Cell phones? No dice at Brasstown Valley

To the editor:

Just a quick note to let you know, my crew and I really enjoyed your commentary on cell phones (Golf Course News, November). We've had our sign up since April of 1999 and have really enjoyed needing the cell phone walkabouts.

These people really don't know how to take our songs. They ask us if we are really serious. All we can do is laugh and say, "Have fun and play golf only."

Personally, I feel the same as you about the issue, and would like to see some type of golf code of ethics.

Hey, if Ben Hogan knew this behavior was going on, in the game he so cherished, he would roll over in his grave, if he hasn't done so already.

Sincerely,

Steve G. Gona,
Brasstown Valley
Young Harris, Georgia

P.S.—My crew thought paint balls would be the way to go on the sniper issue: 1) red = slow play; 2) yellow = 2nd warning; 3) black = you're gone, partner!

Editor's note: I have this great idea for signage for no cell phones and, what do you know, the folks at Brasstown Valley are six months ahead of me. What do you know?

continued on next page

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Eyeballing the future

‘My interest is in the future because I am going to spend the rest of my life there.’
— Charles F. Kettering

In the midst of millennium madness my mind meanders to the fact that the millennium doesn’t start until Jan. 1, 2001 — a year from now. But never mind reality in this day of giddiness. For a moment, let’s go along with the crowd — some of whom are actually attributing the economic rocket ship America is riding to Bill Clinton, of all people. Let’s take a look with those rose-colored glasses at the next 100 years. It can be an exciting trip, something like my wife’s grandmother who, in her 96 years, lived to see the first car, the first airplane and the first computer.

This century we’ve come from horse-drawn mowers to a mower in which you log in the coordinates of your fairway and let ‘er rip.

The future? Doctors are about to implant manmade eyes into Stevie Wonder. I foresee manmade eyes in that machine that will help it mow the golf course from tee to green. And that troublesome job of cutting the cups each day? A day will come when you can program the mower to cut the cup for position 1 or 2 or 7 on each of the greens.

• The Internet is barely a baby and its possibilities seem limitless. Everyone, it seems, has a home page — even my nephew. And e-commerce is everywhere. Indeed, who does not sell their goods and services over the World Wide Web?

The future? Virtual reality will come to golf. Turfgrass professors will take cybertrips to golf courses to investigate diseases and prescribe a cure without even leaving their offices.

Better still, can’t you wait for the time when Prof. Growmore can say, ‘Beam me up, Scotty’?

• Designing courses on computers with CADD software has speeded up a number of processes and helped many architects like several others, commented about this summer’s record-setting temperatures. "What’s the one thing you learned this year that’s new?" the Ohio State professor said.

Now these guys had been around for awhile, through droughts and floods, good economies and bad, strong green committees and weak ones. I expected at least one or two "Gee, I don’t know. It was just another golf season."

But these guys were more like school kids leaning forward in their seats thrusting their hands toward the ceiling because they knew the answer to the teacher’s question.

"Some of these fairy rings can actually increase in activity the hotter it gets," answered Dr. Randy Kane, an agronomic troubleshooter for the Chicago District Golf Association who, like several others, commented about this summer’s record heat. "Once it gets over 100 degrees even pythium and brown patch shut down. But these fairy rings really take off."

Keith Hopp of the USGA’s Mid-Atlantic region noted "how little water" he and the supers in his region found they needed to keep grass healthy and presentable.

Ted Hunker of Tartan Fields Golf Club in Powell, Ohio, said, "The new bentgrasses can be pushed over the edge just like the old bentgrasses can be pushed over the edge."

"Good people in the right positions is the key," said Todd Voss of Double Eagle Golf Club in Galena. "Second, lightweight brooming can add just as much to green speed as...

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Super's keep late hours for knowledge

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o it’s 7 o’clock on an early-December Tuesday evening in Columbus, Ohio. The superintendents and assorted turfgrass managers assembled at the Ohio Turfgrass Conference and Show have had a full day of meetings, educational sessions and trade show tromping. Now the bars and restaurants are open. ESPN SportsCenter is winding down and a full slate of college basketball, NBA and NHL games are about to hit the airwaves. Then there are home courses to check up on and loved ones to call before they head off to bed.

