

**I** always like to start the new year fresh, so in addition to New Year's resolutions, I like to take care of any unfinished business I might have hanging from the year before. So as we enter Y2K, I have a few things I'd like to get off my chest:

What if the handful of activist superintendents scattered around the country didn't take it upon themselves to challenge various water management districts, the EPA and Friends of the Earth? I wonder what golf courses would look like today?

The last time I checked, those bureaucratic and political battles weren't in a superintendent's job description. I find it amazing that a golf course's manager of grounds is on the front-line fighting for the welfare of the club. Why aren't the golf course owners and general managers taking a stand?

When the water is no longer available and all the chemicals and fertilizers have been banned, who will be the biggest losers?

I guess in some sort of crazy, convoluted way, superintendents think they must fight these battles to keep their jobs. Maybe they just love the game more than those who play it for a living. No matter what happens, though, there will always be superintendents on the job out there spraying soapy water on the bugs, grooming the weeds, raking the sand greens and listening to the golfers blaming them for the poor conditions.

## Join the club

What if golf course owners could see the value of paying their superintendents' dues to belong to local, state and national associations? It's amazing how many clubs still won't put a \$2,000 dues/travel line item in the budget — though, that shouldn't stop a superintendent from joining on his or her own.

It might cost the club \$500 to \$600 a year in dues and another couple of hundred a year for the superintendent to attend a few chapter meetings and have lunch with his or her peers. On the other hand, a golf club — big or small — must have its priorities straight. Five-hundred bucks is about 50 pounds of shrimp cocktail and a few cases of beer. When you put it that way, it goes without saying that a trip to

# What if ... ? Last Rants for 1999

BY JOEL JACKSON



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the GCSAA conference and show would be out of the question.

## Life expectancy

What if Southern superintendents could shut down their golf courses for three or four months in the dead of summer like the Northern courses do in the winter? I laugh when I read the September/October newsletters from my Northern peers as the president's and editor's messages praise the coming of fall and the end of a grueling spring and summer. Southern superintendents don't get time off for good behavior.

It must be a proud and amazing sight up North to see Old Bessie, the 20-year old triplex, come rolling out of the shop in the spring having been rebuilt and repainted for the umpteenth time. There are mowers in use in the snowbelt that are older than Tiger Woods.

Down South, courses struggle to get three to five years out of a mower that must cut grass almost daily. I heard that normal operation of a greensmower engine in the South for one year is like putting 100,000 miles on an automobile. I wonder what the life expectancy is of a superintendent who has to go full bore 12 months a year?

## But seriously ...

Mother Nature proved again to be more than a match for mere humans — as North Carolina can attest. The magnitude of destruction and the aftermath of the flooding make the regulatory and scare tactics of EPA and Friends of the Earth look like gnats on an elephant. Hey people, let's focus on real problems.

Happy holidays . . . and I sure hope my computer is Y2K compliant.

*Joel Jackson, CGCS, retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.*