

## 2014 Golf Industry Show

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

The 2014 Golf Industry Show is over and the numbers have been tallied. Total attendance was 14, 147 up 8% over the 2013 show. 6,845 qualified buyers (up 14%) were at the trade show and enjoyed 184,500 square feet of exhibit space. The 561 exhibitors showcasing their products was a increase of 9% from 2013.

The Golf Industry Show is presented by the GCSAA and the National Golf Course Owners Association with participating partners –

- \* American Society of Golf Course Architects
- \* Golf Course Builders Association of America
- \* United States Golf Association
- \* National Golf Foundation
- \* International Golf Course Equipment Managers Association
- \* Society of Golf Appraisers

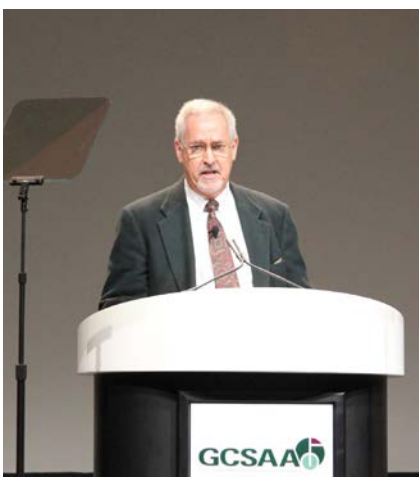
Orlando has been a popular site for the golf show and attendance usually is good due the central location, usual good weather and plenty of activities for families before or after the show. As a late registrant I had limited flight choices so I went a day early and arrived late Saturday, spent some time arguing with my gps to the actual location of my hotel south on International Drive.

Sunday I got in 18 holes of golf before watching the Super Bowl from Senor Frogs.

I left my hotel early on Monday morning but I forgot how much traffic there is on International Drive and how large the Orlando convention center is. After I got to the parking lot I still had a 20 minute hike to get from my car to the registration booth to get my badge before going back upstairs to get to the Turfgrass Talk Show.



**Outgoing President Pat Finlen addresses the crowd. Finlen was recently named the general manager of the 45 hole Olympic Club after serving as director of golf maintenance operations for 12 years.**



**2014 Colonel John Morley Distinguished Service Awards were given to (from left to right) Dr. S. Bruce Martin, Clemson University, Dr. Bruce Clarke, Rutgers University and former GCSAA President Stephen Cadenelli.**



Rod Johnson and Paul Bastron in the Wee One booth showing off a donation for \$8,000 through Syngenta.

Representatives visited the tee of a golf course and in the "Spirit of Giving" gave golfers \$20. Golfers were then offered to keep the money or give it to the Wee One where it would be increased 10 times the amount by Syngenta.

Every player gave back the \$20 and many gave more out of their own pocket.

The Wee One Foundation assists golf course management professionals who have overwhelming expenses from medical hardship.



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February 5th - Orlando, FL



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I say it every year but I will say it again that I am a education junkie and if there is a session going on I am usually there. If it is my money or my employers I want to make sure I get all I can out of the show for my investment of time and travel.

I missed not seeing Jerry Kershasky in most of the sessions with me this year. If you missed the show or need to update your notes some of the presentations are online at the GCSAA website.

The Turfgrass Talk Show offers a mix of music, humor and education. The session was once again hosted by Dr. Nikolai from Michigan State and Dr. David Kopec, from the University of Arizona.

My two take home messages from this talk were 'Solution to pollution is dilution!' In other words topdress more and core if you have layers. The second is topdressing fairways is out of the price and time bracket for a daily fee course but we sure could use it.

The Time to Talk Business: Communication and Leadership Skills for Superintendent Success featured 3 superintendents. Chris Carson of Echo Lake Country Club

in New Jersey discussed budget communication. He reminded the audience often superintendents are professionals working with amateurs in our field. In other words we need to use basic terms and subtle ways to teach club decision makers what we need. Pictures do a good job telling the story but remember to lay the groundwork for capital projects and purchases rather than waiting for budget time.

