

Golfdom

DECEMBER 2004 • VOLUME 60 • NO. 12

The Golfdom Report

22

Better Days But ...

There are signs the golf industry is pulling itself out of the economic doldrums. But the financial slump isn't over yet, experts say.

By Larry Aylward

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Time For an Annual Review

It started off great, what with Phil winning the Masters. But things started to get ugly around U.S. Open time.

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By Peter Blais





cover story

BY GOLFDOM STAFF

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About the cover

We think this silhouette of a golfer says something about the state of the industry – while things are getting better, there are still some unknowns. (By MediImages and Tom Johnson of Advanstar Communications)

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GreenCast

Digital Flagstick

Leading by Design
By Pat Jones
The ASPCA updates in a new era with a new executive secretary and a renewed effort to make the society more visible in the golf community. *Golfdom Insider* made the occasion with an exclusive interview with Chad Fitzhugh. [\(More...\)](#)



The Latest

So Far, So Good
WV reports opened up 2.5 percent for first six months. [\(More...\)](#)

Audubon International Opens First Field Office
Group hires former superintendent as Great Lakes leader. [\(More...\)](#)

Candid Camera and a Hole-in-One
A Cleveland entrepreneur came up with a great idea that led to a great hole-in-one contest at a great Cleveland golf course. [\(More...\)](#)



Major Challenge for Glory, Register Now for the Major Challenge PGA Championship Round

Who wouldn't want an all expenses paid trip for two to Scotland to play golf all week long in November? IT COULD BE YOU if you register now and pick your team. [\(More...\)](#)

They're the Same... But Different
By Larry Aylward
Many of the international superintendents who volunteered at Shinnecock Hills during the U.S. Open said their courses bear resemblance to the famed Long Island course. [\(More...\)](#)

Around the Country With the USGA Green Section
Here are the latest turf-management updates from the field. [\(More...\)](#)

Digital Golfdom Exclusive

What on Earth is a Slope Budget?
By Frank H. Androska Jr.
The superintendent at Big Canyon Country Club explains it and other interesting responsibilities he's taken on. [\(More...\)](#)



MSDS and Labels at Your Fingertips
Golfdom and CDMS offer our online readers a new service: downloadable Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) and Labels for turf chemicals. Access more than 1,000 product labels and 4,200+ MSDS. [\(More...\)](#)

Sneak Preview
Organize Done Right
By Frank H. Androska Jr.
New technology allows superintendents to do system renovations without disrupting play. [\(More...\)](#)

Working the Web
Working the Web: The new Audubon International Web site will help superintendents find information more easily about how to become more environmentally friendly. [\(More...\)](#)

Turfgrass Trends Online

Cover Story:
Sustainable Forestry: Pines, Grasses, Pines: Past and Future

Featured Research:
Follow the Mutt Out of the Hardest Resolutions: Fertilizers

Fertilizers Can Dramatically Affect Canopy Temperatures

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EDITORIAL STAFF

Larry Aylward EDITOR 440-891-2770 lalward@advanstar.com
Thomas Skernivitz MANAGING EDITOR 440-891-2613 tskernivitz@advanstar.com
Geoff Shackelford CONTRIBUTING EDITOR 310-451-5877 geoffshackelford@aol.com
Joel Jackson CONTRIBUTING EDITOR 407-248-1971 flgm@aol.com
Anthony Pioppi CONTRIBUTING EDITOR 860-344-8895 apioppi@earthlink.net
Mark Luce CONTRIBUTING EDITOR 785-841-6044 mluce@earthlink.net
Karl Danneberger CHIEF SCIENCE EDITOR danneberger.1@osu.edu
Lisa Lehman CORP. CREATIVE DIRECTOR 440-891-2785 llehman@advanstar.com
Kim Traum SR. GRAPHIC DESIGNER 440-891-3175 ktraum@advanstar.com
Mike Klemme CHIEF PHOTO EDITOR 580-234-8284 mike@golffoto.com
Vernon Henry CORP. EDITORIAL DIRECTOR 440-826-2829 vhenry@advanstar.com
Lynne Brakeman WEB EDITOR 440-891-2869 lbrakeman@advanstar.com

CLEVELAND HEADQUARTERS

7500 OLD OAK BLVD.
CLEVELAND, OH 44130-3609

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF



American Society of Irrigation Consultants 111 E. WACKER,
18TH FLOOR, CHICAGO 60601; 312-372-7090; WWW.ASIC.ORG

