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A close-up, low-angle shot of a golf club head (likely a putter) resting on a vibrant green golf course. The background is a soft-focus landscape of rolling hills and trees under a warm, golden sunset sky. The club's shaft is a dark blue or black, extending from the top left towards the center.

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Golfdom

NOVEMBER 2009 • VOLUME 65 • NO. 11

The Right Stuff

25 Part two of our Turfgrass Fertility Report. Stories include, "The Right Stuff" by John Walsh, and "Tournament Prep and Fertility" by Ron Furlong.

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For Sale: The Old Tom Morris Award

The incredible story of how the late Byron Nelson's industry honor ended up on eBay.

By Christopher S. Gray Sr.

About the cover

This image by iStock International Inc. portrays our golf course fertility theme perfectly.

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waterwise

PART TWO

Architects Have Answers Environmentally minded designers know how to conserve water.

By Anthony Pioppi

Act Now

10 easy things you can do to conserve water on your golf course. By Christopher S. Gray Sr.



Turfgrass Trends

This month, *Golfdom's* practical research digest for turfgrass managers discusses the origin of turfgrass. Also, velvet bentgrass is analyzed for its possible role in sustainable golf. See pages 63-68.

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Thinking-Man's Superintendent

Jeff Carlson is always looking for alternative ways to maintain turfgrass. He must.

By Larry Aylward

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A Two-Pronged Growth Approach

The First Tee aims to grow the game *and* grow the character of its participants.

By Larry Aylward

Online Exclusive

Listen to this video podcast only at www.golfdom.com:



Here Comes Winter . . . And Snow Mold – Bayer

ES's Chris Olsen provides update on snow-mold control in this interview with *Golfdom* Editor in Chief Larry Aylward.

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF

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There's a spot for a new controller on your course. How will you fill it?

Fact is, this used to be an easy answer. There were only a few choices in irrigation system controllers, and more or less they performed roughly the same. Well, that has changed quite a bit.

The demand for increased water conservation, more flexibility, and better efficiency has led to dramatic breakthrough technologies, and many new options.

So what used to be a routine decision isn't. (And, of course, irrigation controller technology isn't something most of us stay as up-to-date on as say who's at the top of the leaderboard at a PGA TOUR event, or who was just voted off the island last night.)

So where to go from here? That's the million-dollar question. Literally — the right controller system can have that much of an effect. First off, don't just consider the brand. Instead, look at capabilities too. If you do, you'll discover your choice is simpler than you might think. Because there are significant differences. For instance, there's a control system that can offer much greater precision (to the second instead of the minute) in setting rotor run times. Why is this important?

Because shaving seconds of program run time can save hundreds of thousands of gallons of water over

a year. Sometimes as much as 40% in total power and water costs. This same system also allows any controller to act as a central control for all the rest. Why does this matter? It's

a huge time saver if you operate without a central, or during a renovation. Instead of having to visit each and every stand-alone controller on the course, you can just go to one. (Or simply hook one up to a maintenance radio and control them all. Or even better, connect one to the internet with a modem, and manage the whole irrigation system from anywhere you can access the internet, like the clubhouse—or perhaps the couch in front of your TV at home.) Then, there's the question of how easy the controller is to upgrade in the future—as more and more sensor and web-based technology comes online. Here again, the answer is simpler than you might expect. Only one control system is totally software-based. Which means upgrading is just a matter of connecting the controller to a laptop and taking only a few minutes to upload the latest software. What is this advanced system? It's the John Deere Aurora Control Series. Sure it might not be the first name you consider in irrigation, but when you look at everything it offers, it might be just the right one to fill the position. Like to learn more? Call your local John Deere Golf distributor or visit www.JohnDeere.com/Aurora.



For the full story visit
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JOHN DEERE
GOLF

In my writings the past several months, I've tried to place a positive spin on the economy, especially as it relates to the golf industry. When I hear about a "green shoot," as Chairman of the Federal Reserve Ben Bernanke calls them, I'm going to shoot off my mouth about it. We need all the good economic news we can get.