Nick Janovich of Oglebay Resort and Conference Center discussed project planning and staying on time targets by preparing with formal project time lines that break each step into tasks.

The session ended with Tyler Bloom, assistant superintendent at Sunnybrook Golf Club in Pennsylvania discussing how to stand out in today's economy as a individual.

Branding is important for individuals as it is for companies. Superintendents need a philosophy and then build on that through communication and education. Tyler warned to keep your emotions out of your social media posts because nothing is private or erasable.

In the afternoon I attended the Career Hot Topics session featuring talks on using technology not only to find a job but keep your job by being more efficient and professional.

Megan Winter an attorney with Fisher & Phillips, LLP discussed keeping your online profile clean because items are out there forever. She suggested we 'Google' ourselves to see what is out there and use services like reputation.com to clean your online profile if needed. She added rest assured employers are looking up your profile.

I finished my day by attending a session on Innovative "Green" Maintenance Facilities. Debra Swartz discussed how spills or leaking drains or spills can contaminate groundwater a long ways from the spill site. Matt Schafer presented the new sod roof maintenance facility at Merion Country Club and Josh Heptig discussed how composting has reduced 27,000 pounds of food waste going to landfills at his club in California.

Tuesday morning the traffic was worse so I was in the standing room only seats at a very packed Innovative Superintendents Session.

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It was great to see the room full and the 5 superintendent members did a great job. The industries leader in digital technology Bob Porter was a fill in and did a great job describing applications such as skitch, photo grid, evernote and keynote to help us quickly organize our lives and communicate with members and decision makers.

Lee Mclemore of the Country Club of Birmingham presented "Don't Fear The Test". He urged turf mangers to use test plots to see how products work on your golf course. Or to offer space to universities, chemical companies and distributors to try new products.

Lee then switched to the tests many guys who think they are invincible often skip such as PSA, prostate, blood glucose and lipids, colonoscopy and skin cancer.

Dean Pillar from Cordova Bay Golf Club

in British Columbia discussed how he has come to know the full ecosystem on his golf course after not using insecticides or aquatic herbicides since 1996.

In both cases it seemed to take 3 years of headaches to reach a natural balance and be cautious when introducing new species to your system.

Chris Tritabaugh from Hazeltine National Golf Club presented his work culturally favoring bentgrass by keeping the turf dry but healthy while giving the bent enough nutrition. Hazeltine's fairways were killed off and overseeded in 2010 and Chris started in 2013. Coming from a older course Chris found the new seeded bents were much better at competing with the poa annua.

The final speaker was Chris Thuer from Bear Slide Golf Club discussing his clubs

efforst to attract junior golfers. Through reduced junior rates and using the US Kids recommended yardages for tees the number of junior rounds has climbed each year at Bear Slide.

My next session was called Managing Golf Course Operations In A New Age and was described as being how multi course operators (management companies) operate efficiently and successfully.

It was my the one disappointing session for me because it turned out to be a talk on how management companies are good and why course management chooses to use them.

With 20% of clubs managed by mullti-course operators it can be a system to save some clubs. The best take home point was pools are a horrible investment for northern clubs.



**A packed room at the innovative superintendent session on Tuesday morning.**



**The Golf Channels Kelly Tillman interviews Old Tom Morris award winner Annika Sorenstam.**



**Ray McElroy former cornerback for the Lions, Bears and Colts and is the former Chaplain for the Bears addressed the Prayer Breakfast.**



**USGA Green Section Director of Education Jim Moore discussed water use and pace of play problems in golf.**



The session was informative, just not for me in my current position. They did discuss the difficulty of making real change at equity clubs where ego's get in the way of good fiscal decision making. Working for a management company is not for everyone but those who embrace enjoy it and often have avenues to advance their careers.

After lunch I attended the Chapter Editors Session with Brett Grams. Cliff Haka, Director of the Michigan State Library where the Turfgrass Information File is housed discussed their progress in hosting the pictures from O. J. Noer. To date they have 12,900 mainly from 1938-1976 online and searchable by city and date.