GOLFDOM ADVISORY STAFF

Jim Barrett , ASIC JAMES BARRETT ASSOCIATES	Jim Husting , CGCS WOODBIDGE G&CC
Pat Blum COLONIAL ACRES CC	Robb Dillinger , CGCS MUNIE OUTDOOR SERVICES
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ASSOCIATIONS



American Society of Golf Course Architects 125 N. EXECUTIVE DR.,
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BUSINESS STAFF

Pat Jones PUBLISHER 440-891-3126 pjones@advanstar.com
Tony D'Avino GENERAL MANAGER 440-891-2640 tdavino@advanstar.com
Mindy Moczulski ADMIN. COORDINATOR 440-891-2734 mmoczulski@advanstar.com
Jill Hood PRODUCTION MANAGER 218-723-9129 jhood@advanstar.com
Rhonda Sande PRODUCTION DIRECTOR 218-723-9536 rsande@advanstar.com
Jessica Borgren CIRCULATION MANAGER 218-723-9356 jborgren@advanstar.com

ADVERTISING STAFF

CLEVELAND HEADQUARTERS

7500 OLD OAK BLVD.
CLEVELAND, OH 44130-3609

Kevin Stoltman ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER kstoltman@advanstar.com
440-891-2772 FAX: 440-891-2675
Pat Roberts NATIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGER proberts@advanstar.com
440-891-2609 FAX: 440-891-2675
Michael Harris REGIONAL MANAGER mharris@advanstar.com
440-891-3118 FAX: 440-826-2865
Leslie Montgomery ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE lmontgomery@advanstar.com
440-891-3199 FAX: 440-826-2865

MARKETING SERVICES

Linda Barrier REPRINTS (500 MINIMUM) 440-891-2701 lbarrier@advanstar.com
Danielle Gundling CIRC. LIST RENTAL 440-891-2655 dgundling@advanstar.com
Subscriber, Customer Service 218-723-9477; 888-527-7008
Books, Directories, Current Issues, Back Issues, Photocopies,
Microfiche, Film Copies, CD-Rom 800-598-6008; 218-723-9180

CORPORATE


ADVANSTAR
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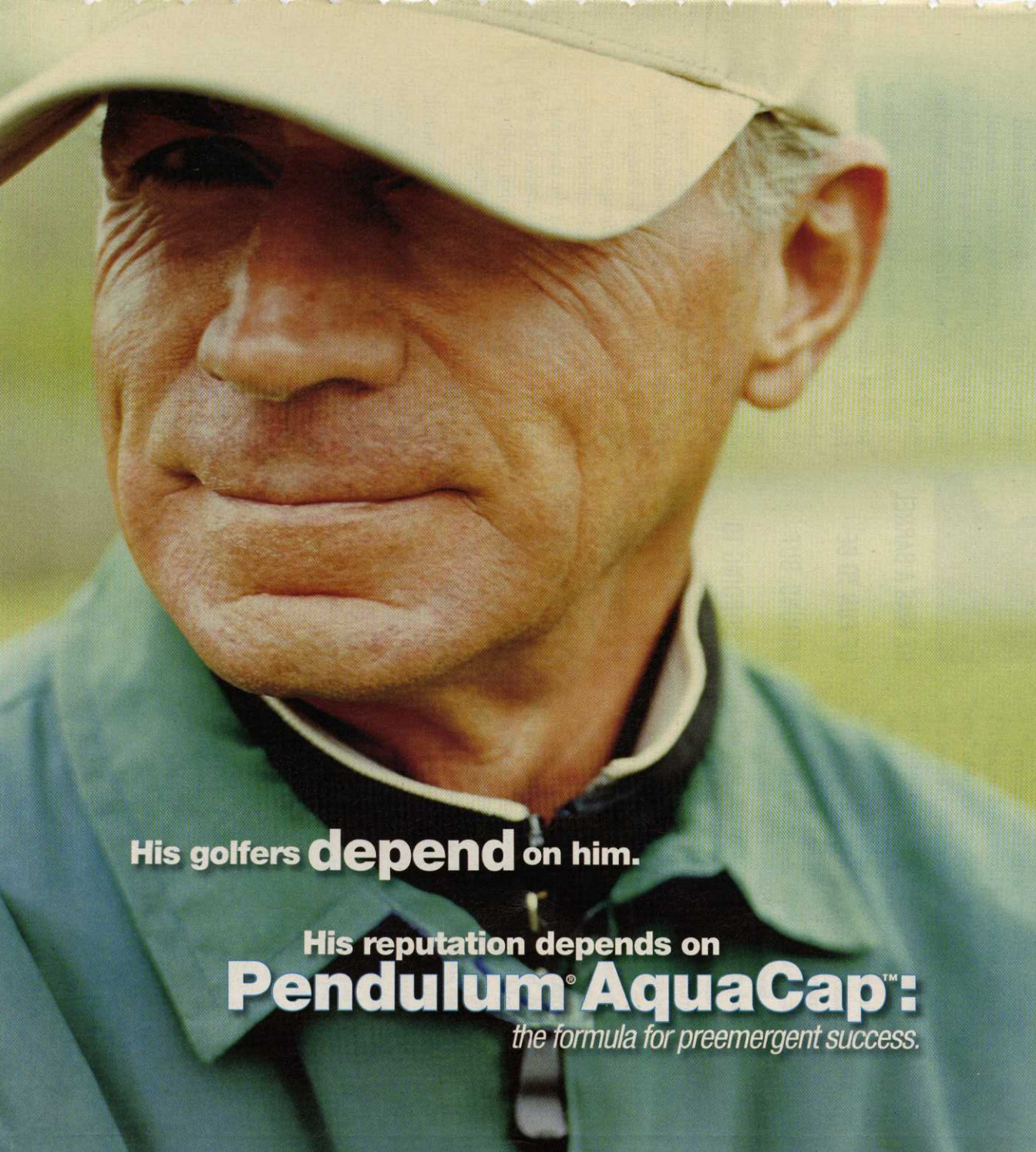
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Legend has it that Wayne Otto got his nickname, “The Wee One,” on the first tee of the hallowed grounds of The Old Course at St. Andrews. Wayne was ready to tee off with fellow superintendent Danny Quast and Stan Zontek and Pat O’Brien of the USGA Green Section. Even in that auspicious place, the four were engaged in the usual pre-round banter about what stakes they would play for, when one of their craggy local caddies was heard to tell another in a deep Scots brogue, “My money’s on the wee one.”

