

**A**s a typical “he-has-an-opinion-for-everything” American, I’d like to share some thoughts with you about what I see happening in the golf world this year. Here goes:

I’m going to go out on a limb and say that water will be the biggest issue of 2008 in the golf course maintenance industry. (I know — I’m not straying too far from the tree trunk.)

Water is getting to be everybody’s favorite topic. Once the mainstream media latches on to the topic and squeezes every drop out of it, everybody will be talking about it, a la global warming, over Sunday night’s pot roast and potatoes.

It doesn’t take an irrigation consultant to conclude that golf courses all over the country will continue to be faced with an array of irrigation challenges, from cutting back on water use for environmental and economic reasons to sparring with the public over the industry’s alleged wasting of this precious commodity.

But the bet here is these continued challenges will become even more intense because of the mainstream media’s scrutiny.

## Filling Mona’s shoes

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America will hire a very capable replacement for Steve Mona, who’s leaving his CEO post next month after 14 years. Whoever it is better have a thick skin because that person will be compared to Mona in many phases.

According to a recent *Golfdom* poll of about 600 superintendents, 65 percent of them said Mona “did a great job and elevated the profession.” Thirty-two percent of respondents say “he did a decent job.” That’s an astounding 97 percent approval rate, folks. Members and the GCSAA staff will miss Mona. Altogether now: “When Steve was here, he did it this way.”

## McCain will gain

Early last year, *Golfdom* conducted an informal presidential poll listing candidates Hillary Clinton, John McCain, Barack Obama and Rudy Giuliani. Not surprisingly, Giuliani won our poll with 35 percent of the vote. McCain was second with 29 percent.

# Just One Man’s Opinions for 2008

BY LARRY AYLWARD



EVERYBODY IN THE  
INDUSTRY KEEPS  
TALKING ABOUT HOW  
IMPORTANT IT IS TO  
HAVE FASTER PLAY.  
BUT ARE WE KIDDING  
OURSELVES HERE?

We didn’t list preacher-politician Mike Huckabee in the poll because we knew little about him. But Huckabee, a Baptist minister, has come out of nowhere as a GOP presidential contender.

We plan to conduct another poll soon, and Huckabee will surely be listed as one of the candidates. I have a feeling that some in our industry will latch onto the former Arkansas governor. But Huckabee, who has been labeled as a closet liberal and has a few skeletons rattling in his closet, will fade and will not win over the golf course industry crowd.

Speaking of skeletons, they will do in Giuliani, and McCain will become the industry’s favorite and the GOP’s presidential nominee.

## Fast times?

I — and a lot of people just like me (who have a spouse and two young children) — will play about four rounds of golf this year. What I’d give to be an avid golfer, but I just don’t have the time to play that much. If I spend six hours every Sunday at the course (including time spent for an after-round beverage), I wouldn’t be a very popular person in my household.

Everybody in the golf industry keeps talking about how important it is to have faster play. But are we kidding ourselves here?

It doesn’t take an Einstein to conclude that if golf courses are getting longer, they’re going to take longer to play. And in this day of flat rounds and needed revenue, you can’t expect owners to turn away paying customers on a beautiful Sunday — even if it means golfers having to wait for each other on each tee.

See that guy hopping around on one foot and yelling “ouch!”? That’s Mr. Golf Industry.

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