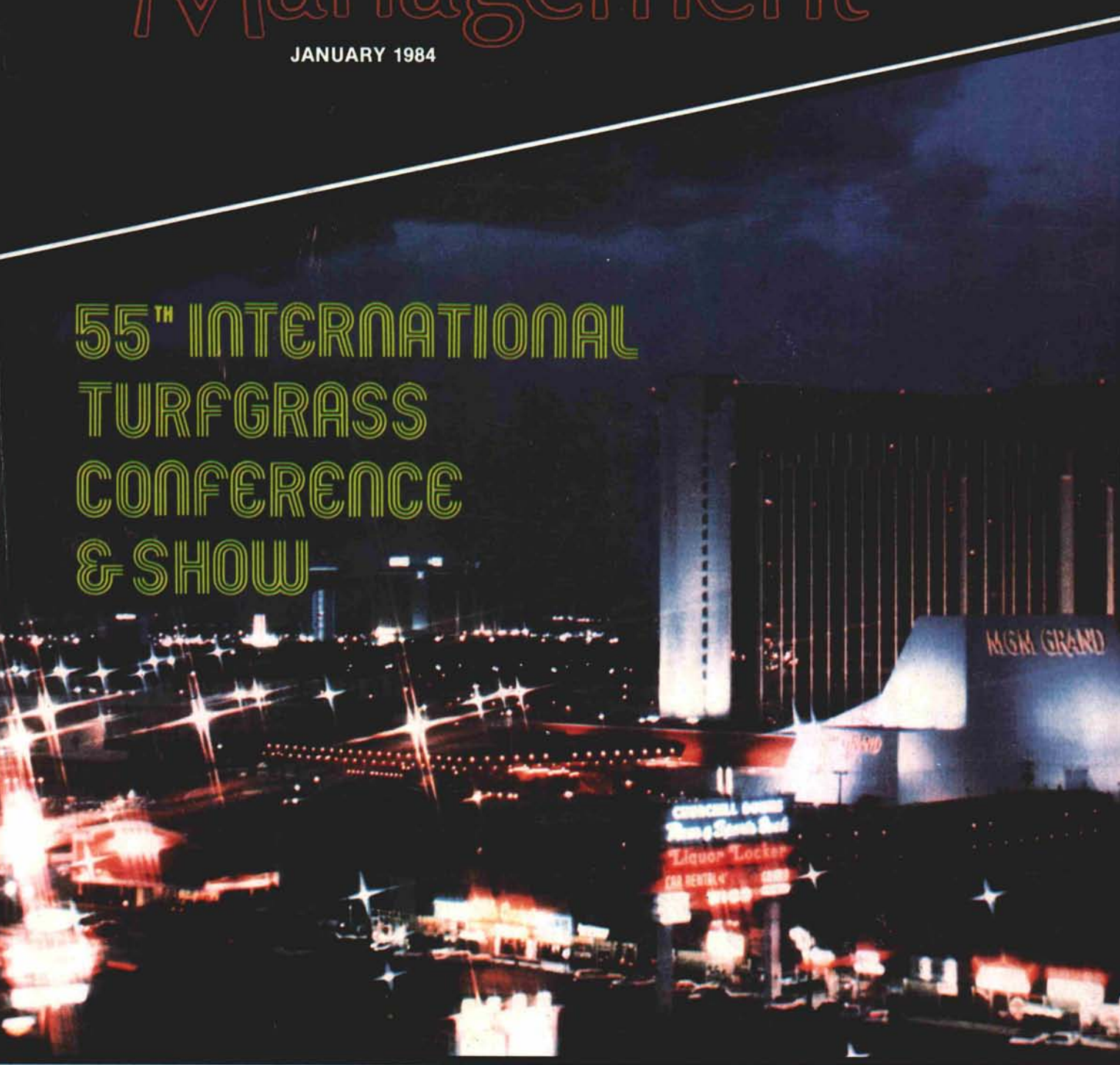


Golf Course Management

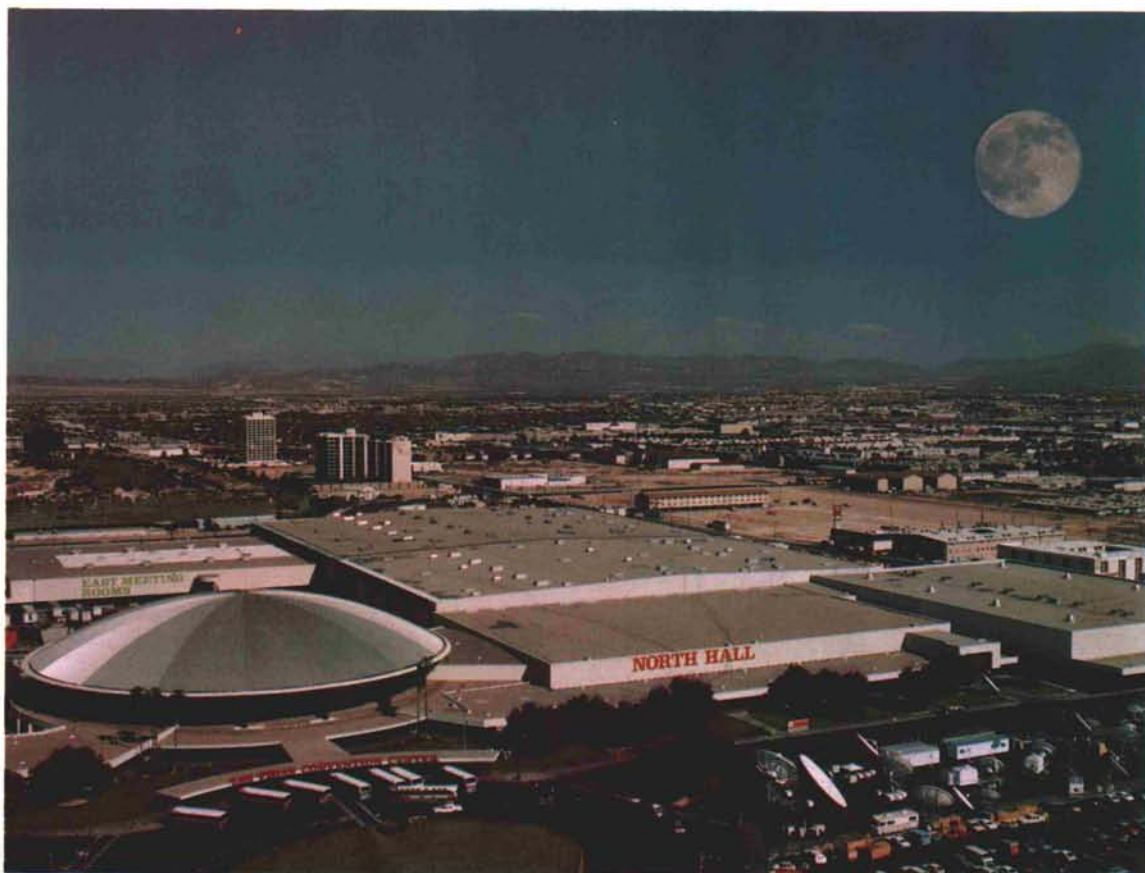
JANUARY 1984

55TH INTERNATIONAL
TURFGRASS
CONFERENCE
& SHOW



LAS VEGAS

January 28th—February 3rd 1984



Las Vegas Conference

Education and Beyond

By James G. Prusa, CGCS
Associate Executive Director

How often have you said and heard, "If I only knew then what I know now?" Take a moment and think about what that profound lamentation really is suggesting.

Every one of us, from time to time, has uttered that wistful statement — or something similar. By saying, "If I only knew then what I know now," are we not actually recognizing the invaluable human assets of experience and knowledge? Are we not actually saying — whether we realize it or not — that our jobs and lives could have been much more enjoyable and less stressful if we had had the benefit of what we "know now" at an earlier age?

Well, if this is true of the past, then the odds are that it is also applicable to the present and future. By changing the old saying around a bit, we can derive a slightly different viewpoint: "If I could only know today what I'll know in the future." In acknowledging this derivation, we take the first step in the learning process — admitting that we still have a lot to learn and a lot that we don't know.

Frankly, that which you don't know is probably the cause of your greatest unhappiness in life. In the business of golf, it is what you don't know that could potentially lead to your failure and demise as an effective manager.

Mutual Commitments To Learning

Our professional Association is committed to an ongoing