Think back to last November. There was no good economic news. *None*. Doomsayers went on radio and TV and predicted America's financial demise. Housing prices plummeted and kept plummeting. Same for the stock market. Job layoffs were sweeping, the result of companies losing business faster than you could say, "There goes my 401(k)."

Think back to last March. Talk about a winter of discontent. On March 12, the Dow lost 80 points and dropped to 6,547 — its lowest level in 12 years.

Now think back to last month, specifically Oct. 14, when the Dow hit 10,000, the first time in more than a year it went over that mark. It's a green shoot we should all feel good about.

I don't mean to make a big deal out of the Dow because I'm no Warren Buffett. But the fact it has risen more than 50 percent since March 12 is good news. The stock market's rise is significant because a lot of us are making back the money we lost when the stock market tanked. This will improve our consumer confidence and allow us to feel less apprehensive about opening our wallets. Increased consumer spending is vital to getting us out of this mess.

Back to me putting a positive spin on things. Some of our readers apparently don't like my glee. In response to some of my positive writings, a few have written me to say I need a reality check and the economy is getting worse, not better. I understand where they're coming from. The view may look better from higher up than what it really is in the trenches. I realize most of us are not directly affected when Goldman Sachs beats Wall Street's third-quarter estimates. But all of this won't stop me from being positive.

Let's look at our industry, specifically golf rounds, which were flat through August when

Thinking Positive About the Economy

BY LARRY AYLWARD



WHEN I HEAR ABOUT
A 'GREEN SHOOT,'
I'M GOING TO SHOOT
OFF MY MOUTH
ABOUT IT

compared to the same time last year. To me, this is good news. Now, I know rounds and revenue are two different things. While golfers may be playing just as much golf as last year, they're spending less on the game — playing cheaper courses, browsing but not buying in the pro shop and taking other cost-cutting measures — than they have in years past. There's no doubt revenues are down. But an industry insider who knows the business well told me they're down only about 5 percent this year compared to 2008. That's not bad, considering some businesses are down 20 percent to 30 percent.

I know I'm looking at the big picture. And I agree with Dennis Lyon, a veteran certified superintendent in Colorado and former past president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, when he says, "I think the superintendent's attitude toward the recovery is based more on the fiscal climate in which he or she individually works." Translation: If business is lousy where you work, you probably don't feel too good about things.

But that doesn't mean you can't feel good about an economic report stating retail sales were better in September than they were in October, even if that report doesn't impact you directly.

Throughout the year, I've heard people say the media is just feeding the recession with its constant barrage of bad economic news. They say the media has made things worse. But now that the media is reporting good economic news, many people are dismissing it.

Not me. When I hear about some good economic news, I'm going to shout about it from the mountaintop. We need to hear it, and I'm going to do my part to make sure you do.

Aylward can be reached at larryward@questex.com.

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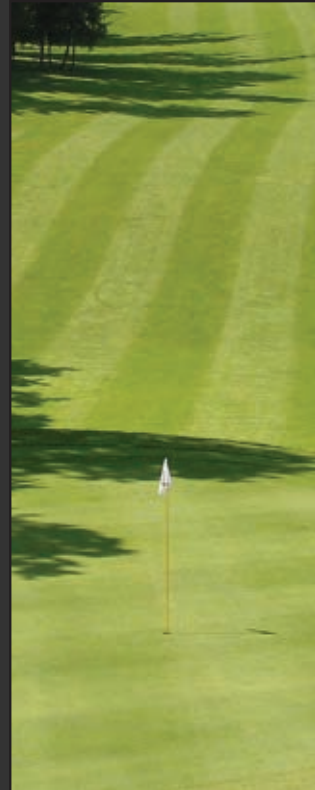
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Off The Fringe

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

Amanda Pope, a professor at the USC School of Cinematic Arts, called the films “precious.” Pope couldn’t have used a better word.

She was talking about the films she helped judge that were named finalists in Rain Bird’s Intelligent Use of Water Film Competition held in September at The Getty Center in Los Angeles.

