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Business Name

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Fax

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☐ Owner ☐ Manager ☐ Other:_____

Golf

☐ Golf Superintendent ☐ Other:_____

1. How much Roundup PRO did you purchase in 1999?

2. What is your annual herbicide budget?

Primary Herbicide Retailer

Retailer Phone

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Roundup PRODry™ Herbicide

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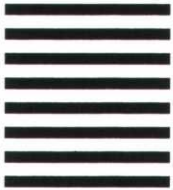

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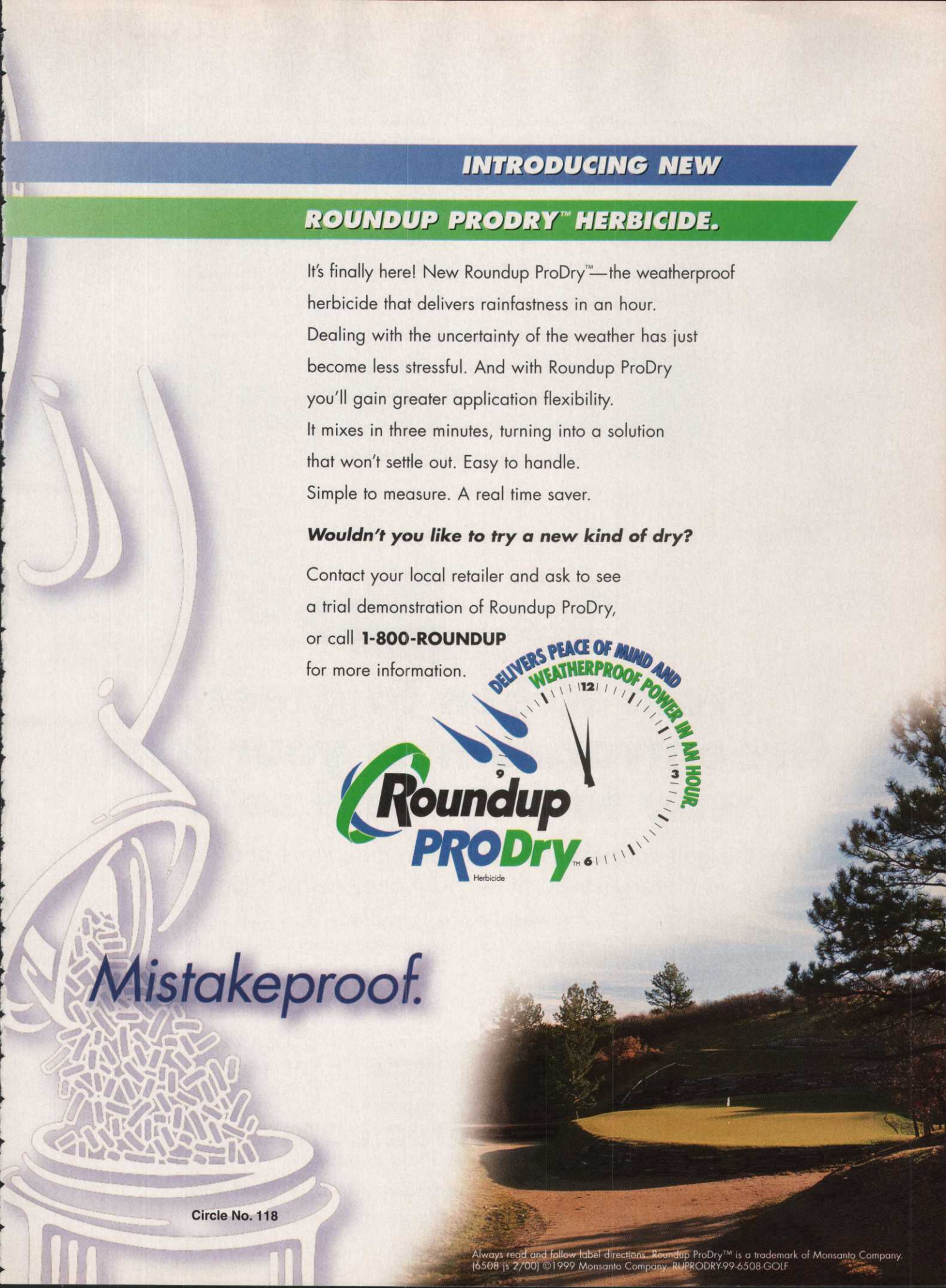