professional effort to disseminate information and knowledge about managing golf courses through continuing education. That's GCSAA's mission — and the counterpart mission of every golf course manager is to work hard to absorb information, learn and improve. Trying to learn about things as they are is difficult enough. Our continuing education is made even more challenging as demanding changes constantly knock at the gates throughout our industry and profession.

For some people, imminent change precipitates insecurity and fear. Fed by their own ignorances, insecure and fear-filled people will attempt to deny this one constant of our universe — ever, ongoing, perpetual *change*. And change is the *only* thing that can be certain to take place.

Those who deny change often attempt to weave a protective cocoon of nonchalant apathy regarding the value of continuing their professional education. Denying change and denying the need to gain greater knowledge inevitably result in stagnation, frustration and, often, absolute failure. Clearly, such setbacks should be considered unacceptable by all professionals.

The Las Vegas Conference

Fortunately for the game and business of golf, there are those who do dare to risk admitting a need for greater knowledge. As in every business and life pursuit, it is the daring risk-takers, striving for continual improvement, who achieve suc-

cess. You'll find those in attendance at GCSAA's education programs are definitely the latter category.

This year's Las Vegas Conference is a continuation and expansion of education concepts that were successfully launched at last year's Atlanta Conference. It doesn't take a genius to recognize that the diversity of need — within both our profession and business — demands production of need-satisfying, educational programming of equal diversity.

