Y2K AND THE EVERYDAY

President Clinton may have been telling the populace that all was hunky-dory in regards to Y2K scares, but golf course superintendents generally took matters into their own hands early in 1999 in order to be prepared for the turning of the millennial clock. From upgrading computers and software programs to stocking inventory, superintendents were preparing, late into the year, for the moment the clock ticks from 12:00 midnight to 12:01 a.m. Jan. 1, 2000.

Meanwhile, they continued to wrestle with hurricanes, droughts and diseases; invent some interesting devices for operating their maintenance shops and keeping their turf alive and well; contribute in a major way to new research efforts by the U.S. Golf Association and the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program; and even handle day-to-day business.

Turfgrass scientists continued their drive to breed bentgrasses that reach into the deep South and Bermudagrasses that will thrive in the Transition Zone.

As time seemed to race on for most, some superintendents took the lead of Gordon Witteveen of the Toronto Board of Trade Golf Courses—retiring.

Quotable Quotes

‘Southern superintendents like to tease us about working six months a year. We tease them that it’s a tough job to kill Bermudagrass.’

— Bob Heron
Canadian Superintendent of the Year

‘We could have had 100 volunteers, without question, which shows the industrywide dedication to Pinehurst and the U.S. Open.’

— Paul Jett, superintendent of Pinehurst #2 course

‘Water is getting as expensive, if not more, than providing electricity. It’s our biggest challenge of the future.’

— George Frye, Kiawah Island Resort’s Ocean Course superintendent

Y2K: Two little numbers, one big problem

By Mark Leslie

On New Years Day I wouldn’t want to be on a golf course because the sprinkler systems will probably be going nuts,” said Pebble Beach Co.’s Dominic Van Ness.

Van Ness, director of the Information Services Department, foresees major problems beginning — and then perhaps snowballing — when the world’s clocks tick from midnight Dec. 31 to 12:01 a.m. Jan. 1.

The situation has been dubbed “The Year 2000 Crisis,” or Y2K, and the scenarios of its effects are endless — from hospitals where lives may hang in the balance to golf courses where the effects will be more mundane, but perhaps far more far-reaching than at first glance.

The whole thing seems so simple. Many computers are programmed to recognize only the last two digits of a year. So when “00” appears at 12:01 a.m., Jan. 1, 2000, it could be interpreted as 1900; or, on some computers, 1980, 1984 or even 1999. This could cause turmoil in how data is analyzed or result in freeze-ups or massive outages.

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New turf care takes bent toward Deep South

By Mark Leslie

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — With his sights keen on growing the cool-season bentgrass into the Deep South, Dr. Milt Engelke has broken the mold of turfgrass care and developed a regimen he feels will, once and for all, make his dream come true.

He already points to success here.

Working with Old Marsh Golf Club superintendent Steve Ehrbar, the Texas A&M professor said, “We feel strongly that we will be okay with the regimen.”

What does it entail?

• Lean water management, irrigating every fourth day.
• Frequent flushing.

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A blower of another kind

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A blower of flux of oxygen to the root zone of putting green. This in-flux of oxygen to the root zone removes gases, which helps stimulate root growth and improve soil quality.

"To keep the air volume (5,000 cfm - 175 mph) on each green high enough to get our desired results," Davis said, "we isolate our greens' drainage system after it exits the green, so any excess air does not enter the surrounding drainage systems."

Olde Florida has a buried vault setup on the 15th and 18th greens, with green-colored removable plastic covers. A 4-inch-diameter slide valve is shut off during the blowing operation so no air can escape. Next to the slide valve is a 4-inch-diameter female hose fitting that is connected to the green's subsurface drainage piping. The blower has a 4- or 6-inch-diameter flexible ADS-type non-perforated discharge hose that is easily connected in the vault, with or without a reducer, to begin the blowing operation. It is hooked up to the blower by a 4-inch quick connect cam lock male (plastic) and female (aluminum) apparatus.

"When we wish to remove excess water from the green's subsurface drainage piping, we simply move the 4-inch-diameter hose to the cam lock quick connect in the center of the fan housing to provide a sucking action," Davis said. "The excess water proceeds rapidly through the blower discharge outlet."

Mounted on a riding bunker rake, the blowers remove debris from sand bunkers prior to them being mechanically raked. When used on the rake, the blower's electrical hookup connects to the bunker rake's battery and its fuel hookup is connected to the bunker rake's fuel tank.

When the blower is mounted to a turf truckster bed, trailer or tractor three-point hitch, there usually is a separate fuel tank and battery to operate the engine starter.

"We have been blowing our greens' subsurfaces for five years now, giving each green one to two hours per day when needed, depending on the local climatic conditions," Davis said. "We are fortunate to be able to blow during play because our vaults are far enough away from the neighboring Golf Club of the Everglades that Rees Jones is designing, and said: "We are installing vaults to hook up blowers on all 18 greens, the putting green and chipping green there."

Davis said the manufacturer of the self-contained blower also makes a new electrically operated low-pressure system that can produce heated and cooled air. Specifications include an air volume of 1,000 cfm, dual mode sucking and blowing, two 3-horsepower 230-volt motors with a power draw of 13 amps full load with a 60-amp start, quiet operation at 51 dba at 30 feet, and 4- or 6-inch outlets with quick disconnect hoses.