



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.

And as time seemed to race on for most, some superintendents took the lead of Gordon Witteveen of the Toronto Board of Trade Golf Courses — and slowed down by retiring.

Quotable Quotes



Bob Heron

'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**



George Frye

'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

Superintendent, thy middle name is Invention

AUGUST



A leaf and debris blower can operate for hours with an auxiliary fuel tank.

Bunker rake blower aerates root zone

By TERRY BUCHEN

NAPLES, Fla. — A new portable turf aeration blower system can supply oxygen to the root zone of putting greens, suck water out of a green's drainage pipes, and even blow away surface debris in sand bunkers.

Superintendent Darren Davis of Olde Florida Golf Club here reports the versatile blower is "another great tool in our golf course maintenance equipment arsenal."

Davis has two of the self-contained blower units, which can be mounted easily onto a turf truckster bed, trailer, tractor three-point hitch, or on the back of a riding bunker rake.

The blower, he said, can move a significant amount of air through the perforated drainage piping of a U.S. Golf Association

Continued on page 18

FEBRUARY



Flagstick storage within easy sight and reach.

Flagstick storage using unused ceiling space

By TERRY BUCHEN

PARAMUS, N.J. — Irrigation technician Dave Zollinger turned wasted space into valuable at The Ridgewood Country Club here, at the same time solving where to store flagsticks for the 27-hole facility.

Zollinger's "brilliant idea," said superintendent Todd W. Raisch, "was to store all of our spare flagsticks on the horizontal and sloping ceilings, which is totally out of the way from any of our activities."

Zollinger bought enough fishing pole holders at a local store to handle all the flagsticks. Each unit can hold six flagsticks. The holders have a foam-type slit so when the circular part of the flagstick is pushed all the way in it snaps into place.

Not only do the fishing pole holders were well, they are inexpensive, Raisch said.

"Storage space is always of para-

Continued on page 19

APRIL



Crew member Daniel Fassina nails down the cover over one of the greens at Islesmere Golf & Country Club.

From Canada with love: Bubble covers for greens

By MARK LESLIE

TORONTO — Be it laser shooting, Global Positioning Satellite technology or soil sensors, some of the greatest advances in the world of golf have been borrowed from other industries. Enter the latest: Bubble Covers, originally designed to lay over swimming pools to keep them warm.

Quebec superintendents have been experimenting with Bubble Covers to protect their greens from winter injury, and, according to Serge Gauthier, they have found success while saving money.

Speaking at the Canadian International Turfgrass Conference here, the superintendent at Islesmere Golf and Country Club in Laval, Quebec, said his

Continued on page 19

JANUARY

Y2K: Two little numbers, one big problem

By MARK LESLIE

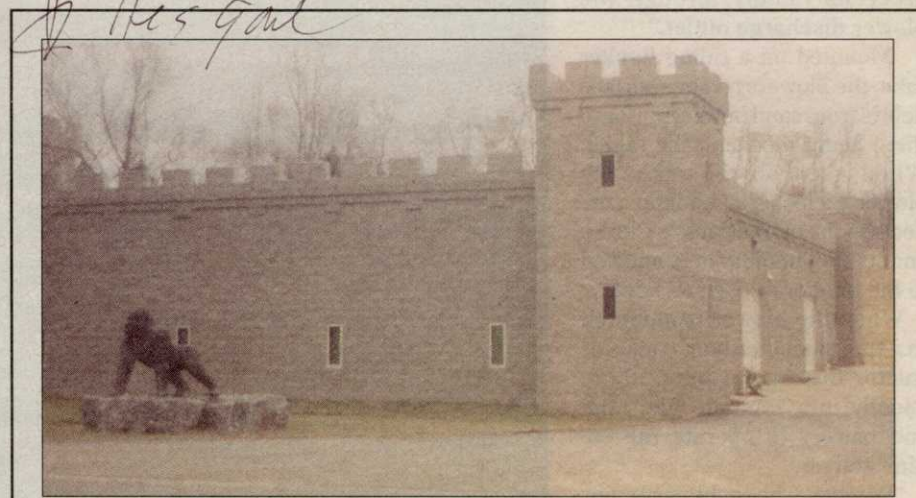
"On New Years Day I wouldn't want to be on a golf course because the sprinkler systems will probably be going nuts," said Pebble Beach Co.'s Dominic Van Ness.