To help GCSAA more clearly identify and target continuing education needs, the Association has been conducting "market research" through membership surveys. Many of you are familiar with this fact, as you have dutifully responded to these randomized inquiries. Basically, it has been you — the respondents to the surveys — who have initiated changes in our Conference programming so that it can better meet the changing needs of the profession.

GCSAA believes attendees will find that the multiplicity of seminar courses, concurrent general sessions, instructors and speakers does better serve the multiplicity of needs. With 122 individual speakers and instructors making 151 individual presentations, a cumulative total of 235.5 hours of continuing education are being offered at the Las Vegas Conference this year.

On top of these "megahours" of "information transfer," there is another invaluable educational opportunity that no person in the industry can afford to miss — GCSAA's annual Show. The education value of perusing the nearly five-acre exposition of our industry's technology is mind-boggling. You'll hear about it from instructors and speakers, but you'll see it on the Show floor.

So, you say it isn't possible — even after the wide range of flexibility and selection designed into the week — for you to absorb all the programming that you desire? Well, we've even tried to offer you ample provisions for various foreseeable contingencies.

If you can't make a particular presentation — or if you are forced to miss a part of the week — you can still "hear" the presentation. GCSAA produces audio tapes (available for you to purchase) of the week's programs just for such challenges. And even if you are able to attend *all* the week's educational offerings (which will probably qualify you to walk on water as a subsequent feat), you can take a complete set of audio cassette tapes home for your library.

How To "Sell" Your Attendance

The following steps and actions should prove helpful in getting necessary support and approval that will enable you to attend the Conference:

- *Be familiar* with the entire Conference offerings. It will be necessary for you to study the Conference brochure from cover to cover.
- *Be confident* about the benefits of your attendance. Reason out objectively what you intend to gain for yourself and your club by participating in the education and exhibition. Be mindful that you must justify a "return on investment" for you and your club.
- *Set objectives* that you intend to achieve by attending the Conference and Show. For example: What problems in your operation require you to acquire more information and knowledge? What are the equipment needs of your operation that you could better analyze, evaluate and prepare to satisfy by attending the Show? What specific people do you need to visit with firsthand to develop contacts or information networks? What specific areas of your education can you improve to make yourself a more productive manager?
- *Organize* your request for approval to attend the Conference. Type out the request with copies of program information and objectives you intend to achieve. Document

the costs of your attendance and demonstrate how that investment will be paid back with improved productivity or savings from more educated purchasing.

- *Sell* the proposal to the right person with enthusiasm and confidence. You've done your homework, and a person with business understanding will recognize the overwhelming payback and benefits from your attendance. Note any objections and do more homework if necessary.

Tips For A Successful Conference

You'll gain maximum benefit from the Conference — and maintain positive relationships at your base of operations — if you observe the following suggestions:

- *Plan Ahead* by reviewing the entire offering of programs for the week. Read the Conference brochure thoroughly and talk it over with your associates. Schedule out your time and attendance at the various functions, allowing room for informal discussions with your colleagues in attendance. Don't overlook the fact that informal conversations during conference week often provide some of the best opportunities to gain knowledge about the industry.

- *Determine* the sessions and seminars you want to attend. If there are other people from your organization at the Conference, try to coordinate your schedules so that you attend different offerings to provide the greatest possible exposure to programs.

- *Keep Notes* on the various speakers and presentations. They'll be invaluable as reference sources after the Conference.

- *Keep A Diary* of your daily activities. This will substantiate your positive participation in the Conference and you'll be surprised at how much you covered.

- *Rest and Relaxation* should be allowed for. Don't forget that learning and leisure are compatible and complimentary activities.

- *After You Return* home, write out and then *type* a succinct summary of the Conference for your superiors. Trip reports are a common business courtesy expected of every professional manager. They also serve as an opportunity to accomplish a little public relations and promotion.

- *Send A Copy* of your trip report to the other managers in your firm. Send additional copies to owners (or their appropriate counterparts) and to various committee members — and don't overlook the local newspaper.

Conferences and conventions are a very necessary part of every business and industry today. They are often the *only* place where professionals who are also active, responsible business people can get all the information, background and understanding to deal with complex current problems.

The future of your golf course — and of the game of golf — depends upon your being informed. Make certain others are aware of this.

It's Your Move

As Thomas Edison once said, "Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration." In an effort to assist you in developing that desirable "1 percent inspiration," GCSAA has put together an appealing program for its 1984 Conference and Show, but like all good things in life, knowledge does not come easily. There is a price. Continuing one's professional education in an ongoing quest to improve is tedious and laborious work. The price includes not only your perspiration but also your firm determination to make every effort to attend the annual Conference and Show.

What now stands between you and the genius that Edison spoke of is the "perspiration" factor of the equation. Dare aim for success, risk the effort involved and attend the 1984 Conference and Show. The attendance of the best in golf and in our profession is far from being simple coincidence.