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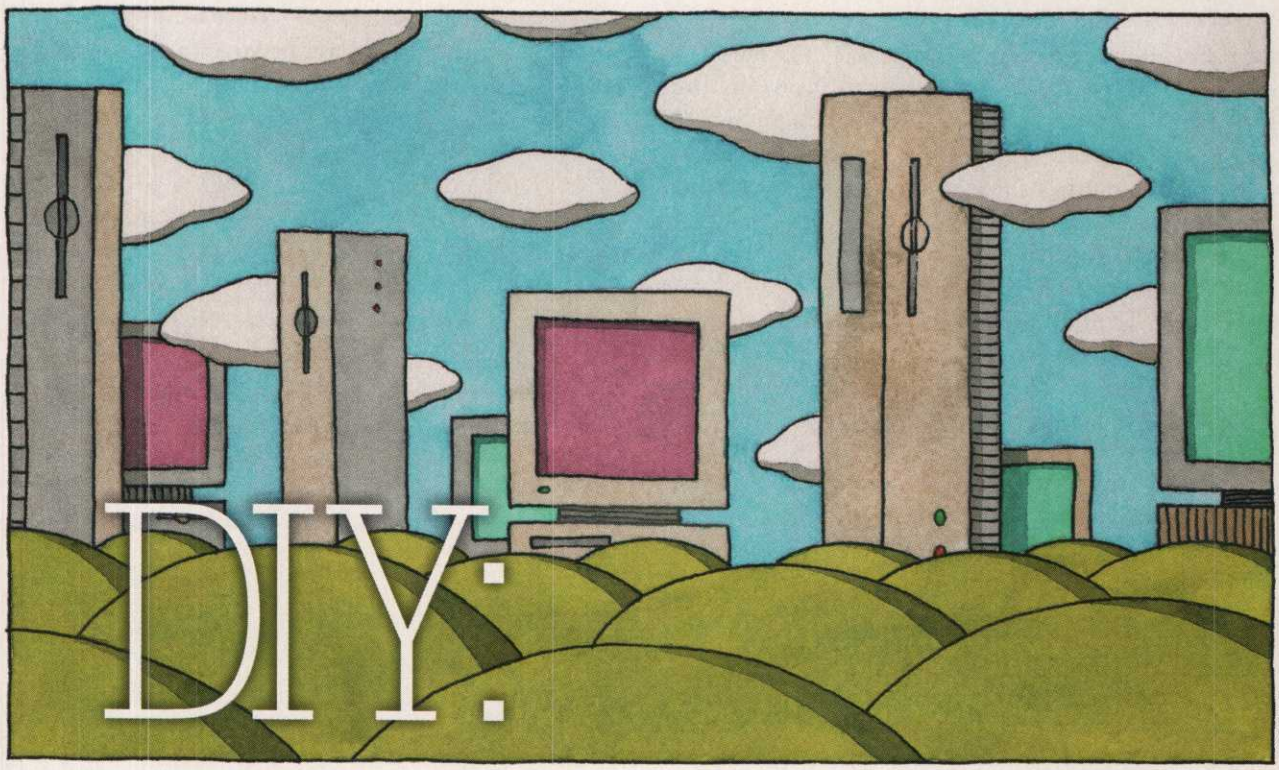

ARTVILLE

Build Your Own Cool Web Site

You can do it with a little help from some cutting-edge software

BY JOE DYSART

Designing a stellar golf course Web site once involved tedious coding and a nerd-like understanding of the 'Net. The good news is that a slew of new software has emerged to help automate the process. This means that heart-stopping golf course photography, audio/video streaming, 3-D imaging and other Web special effects are now within the grasp of any design-hungry personal computer user.

Indeed, given that superintendents are continually seeking ways to better communicate who they are — and what they do for the courses they represent — such cool tools can't come a nanosecond too soon. Superintendents can now use these nifty software programs to catapult their golf course Web sites beyond the ordinary.

Not surprisingly, you'll find most golf course Web sites use at least some of these tools. But there are a few sites

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that have leveraged a range of these tools to create truly distinctive Web presences. In either case, the best of the sites enable a superintendent to reach the community, as well as enable the community to use the Web site as an alternative communications interface to the actual golf course. Golfers can learn more about the design of the course, course conditions, weather and relevant news to make their course visits more enjoyable.

Here are the tools that make this kind of community outreach possible:

General construction

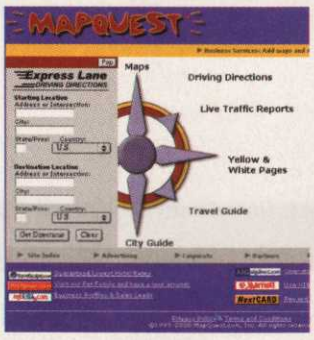
If you're serious about building a Web site, Dreamweaver 3.0, ($299) by San Francisco-based Macromedia, is the industrial-strength package you'll want to learn. It's designed to let you build Web pages using images, rather than HTML text, and integrates well with related tools such as Adobe PhotoShop.