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

Continued on page 20



A MAN'S MAINTENANCE BUILDING IS HIS CASTLE

Superintendent Andy Mottel's maintenance building at Fieldstone Golf Club in Greenville, Del., is unlike any we have seen. So, when we wrote about the new Hurdzan/Fry-designed golf course in February we held onto this photo for a special occasion: our end-of-the-millennium edition.

FEBRUARY

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.

Continued on page 21

Y2K and you

Continued from page 17
malfunctions.

According to Brad Kocher, director of golf course maintenance at Pinehurst (N.C.) Resort and Country Club, an expert hired to whip the resort into "Y2K compliance" told department heads "if it plugs in, it's subject to [Y2K]. It could have date-sensitive parts in it."

The consultant, Kocher said, "walked into my office, took one look at my TV set, and said, 'That probably won't work in 2000.' It has a timer in it. There are so many things to check out. Irrigation clocks, computers, VCRs..."

Clocks, timers, embedded chips — these gadgets that have made life easier — loom as the culprits in a bad prank, golf course superintendents and general managers fear.

Embedded chips, for instance, on which programming is written, are used instead of clocks in many devices. Billions of them are in use in satellites, water and sewage systems, desktop and laptop computers, airplanes and trains, nuclear power stations, power grid systems, pipelines, credit card systems, telephone systems, cellular phones and answering machines, facsimile machines, photocopiers, cameras, time-recording systems and voice mail, air conditioning and heating systems, fire alarms, sprinkler systems, signaling systems, Global Positioning System receivers, microwaves and VCRs, and digital organizers. The list goes on.

"There are things you wouldn't think were date-driven that have a date chip," said Dave Wilber of Wilber Turf & Soil Services in Rocklin, Calif., "[like] the solid-state brain in the Fairway 5100."

And their effects more wide-reaching than expected.

"Remember when a satellite went down a couple of months ago and shut off cell phones?" asked Ron Andrews of Grand Harbor Golf Course in Vero Beach. "[Weather service provider] DTN went down as well. Look what losing one satellite did in terms of temporarily losing beepers and DTN. Make that losing 10 satellites and I don't have a clue what would happen."

"Basically, it boils down to two ways you can have a problem," Andrews said. "First, on your site with your equipment.

"Second, with your vendors. That is really the difficult issue to get a handle on because they all have shippers and vendors and suppliers, who all have shippers and vendors and suppliers, who all have... You can quickly see that we are so interconnected in this society, that the problems expand away from our own site."

"Our biggest concern is the things that we have no control over," Van Ness said. "We have

no control over power, or water, or whether the municipalities are ready. We have no control over our vendors. For instance, the vendors who provide our clothing. It is shipped from the Far East, and it's dubious whether they're ready. Who knows? Our stores might go empty... a couple of months down the road."

Unable to affect outside sources, golf courses should ensure their own operations.

"Our Information Systems people will not be celebrating New Years Day in the traditional fashion. They will be here," said Pebble Beach Golf Operations Manager Shawn Smith.

Indeed, Van Ness said: "I've told everybody not to plan on going to the pyramids in Egypt for that time. We will have one or two staff on that night and have everybody come in to work on Jan. 1 to see what happens. It

will be the best of all worlds if we're sitting there bored."

Many feel Jan. 1, 2000, will be an interesting, and challenging, time. They feel it will neither be the end of the world, nor nothing, but somewhere in between.

As superintendent Scott Cybulski, of Falmouth (Maine) Country Club, said: "I don't see us falling apart. Y2K's not going to stop photosynthesis, is it?"

"Jan. 1, 2000, will be interest-

ing but not that bad," Van Ness said. "I think it will be the longer-term effects that will start to show up. It will build — small problems at first and then more small problems and more, and before you know it, there will be all kinds of things going wrong. And if it affects the worldwide economy, it means less money, less expendable income. And what do you do when you stop income? You stop playing golf." ▶