So, considering the alternatives, how many people would you expect to show up for a late-night session called "Greens Management — What’s Working and What’s Not" featuring Ohio State Professor Dr. Karl Dannecker moderating a panel of seven local superintendents, a pair of United States Golf Association agronomists and a Chicago city agronomist?

No disrespect to the distinguished moderator and panel, but I thought a dozen, maybe two dozen at best would venture back to the conference rooms they had already inhabited since 6:30 that morning.

“Missed it by that much,” as perplexed secret agent Maxwell Smart used to say holding thumb and forefinger an inch apart. Try 200 people wedged into a packed room.

The numerous experts trying to quench their collective thirst for a little more knowledge was the first thing that impressed me.

The second eye opener was one of Dannecker’s opening questions to the seven supers who, between them, must have had somewhere in the vicinity of 200 years of combined turfgrass-growing experience.

“What’s the one thing you learned this year that’s new?”

The Ohio State professor said.

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Editorial Office
Golf Course News
106 Lafayette St., P. O. Box 997
Yarmouth, ME 04096
207-846-1099; Fax: 207-846-0657
mcleish@golfcoursenews.com
pblais@golfcoursenews.com
acoverbeck@golfcoursenews.com

Advertising Office
National Sales:
Charles E. von Brecht
106 Lafayette St., P. O. Box 997
Yarmouth, ME 04096
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657
cvonb@golfcoursenews.com

Western Sales:
Michael Levens
Western Territory Manager
106 Lafayette St., P. O. Box 997
Yarmouth, ME 04096
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657
mlevans@golfcoursenews.com

Marketplace Sales:
Jean Andrews
P.O. Box 997
Fryeburg, Maine 04037
Phone/FAX 207-925-1099

Subscription Information
Golf Course News, P.O. Box 3047
Langhorne, PA 19047
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Waupaca and Caleb of Madison; three way of giving back to the community," he granddaughters, JennaMarie Pagel and 54909.

A memorial fund has been established. People may send donations to Janet Powers at Sentry World in December, "but I am determined to do so. It was Wes' dream. It was the one constant in the last months of his life."

He had worked at Sentry World and Foxfire Golf Course. In 1998 he opened Lanark Links, making golf very affordable for youths and adults alike as "our dream, the 18-hole Lanark Links, in Almon and. Survivors include his wife, two daughters, Jennifer Pagel of Waupaca and Kari Scott of Almond; two sons, Wesley of Waupaca and Caleb of Madison; three granddaughters, JennaMarie Pagel and Paige and Haley Scott; and his mother, Lula and LeRoy Decker of Onarga, Ill. A memorial fund has been established. People may send donations to Janet Powers at 7519 Wolf Lake Rd., Almond, Wis. 54909.

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Supers seek know-how in late-night sessions

Continued from previous page

Matt Shaeffer of Columbus Country Club noted: "We roll all the time. But members aren't as concerned with turf quality as you [superintendents] are. If the playing surfaces are exceptional, they don't know that you have dollar spot, yellow tuft, brown patch or that your turf density isn't 80 percent of what it used to be. They are preoccupied with playability... You are your own worst critic. When you think it's bad, it's nowhere near as bad as you think it is."

Bob Figurella of Brookside Country Club in Canton, home to some wildly undulating Donald Ross greens, agreed. "Members don't care about the Stimpmeter," he said. "They don't care about anything but how much movement there is in that putt."

The next hour and a half was non-stop questions and answers from an audience whose numbers never dwindled until Danneberger said, "Time to go home kids." Or words to that effect.

If the organizers of the Ohio Turfgrass Conference and similar events ever begin to wonder if what they are doing is worthwhile, just ask some of those people attending the 7 p.m. sessions. I think you'll like the answer.

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