Wayne, who died last month at age 65 after a valiant battle with cancer, was “wee” in stature but a giant in spirit. He was a fixture in the Wisconsin golf community for five decades and one of those all-too-rare superintendents who actually retired from Ozaukee Country Club after 35 years. In retirement, and fighting the ticking clock of cancer, he and Quast completed their marvelous book, *Golf Course Turf Management — Tools & Techniques*. Wayne is survived by his glorious wife, JoAnn, two children and four grandchildren.

The standard obituary ends there, because Wayne simply wasn’t a standard guy. The words “mirthful” and “turfhead” seem odd when put together, but Wayne was both. He was a barrel of fun to be around, but according to his many friends he would talk turf with anyone, anywhere and anytime. If you ever met Wayne at the GCSAA show or a golf tournament, you’re probably shaking your head in agreement right now. He was, quite simply, passionately intense about the art and science of growing grass.

“I can’t think of anybody who has talked more turf to more superintendents than Wayne,” says his longtime friend and partner-in-crime, Rod Johnson, certified superintendent of Pine Hills Country Club in Sheboygan, Wis. “While he supported everything that improved our professional standing, turf talk was always more important.”

He practiced what he preached in terms of agronomy. Marc Davison, certified super-

Wee in Size, Otto Was Big in Heart

BY PAT JONES



HE WAS A BARREL
OF FUN TO BE
AROUND, BUT
ACCORDING TO
HIS MANY FRIENDS,
HE WOULD TALK
TURF WITH ANYONE,
ANYWHERE AND
ANYTIME

intendent of Green Bay Country Club, recalls Wayne’s lean and mean approach to fertilizing greens.

“He told me once that he just gave his greens a ‘sniff’ of nitrogen. He said he’d open a bag of fertilizer and drive around each green with the open bag in the back of his cart. Obviously, he was joking, but that was Wayne.”

He was also always right in the middle of practical jokes, but more often on the receiving end. Many of them often involved showerheads and toilet paper. Even though Wayne was incessantly zinged by Johnson and others, he never got mad and rarely retaliated. He just took pleasure in being part of the gag.

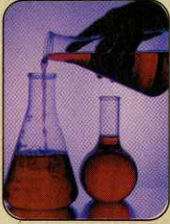
There are myriad other stories, many about Wayne’s insatiable appetite for Mexican food, hot sauce that would bulge the eyeballs of the strongest among us and Cushmans that mysteriously ended up in creeks during the night. But the constant theme of all the messages I received from his colleagues was the unconditional joy he radiated when he was on the course or amongst his friends.