Living in parched Southern California, Pope knows a thing or two about water’s preciousness. Rain Bird’s competition, which encourages amateur and experienced filmmakers to use the power of film to bring about a greater awareness of the need for responsible water use, awarded three short films with top honors at the screening event.

The winners are:

- **“Small Changes”** by filmmakers Jennifer and Christopher Gandin Le of Austin, Texas — Jury Award Winner;

- **“The Saving Water Song”** by filmmaker Keith Cantrell of McPherson, Kan. — Audience Award Winner; and

- **“More or Less”** by filmmaker Mark E. Petersen of Boulder, Colo. — Green Industry Award Winner.

Rain Bird presented the Gandin Le couple with a check for \$6,000, while Cantrell received a \$3,000 prize. Petersen received \$6,000.

All of the finalists’ films are available for viewing on the competition’s Web site, www.IUOWFILM.com. Try to set aside a few minutes to watch them. You’ll be glad you did.

I had the honor of being a judge for the competition with Pope and



FINALISTS IN RAIN BIRD’S FILM COMPETITION TAKE A SPLENDID APPROACH TO EXPLORE WATER CONSERVATION

Gary McVey, executive director of the American Cinema Foundation; Timothy Brick, chairman of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California; and Philip Sokoloski, manager of communications for FilmL.A. While all the films provided a solid message about water conservation, I thought “Small Changes” was the best. The film lasts only 1:59 minutes, but makes great use of that time. In the film, actors go about their daily lives without using water for things like boiling spaghetti and taking showers.

The films are different in their approaches. For example, “One Single Bucket” is a documentary based on Diana Opong-Parry’s upbringing in Ghana. And “Saving Water Song,” created by the talented 16-year-old Cantrell, is a music video.

This year, Rain Bird, in cooperation

Golfdom Publisher Patrick Roberts (left) and Rain Bird Corporate Marketing Director Dave Johnson (right) present the Green Industry Award check to Mark Petersen.

with Questex Media Group, which publishes *Golfdom* magazine, presented a Green Industry Award to Mark Petersen of Boulder, Colo., for his film, “More or Less.” Petersen is president of Water Catch Inc., a service company that offers irrigation repairs for residential and commercial properties. Petersen also specializes with wire troubleshooting on golf courses. Petersen says he has had difficulty getting some of his clients, especially rich homeowners with 5 acres of property, to understand they don’t have to water their lawns daily to keep them lush and green.

“I can’t tell you how many service

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Off The Fringe Well-Taught

**ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS
LEARN FROM THE BEST AT
GREEN START ACADEMY**

By **Larry Aylward**, Editor in Chief

**John Deere's
Brad Aldridge
makes a point
during an outdoor
demonstration.**

Some day, when they look back on the Green Start Academy, the assistant superintendents who attended the event will realize what an honor it was to be there — if they haven't already.

Last month, about 50 assistant superintendents from across the country were selected to attend Green Start Academy, a two-day educational and networking event sponsored by John Deere Golf and Bayer Environmental Science held in Clayton, N.C., and Fuquay-Varina, N.C.

It's a dynamic program and assistant superintendents get to rub elbows with some of the movers and shakers in the golf course maintenance business. This year, attendees were treated to a Who's Who lineup of speakers. If this were Major League Baseball, this all-star lineup would win the World Series. It included Ken Mangum, certified golf course superintendent of the Atlanta (Ga.) Athletic Club, and Bruce Williams, director of business development in the West for ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance. Mangum and Williams are veterans in the business and call it like they see it.

One thing Mangum and Williams harped on to the assistants was the importance of getting themselves noticed in their quests to move up in their careers. "You can't be better than everyone else if you're doing the same thing," Mangum said.

Of course, there were questions for Mangum and Williams about the struggling economy and job security. "I think everybody is concerned about their jobs," Mangum said.

Stan Zontek, director of the Mid-Atlantic Region for the United States Golf Association's Green Section, talked about golf course trends. More courses are adding first-rate practice facilities to accommodate more golfers who don't have time to play 18 holes, said Zontek, who also spoke about golf course conditioning. While more people say con-

Continued on page 12

PHOTO BY: LARRY AYLWARD