

weeding. Roadside stands offered spectacular fruit at bargain prices. Nowadays it is completely filled in with development, including Disney's California Adventure, which is nearly the size of the original Disney park.

The last time we convened in Anaheim, crime was taking over the area. GCSAA offered warnings and suggested people walk in groups and

never alone. Graffiti was everywhere and the atmosphere was threatening, giving one the feeling of New Orleans or Atlanta or Houston. No more! Visitors pretty much are safe in the convention/Disney areas, although not many blocks west were some rough looking ghettos.

The pre conference seminars offer a varied menu to choose from and I couldn't resist enrolling in a

first-time seminar taught by Frank Rossi and Jeff Carlson. Of course everyone in Wisconsin knows Frank from his time on the UW - Madison faculty. Jeff Carlson has been a Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium speaker twice, if my memory serves me correctly. He currently is the golf course superintendent at the Vineyard Club on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. They co-taught a course titled "Organic Golf Course Management." I would summarize it by saying there are no easy answers on the subject, but they did a superb job of presenting what is known.

Per usual, I participated in a chapter editor's event. I have made a lot of friends over the years in this position of editor and I get to see them once a year at conference. The publication landscape has changed a lot over the years, but the friendships remain. A certain kind of personality seems attracted to the task, which has added to the enjoyment for me.

Wednesday night was a hoot! Syngenta invited us to their annual reception. This year it was held at the new Disney California Adventure. They took over the place, lined the streets with hors de oeuvre stations and invited everyone into the Hyperion Theater to hear Joe Theisman speak. I have never been a fan of big Joe, but I am now. He was entertaining, friendly,



The SFGC also was in prime golf condition.



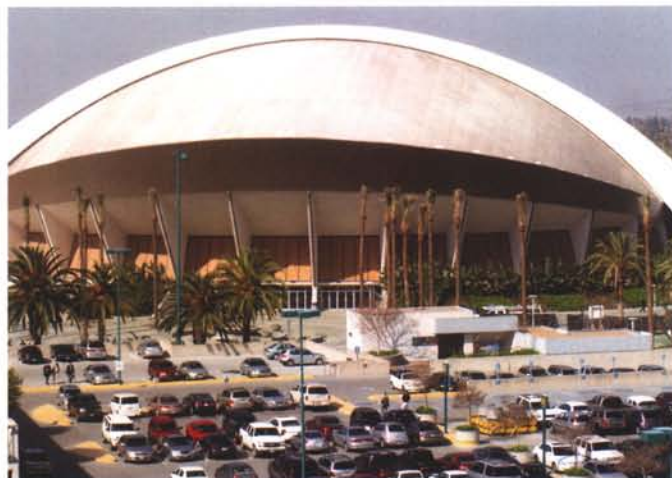
Alcatraz, a well known San Francisco landmark.



The Golden Gate Bridge is among the most recognized in the world.




The California Adventure Park is the same size as Disney Land.



The old part of the Anaheim Convention Center.

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California Adventure and Disney Hotels in the background.



The main road separating the convention center from Disney has a distinct tropical look.

engaging and informative. Initially I was disappointed not to have a member of the golf community as a guest, but since most of us in Wisconsin are football fans, listening to a Hall of Famer was pretty good.


Johnny Miller was the keynote speaker on Thursday morning and I hauled my Johnny Miller books with me to conference in hopes of getting them autographed. Steve Mona was at the GCSAA tournament, so I left a note for him asking for assistance in accomplishing my mission. Then I spoke with Jeff Bollig, GCSAA's director of communications. I asked him about the possibility of getting Miller to sign my books and Jeff replied, "Sure. Be at room 303 at 8:15 a.m. Thursday and I guarantee you he will autograph your books."

So I was there, before 8:00 a.m. And sure enough, before anyone else was round, up the escalator came Johnny Miller and Steve Mona, just back from breakfast. Steve and I shook hands, he introduced me to Johnny, and Johnny was more than happy to autograph the books.