Many will miss him and mourn, but all of us in this business should take a cue from Wayne and celebrate the fact that we were blessed to be a part of something that seems to attract such people. I’m wagering that Wayne is up in the Big Somewhere right now seeking out his fellow superintendents for a chat.

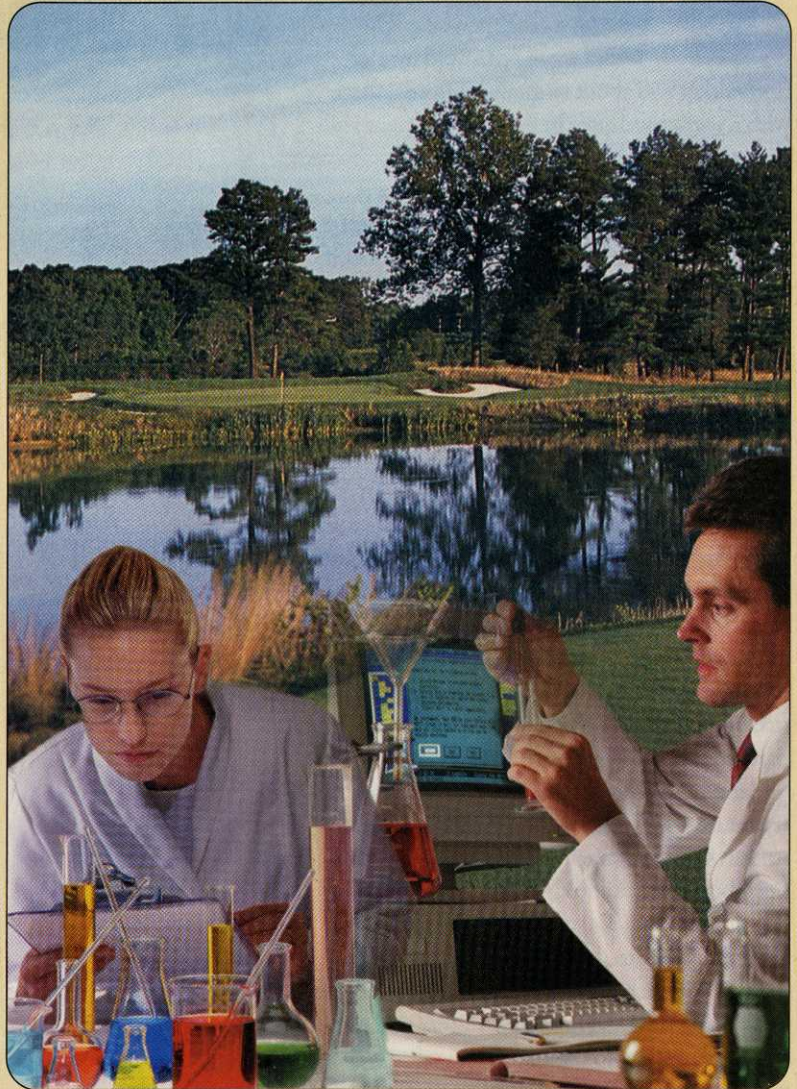
And who will win the inevitable heavenly arguments about turf? My money’s on the Wee One.

Pat Jones, the publisher of Golfdom, can be reached at 440-891-3126 or pjones@advanstar.com

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When I spoke with Jim Jennings late last year, he was looking for work in golf course maintenance. The 47-year-old former steelworker was about to graduate from college with a two-year degree in turf management and was embarking on a new career.

At the time, Jennings was as worried as any new graduate about finding a job. "Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and wonder if there are any jobs out there," Jennings said.

It took him a few months, but Jennings found a job on the golf course maintenance crew at Shady Hollow Country Club in Massillon, Ohio. He says things have been going well for him there.

He did receive one big scare, however. In September, the course's superintendent and the man who hired Jennings announced to the crew that he was let go from the course. When Jennings heard the news, he wondered if he and other members of the course's core staff would also be let go. His troubled mind took him back to the steel mill, where he experienced a similar scenario so many times before.