It is quite an undertaking and well worth your time to go look at some of the amazing pictures. Who knows you may find your course or an ancestor. If you do not know every past issue of *The Grass Roots* is there and searchable by author, topic or keyword. It is a great benefit for WGCSA and GCSAA members to use the library for free.

Then the GCSAA staff discussed the recent makeover of *Golf Course Management*

magazine and the hows and whys of giving a publication a new look.

The opening night celebration was smaller but still fun to network and see many old friends just without the speeches and presentations.

Wednesday morning started with the opening session hosted by President Pat Finlen and the presentation of the Old Tom Morris award to Annika Sorenstam.

It also included presentation of awards for the golf tournament, Leo Feser Award, Excellence in Government Relations, Environmental Leaders in Golf, Environmental Stewardship and the Colonel John Morley Distinguished Service Awards to Dr. Bruce Clark, Dr. S. Bruce Martin, Stephen Cadenelli and Frank Lamphier.

It was a good presentation and Annika was great but since it goes to 9:30 and the trade show opens at 9:00 it made for some disruption as some people had to leave early. It also left a challenge for those who stayed to get the best giveaways at the opening of the show. I was fortunate to get my Jacobsen hat but missed out on the Toro 100th anniversary hat. I am hoping a

certain salesman comes through with one sometime this season.

There is not room to cover all the education from the show floor but all of the half hour sessions I attended were great quick and informative. Dr. Rossi continues to be the industry "Rock Star" and pulls them in with standing room only crowds.

My goals on the show floor were to research new point of sale systems as we look to move from Fore Reservations, find a herbicide to better control milkweed and thistle in our natural areas and look for new and improved fungicides and fertilizer formulations to do more with less.

I was so busy Wednesday I found myself halfway through eating my trade show sandwich when I realized I skipped the certification lunch and ceremony. Wisconsin does have 2 members with over 30 years of certification with Douglas DeVries and Randy Witt. With over 25 years is Chad Ball, Rod Johnson, Mark Kienert, Joe Kuta, Steve Van Acker and Bruce Worzella.

This is the first year in my memory our association did not have any newly certified members.



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My Thursday started with the Prayer Breakfast and words of wisdom and faith from former NFL player Ray McElroy.

Then the USGA General Session featured talks on technology, slow play and water use followed by a open question forum.

Southeast Region Agronomist Chris Hartwiger summed it up by saying golf should be fast friendly and fun.

The slow play discussion concentrated on overloading golf courses with tee times too close together and how to soften some courses with wider corridors and shorter rough to help the high handicap players.

The USGA is also doing research by giving players small GPS units and tracking every path they take through the golf course to allow operators to focus on those areas more than un-played areas. The work is being done

by interns around the county.

Another day on the trade show floor meeting with vendors and taking in short education sessions.

The GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show ended with the Closing Session with introductions of the new board, turf bowl winners and closed with a great show by comedian Bill Engvall.

In my opinion the new diet GIS was a great experience. I missed a few things but at the same time a 4 day show was nice and allowed for easy travel and less time away from home and work.

Next year the show heads to San Antonio. If you have never been to the conference I would highly recommend it as a great educational and networking opportunity. Now I just need to find my boots and polish my spurs! ✓



**Comedian Bill Engvall had the audience in tears at the closing session.**



**This Nature Calls Port-a-potty blends in and is large enough to be handicap accessible.**



**This bus stop looking shelter is a good easy to build golf course shelter.**



**Director of Michigan State Libraries Cliff Haka addressed the Chapter Editors Session.**



**The 1940 Toro 76" Professional Mower was on hand to showcase Toro's 100 year anniversary.**



**The 1954 E-Z Go golf cart helped modernize the game.**

## FUTURE GIS SITES

**2015 – San Antonio, TX, Henry B Gonzales Convention Ctr (Feb21-26)**

**2016 – San Diego, CA, San Diego Convention Center**

**2017 – Orlando, FL, Orange County Convention Center**

**2018 – San Antonio, TX, Henry B Gonzales Convention Ctr**

**2019 – San Diego, CA San Diego Convention Center**