"Absolutely," came the easy and friendly reply. "Let's sit down at that table." So we did. We visited for between five and 10 minutes and I immediately became a loyal JM fan!

The opening session may have

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been the best I have attended in 35 GCSAA conferences. There has been less, in recent years, of the ceremonial business. Key people are appropriately introduced and then they leave the stage. It moves along nicely, which is what most people in the audience want.

Sean Hoolehan, GCSAA president, works for an American Indian tribe in Oregon. I got to know him through our mutual membership on a GCSAA committee a few years ago and I enjoyed listening to his experiences in such a setting. Members of the tribe who own the course he manages offered the invocation. It was fascinating! I believe that everyone in attendance shared that emotion.

Presentation of the Old Tom Morris Award always draws people to the opening session. The 2007 recipient was Charles Sifford, an early black player on the PGA tour. Charles, a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame, is an old man now who was a pioneer in his time. After he accepted the award he talked on for 15 or 20 minutes and had thousands in the palm of his hand! He was an excellent choice to receive our highest award.

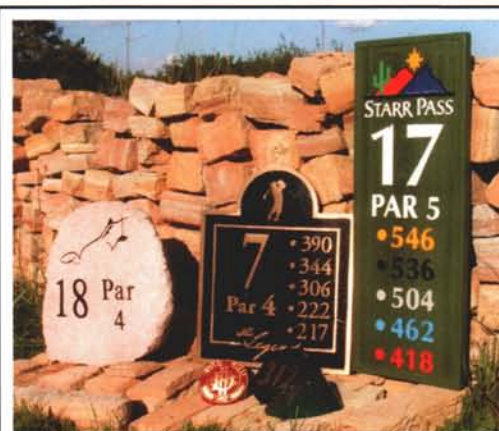
And then Johnny Miller spoke. It was an outstanding presentation, in my view. Lots of guys don't care for him because of comments he has made on television broadcasts of golf tournaments. I am now thinking that he just knows an awful lot about the details of the game and golf courses and is a brutally honest commentator. He is also a devoted father and grandfather (six kids and 15 grandkids) and husband. His religion is important to him and he has lived a clean and moral life. In the context of professional sports, he is a rare bird anymore.

After his comments, Johnny received a standing ovation, which was well deserved. After the Opening Session I trucked down to

the show floor to get a Jacobsen hat (my collection has one from every year starting with 1973) and on my way out I ran into Sean Hoolehan and – you guessed it! – Charles Sifford. I asked Charlie if he would sign my program and he did. I will put that inside his book "I Just Want to Play" in my library. It was all powerful stuff that morning.



Keynote speaker Johnny Miller.



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Joe Theisman was a guest of Syngenta.



Theisman appeared on the stage of the Hyperion Theater.



The Syngenta reception in California Adventure Park was great fun.



Naive Americans offered the invocation for the Opening Session.



This year bunker construction was feature, from start to...

By now it was Thursday noon and the thought that conference and show would be over in a couple of days crept over me, along with the melancholy that goes with that thought. I have loved attending conference every year and after this one, I will get to go to one more, at least as a golf course superintendent. There is a lot of pride in the show event – there is nothing in the golf world like it. I may as well come right out with what I have concluded about our show, and it is OUR show despite the moniker GIS. I actually think it is sad that a show we started and supported for decades now doesn't even have our name on it. No one understands or appreciates the need to change and move on more than I do, but this change is one I absolutely do not like. There are some GCSAA members who have even become resentful of the intrusion on our show. There isn't anything wrong with saying I do not like walking out of the Jacobsen dis-



...finish!

play and the latest in grass machinery and finding myself next to pots and pans peddlers. I do not like walking past scores and scores of booths that have nothing to do with my business, only to find a supplier I deal with in the middle of that.