Jennings worked in the unstable steel industry for nearly 25 years, where layoffs are as ordinary as rows of bungalow homes in blue-collar neighborhoods. All told, Jennings was laid off five times during his steel-industry career. He was called back to work four times. But when the mill at which he was employed announced it was closing for good in October 2002 and moving its machinery to China, Jennings knew there was no chance of being recalled a fifth time.

When Jennings joined Shady Hollow in the spring, he figured he wouldn't have to worry about getting laid off from the 18-hole private course. But when the course's superintendent walked in the lunch room and told of his fate that day, the same sick and sinking feeling formed in Jennings' gut as when the foreman at the steel mill announced to crew members that they would be soon out of work.

"It was like, oh man, here we go again," Jennings says.

While Jennings was left worrying for several weeks about his fate, he learned recently that he and the others would not be let go. With the hol-

He's Just Looking for Steady Work

BY LARRY AYLWARD



EX-STEELWORKER
JIM JENNINGS JUST
WANTS SOMETHING
STABLE. HE
DESERVES THAT
AFTER WHAT HE'S
BEEN THROUGH

idays looming, not to mention a mortgage and a family to feed, Jennings was relieved.

Mindful of his unpredictable employment in the steel industry and to take control of his fate, Jennings considered another livelihood back in the early 1990s. In 1992 he enrolled at The Ohio State University's Agricultural Technical Institute to study turfgrass management. When he wasn't working, he went to school. Hence, it took him 11 years to get a two-year degree.

While looking for work in the golf industry last year, Jennings said he wasn't searching for a dream job. He just wanted to learn the business and gain experience. "I just need a chance to prove myself," he said at the time. "I hope I'm in the right place at the right time."

More than anything, Jennings just wanted something stable. He deserves that after what he's been through. There should be a law that says: "People that want to work and like to work should be afforded the chance to work without constantly worrying that work be taken away from them."

Regarding his career employment, Jennings has joked that he won a free trip on a cruise ship — but the ship was the Titanic. Hopefully, however, Jennings' ship has come in in the form of Shady Hollow Country Club, and it will stay put for a while.

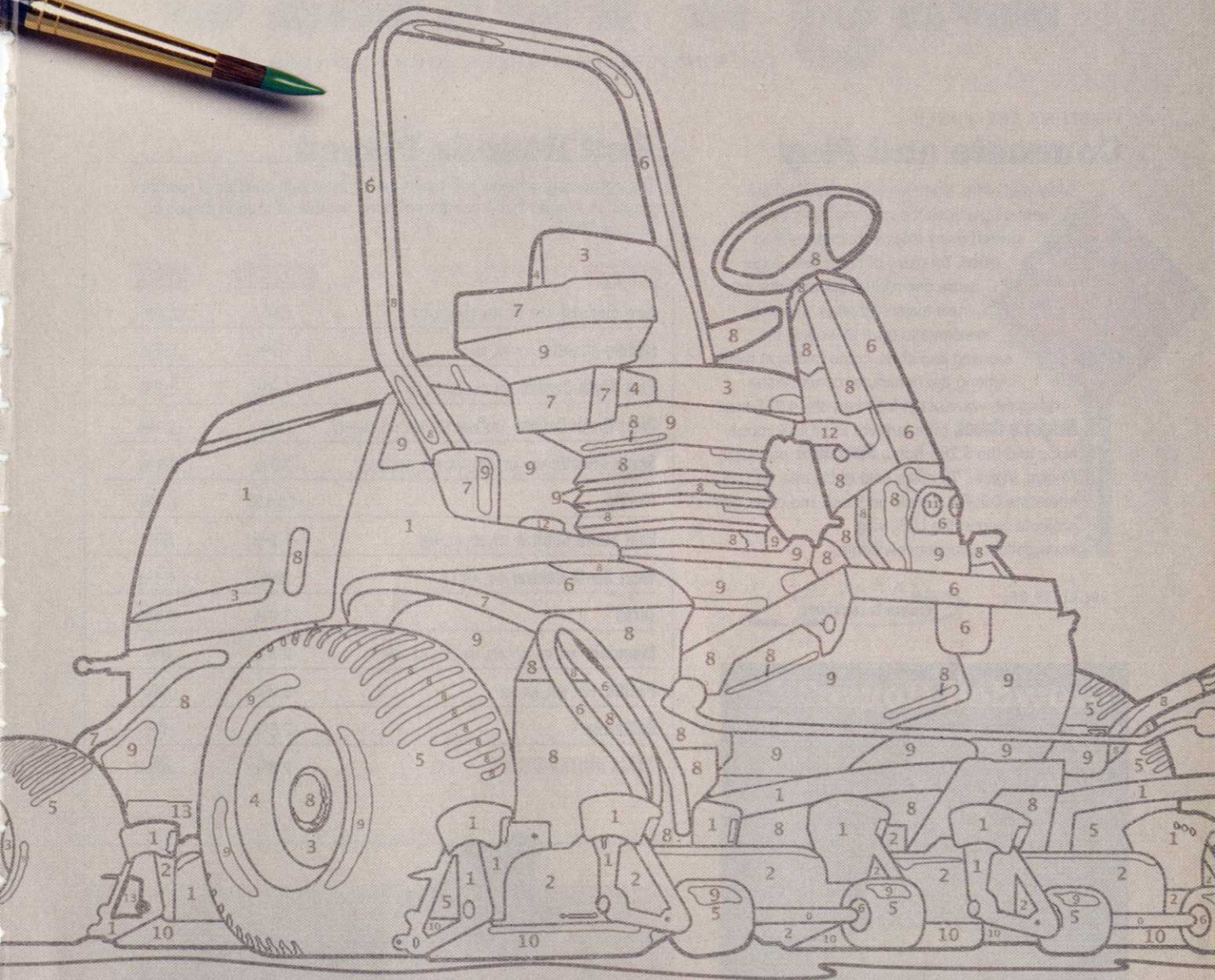
"This place is beautiful," Jennings says of the course. "It has huge white oak trees. It's really pretty out here."

