vice president for Toro who pioneered turfgrass research. The winners, students working toward postgraduate degrees, have been identified as promising future teachers and researchers in the field of golf course management. They also received an all-expense paid trip to the 2011 GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show.

Congratulation goes out to Derek Kastenschmidt of Reinders for receiving the 2010 Toro Commercial Equipment Master Salesperson award. Toro has an annual awards presentation and Derek had no idea he was the recipient or that his wife Shelly and family were secretly flown to Orlando until his wife walked on stage as they

read the persons past several years accomplishments. Needless to say, Derek and the entire Reinders team were very surprised and excited to see this unfold and hear Derek's name announced.

Derek is a 1992 graduate of Michigan State University where he received his degree in Turfgrass Management. He began his sales career in November of 1992 and has been a sales representative for Reinders since 1998. He received Toro's Green Jacket award in 2002 and is a certified professional sales representative from Sales Marketing Executives International.

Congratulations to UW-Madison student Glen Obear for winning the GCSAA Scholars Program. Obear from Sheboygan was selected as the first place winner and is named the Mendenhall Award Winner. He received a \$6,000 scholarship.

The GCSAA Scholars Program, funded by the Robert Trent Jones Endowment, was developed to recognize outstanding students planning careers in golf course management. Winners were selected to receive scholarship awards based on the final ranking in a competition judged by GCSAA's Scholarship Committee. Factors considered were academic achievement, potential to become a leading professional, employment history, extracurricular activities, and recommendations from a superintendent with whom the student has worked and a current academic advisor.

The Mendenhall Award is given in memory of the late Chet Mendenhall, a pioneer in the golf course management industry. A native of Kingman, Kan., Mendenhall's upbringing on an Oklahoma farm served him well. His career in working with the land began in 1920 as an employee of the Wichita (Kan.) Parks and Forestry Department, where he designed and built his first course despite having no previous experience with the game.



Toro Master Salesman Award Ceremony:
From Left to Right Jim Heinze, Derek Kastenschmidt, Shelly Kastenschmidt, Darren Redetzke, Peter Whitacre, Dale Getz

Celebrate Certification allowed certified superintendents to gather for recognition, lunch and networking. Wisconsin's Rod Johnson received his 25 year plaque for renewing his certification 5 times. Ron Whitten, Senior Architectural Editor For Golf Digest was the guest speaker. Ron brings a unique background a former attorney turned architectural expert. He joined Dr. Michael Hurdzan and Dana Fry in designing Erin Hills near Hartford.

The GCSAA National Championship and Golf Classic were held at PGA National in Palm Beach, FL February 5 and 6 with a mixer bestball the day before. The Championship was played on the National Course was won by David Brown of Flatirons Golf Club in Boulder, CO. Scott Bushman led Wisconsin with a tie for 53rd place in the Championship.

In the Golf Classic played on the PGA National Haig and Palmer Courses leaders from Wisconsin included Steve Schmidt at Butte Des Morts Country Club with a 11th place in the Div 1 Senior Gross and Tom Wentz of Lebanon with a 12th place in the Affiliate Gross.

The GCSAA Championship is a great way to get away for a couple days of relaxation and competition before the

show. GCSAA offers the National Championship and the Golf Classic for serious and serious but fun competition respectively.

I thought the week was a great opportunity and if I had any negative observations it would be the hockey game next to the Answers on The Hour sessions was a noise distraction and for some of the speakers they clearly needed more seating. The other problem I noticed was the educational conference had two programs or guides available. The 1/3 width program is convenient to carry but did not include the names of speakers and topics of some of the free educational sessions leading to less attendance at those events. The full width program was harder to carry but included everything, but why would you carry two programs? Many attendees only grabbed the smaller incomplete program guide. Next year GCSAA should just provide one program and include all the information in it.

Next years GCSAA Conference will be Las Vegas Feb. 27 to March 2 with the Golf Industry Show Feb. 29 to March 1, at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Bring your nickels and enjoy the hustle and bustle of the strip.



25 Year Certification Class: Rod Johnson, CGCS at Pine Hills Country Club is back row, third from left.



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