Honestly, I am just kind of disappointed with it. Why not partition all of those exhibitors for CMAA at one end, all together, and keep our exhibitors by themselves where they are easily accessible by their GCSAA

customers? From an attendee's point of view, I cannot think of anything I like about the convergence of CMAA and our show. I won't deny that there are likely efficiencies involved - exhibitors are bound to spend less going to one show rather than two or three. But we should still at least have our name on it - that is a simple matter of pride and tradition - and we should control the floor plan - that is merely practical. But it is too late in my career to get

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involved in any crusades that are likely to fail anyway.

I thought the educational offerings for me this year fell into the "average" range, which is still awfully good. Mostly, the subject matter addressed this year was less relevant to me than in some years past. The early morning innovative superintendent sessions Thursday and Friday, for example, just didn't have the timber I seem use to. The same was true for the research lectures; other than the anthracnose/management practices

update, the rest held little for me. Actually, the same could be said for all of the Thursday lectures - just not enough pertinence to my situation.

Friday was the best day. It started with keynote speaker Pat Croce. He was enthusiastic and relevant and I did get some take home pointers. The USGA Green Section program was excellent, as it always is. The turf tips are always right on and useful, and I enjoyed listening to Dick Rugge talk about keeping a handle on equipment that could conceivably ruin the game. Best of

all was Martin Ebel, a handicapped lawyer and golf player. He summarized our responsibility on the golf course in the areas of accommodations. I had heard his speech before and he was even better this time. And I was very pleased that Dr. Joe Vargas received the Green Section Award.

This year's bookstore had wonderful selections, but nothing special regarding pricing. Bargains, yes; great bargains, no. But it is still one of my favorite features of conference.



WGCSA president Mike Lyons welcome Bob Lohmann to the Wisconsin Hospitality Room.



Mike Bogroff, Chad Grimm, Aaron Goninen and Mike Bremmer enjoyed our Wisconsin Hospitality Room.



Aron and Laurie Hogden.

A group of grizzled old Wisconsin guys - Jim Shaw, Ed Devinger, Bob Lohmann and Dave Weber.



Josh Lepine and Jon Canavan.

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If there is a fun event at the GCSAA conference, it has to be the Wisconsin hospitality room. Our chapter and Milorganite served as co-hosts, and it is a splendid evening among friends. More than once it occurred to me that it was sad that in our busy world you have to travel to California to see and visit with colleagues and friends from back home. But at least we have this opportunity. It seemed everyone there was knee deep in enjoyment, too.

The presence of the Wee One Foundation in a corner of the Milorganite booth speaks warmly

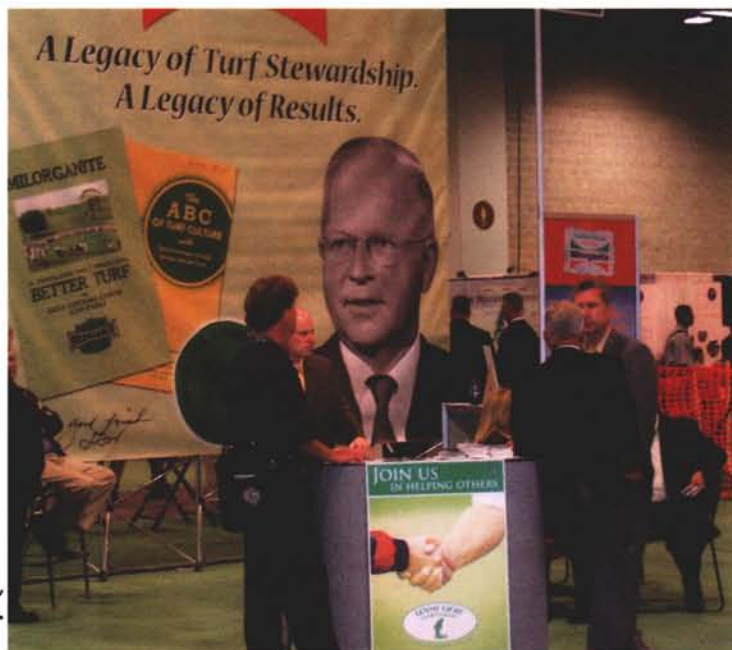
of the MMSD managers who welcomed the WOF, as well as the WOF officer who came up with the idea. I don't know how many new members were signed up, but the organization now has a national recognition. Wayne Otto would be proud and pleased.