The physical work, from mowing greens to cutting cups, is tough on his bones, Jennings admits. But he likes the tough work, and says he sleeps well at night.

Hopefully, Jennings' mind can rest well, too. Here's to him not having to worry about not having a job to go to upon rising in the morning.

Editor Larry Aylward can be reached at 440-891-2770 or lajlward@advanstar.com.

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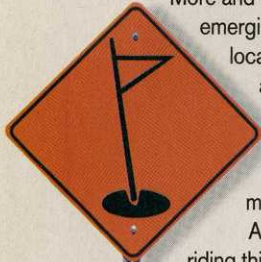
The Big Picture

THE NUMBERS THAT SHAPE YOUR BUSINESS

TIDBIT OF THE MONTH

Commute and Play

More and more "commuter communities" are emerging across the country, and most are located many miles from metropolitan areas. Yet many of these new large-scale golf-related subdivisions are near major highways, allowing residents to drive to work in the morning and come home to play at night. Among the commuter communities riding this wave of the future are the 4,235-acre **Bright's Creek** off Interstate 26 in Columbus, N.C., and the 3,785-home **Suncadia** project in Roslyn, Wash., 70 miles east of Seattle via U.S. Interstate 90. For details on these and other golf projects around the U.S., visit www.golfconstructionnews.com.



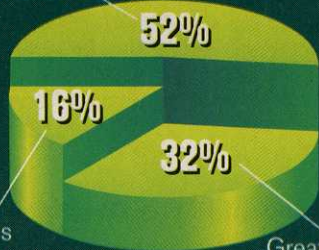
COURTESY OF:



Crowded House?

The majority of superintendents we surveyed online recently are against the Club Managers Association of America joining the Golf Industry Show in 2007. Here's how they responded when we asked them what they thought of the merger:

No, I don't like it.
What happened to
our show?



I guess
it's OK.

Great idea.
Welcome!

Based on 223 responses

Golfdom

DAN BEEDY

Golf Rounds Played

The percentages below represent the difference in number of rounds played in August 2004 compared to the number of rounds played in August 2003.

REGION	AUGUST	Y.T.D.
New England ME, VT, NH, MA, RI, CT	.2%	2.4%
Middle Atlantic NY, PA, NJ	-1.9%	1.7%
East North Central MI, OH, IN, IL, WI	-1.9%	-1.8%
West North Central ND, MN, SD, NE, KS, IA, MO	-4%	-1.1%
South Atlantic WV, DE, MD, VA, NC, SC, GA	-7.9%	3.3%
Florida	-13.1%	1.6%
East South Central KY, TN, AL, MS	-1.2%	3%
West South Central OK, AR, LA	-2%	-4.1%
Texas	-3.9%	-3.5%
Mountain MT, ID, WY, NV, UT, CO, AZ, NM	-2.3%	.8%
Pacific WA, OR, AK, HI	-3.9%	-.2%
California	-2.6%	-1%
TOTAL UNITED STATES	-2.8%	.4%

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