

## 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



Mark Leslie  
editor

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.



Many courses have web pages.

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 with dig-and-fill figures, but aren't we just skimming the surface?

The future? Simply plug your finished CADD disks into earthmoving equipment out on the site, turn on the engine and watch that equipment (remember the manmade eyes?) create the course envisioned on the disk.

- GPS and GIS technology is being used today to precisely map courses and all the particulars in them — and under them — from irrigation and drainage lines to bunkers, greens, tees and trees.

The future? Working with a course's weather station and tuning into weather-forecasting services, GPS- and GIS-driven equipment will micromanage irrigation, chemical applications and various other tasks.

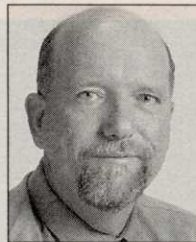
- Spanish is now a prerequisite for two-year students at Michigan State University. I foresee the day when you won't have

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## Supers keep late hours for knowledge

So 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.



Peter Blais  
managing editor

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 Danneberger 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 number of turf 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 Danneberger'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.

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 Happ 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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## 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 needling the cell phone walk-a-bouts!

These people really don't know how to take our singe. 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. Gonea,  
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!*



The sign at Brasstown Valley.

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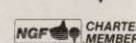
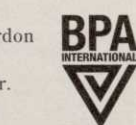
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