The networking opportunities at a national and international meeting like this one can hardly be overstated or exaggerated. The wealth and breadth of practical golf course management opinions and experiences is unmatched. This is one of the best reasons to attend, in my view.

By mid-Friday Chad and I were well aware of some powerful winter weather poised to move through the middle west about the time we were scheduled to arrive home on Sunday. So through the magic of a laptop computer we were able to secure, literally, the last two seats on a flight from LAX to Chicago one day before our original reservations. It left at 6:00 a.m., required \$100 for the change, and necessitated a car trip from Anaheim to LA at 3:30 a.m. But we made it to Chicago and were on the last flight out for Madison. All in all, we were lucky.



Our UW-Madison turf program had a booth on the show floor,



as did the Wee One Foundation, welcomed by MMSD and Milorganite.



Bob Vavrek was a speaker on the USGA Green Section program.



Dr. Joe Vargas was the deserving recipient of the 2007 Green Section Award.



Brent and Randy Smith - son and father, exhibitor and superintendent.

Rescheduling at the last minute raises the suspicion of transportation authorities. Chad and I were pulled aside while going through security in Los Angeles, were questioned and had all carry on luggage gone through. I probably shouldn't complain, but neither of us really fits the profile of a subversive. Better safe than sorry though.

All in all, it was a great conference. As I near the end of my career, I am starting to focus on the things I will miss when retired. With one more to go, the GCSAA conference and show is definitely one of the great benefits of being a golf course superintendent. It represents really good work by the GCSAA staff for the benefit of golf course superintendents. Thanks. 🌱



A bird's eye view of the show floor.

The following is a list of the vendors who made the Wisconsin Room possible this year in Anaheim. Without their continued support and generosity the evening would not have been possible. Thank you from all of us in the WGCSA.



Adam Barr and Rod Johnson met and visited on the GCSAA show floor.



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2007 WGCSA EVENT CALANDER

Date	Location	Event/Speaker
March 5, Monday	Ramada Hotel Fond du Lac, WI	Spring Business Meeting
April 23, Monday	Geneva National Jeremy Amosson - GC Supt. Lake Geneva, WI	Roger Siep Memory Training
May 30, Wednesday	The Legend at Brandybrook Jake Renner - GC Supt. Wales, WI	Super / Pro
June 10th and 11th Sunday, Monday	Big Fish GC Tod Blankenship - GC Supt. Hayward, WI	Dr. Eric Watkins Bob Vavrek, USGA Eric Koeritz Larry Phornton
July 9, Monday	The Club at Strawberry Creek Matt Kregel - GC Supt. Bristol, WI	Supt. Tournament Speaker - TBA
July 26, Thursday	WTA Field Day Verona, WI	Field Day
August 20, Monday	Brynwood CC Jon Canavan - GC Supt. Milwaukee, WI	Member / Guest David Swift Preparing for a PGA / US Open
September 24, Monday	Pine Hills CC Rod Johnson - GC Supt. Sheboygan, WI	Wee-One Foundation
October 5th and 6th	Minoqua CC Mike Jaeger - GC Supt. Minoqua, WI	Dinner Dance
October 11, Thursday	Meadow Valley @ Blackwolf Run Michael Lee - GC Supt. Kohler, WI	WTA Fundraiser
November 28th and 29th	Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium Kohler, WI	TBA
December 11, Tuesday	GCSAA Seminar	TBA