DreamWeaver also enables you to ensure that your site can be downloaded by 'Net cruisers using older browsers, can be optimized to ensure it does not "overwrite" pages you've created with other programs, and enables you to select and resize images directly on the Web page your creating. It's a powerful, pro-level tool that is also accessible to the motivated beginner. (Check out **www.macromedia.com** for more information.)

Sunol Valley (**www.sunolvalley.com**) in Sunol, Calif., provides a solid industry example of what is achievable with a program like Dreamweaver. Sporting a well-designed and easily navigable interface, its home page offers quick jumps to all the site's major interest areas. The design is eye-catching, yet the images are kept small so that the site can quickly download over the 'Net.

Interactivity

Generally available as a programming option in any good Web design package, interactivity enables visitors to begin using your Web site.



For some courses, such as the Agate Beach Course (**www.orgolf.org/agate-beach.html**) in Newport, Ore., interactivity comes with something as simple as a link to Mapquest (**www.mapquest. com**), a free service providing door-to-door driving directions between any two points in the United States.

Meanwhile, Boundary Oak GC (**www.boundaryoak.com**) in Walnut Creek, Calif., has a function that allows visitors to sign up for an e-mail-delivered newsletter, which includes news of course improvements, progress on its new irrigation system and other related capital improvements that often fall under a superintendent's responsibility.

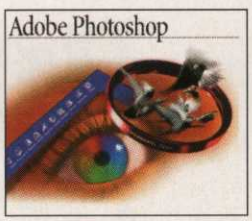
Crucial elements

You're blessed if you're already sharp enough to create your own custom Web-site banners, backgrounds, buttons, bullets and the like from scratch.

For the rest of us, there's NetStudio 2000 ($89) by Berkeley, Calif.-based NetStudio. This is an easy-to-use program that enables a superintendent to upgrade a Web site from dreary to dramatic. It's easy to grasp and it features learn-by-doing tutorials. (Check out **www.netstudio.com** for more information.)

Creation and management

Superintendents with only peripheral graphic needs can probably get away with a less expensive program. But for serious graphics afficionados who are looking for industrial-strength performance, nothing but Photoshop 5.5 by San Jose, Calif.-based Adobe ($544) will do.



Virtually everything you wished you could do with an image — combine, paint, modify, go crazy with filtering effects — can be done with Photoshop. New features include multiple levels of undo, text that is customizable, and a magnetic pen and magnetic lasso. (Check out **www.adobe.com** for more information.)

Courses like the Iron Horse (**www.golf.sw.com/tx./ihorse**) in North Richland Hills, Texas, have leveraged dramatic photography to offer an aerial photo of each hole. The Richmond CC (**www.richmondcc.com**), in Richmond, Calif., also boasts pictures of the grounds crew's labors with gorgeous photos of every hole.

Animated images

Too often, animation software seems designed by those determined to make you pay your dues before you can use it effectively. Thankfully, this isn't the case with WebSpice Animations ($149) by Morgan Hill, Calif.-based De-Morgan Industries.

Simply pop in the CD-ROM, point and click four or five times and presto — you've lifted the animation you want from this program right to your golf course Web page. Choose from 3-D animated objects, letters, words, buttons and arrows and leave people wondering how you became so gifted in Web animation. (Check out **www.webspice.com** for more information.)

Virtual reality tour

While considered fairly sophisticated, panoramic virtual reality is nevertheless being used by some Web sites to create 360-degree "tours" of products, company headquarters and the like. The technology is perfect for a superintendent looking to give visitors an up-close view of course conditions.

Currently, the standard bearer of panoramic VR software is QuickTime VR ($399) by Cupertino, Calif.-based Apple. Essentially, users create panoramic VR experiences by photographing a number of angles of a scene or product, and then "stitching" those scenes together with the software to create a 360-degree, navigable experience. (Check out **www.apple.com** for more information.)

Easy to download

Let your competitors create golf course sites with bloated, slow-loading graphics that no one has the patience to download. But you can take the fast-load, smooth-as-ice-cream approach with your approach by using WebRazor Pro ($129) by Los Angeles-based Ulead. This software virtually guarantees downloading fastness and smoothness with tools that squeeze all the fat from images, animation and 3-D design. (Check out **www.ulead.com** or more information.)

Audio/video streaming

Audio/video streaming can really give the site a professional look. Seattle-based Real Networks is a pioneer of streaming. With its RealAudio and RealVideo Pro Bundle ($399), you'll be able to reach 115 million RealPlayer users.

Its video scaling feature allows you to import video at any size and scale it down for use on the Web. An optimal bandwidth programming feature enables the presentation to adapt to the specific bandwidth of the user.

In short, users will enjoy the experience whether they're using a paltry 28.8 modem or a Ferrari-speed T-3 Internet connection. (Check out **www.realnetworks.com** or more information.) ■

Joe Dysart is an Internet business consultant and free-lance writer based in Thousand Oaks, Calif. He can be reached at joedysart@aol.com

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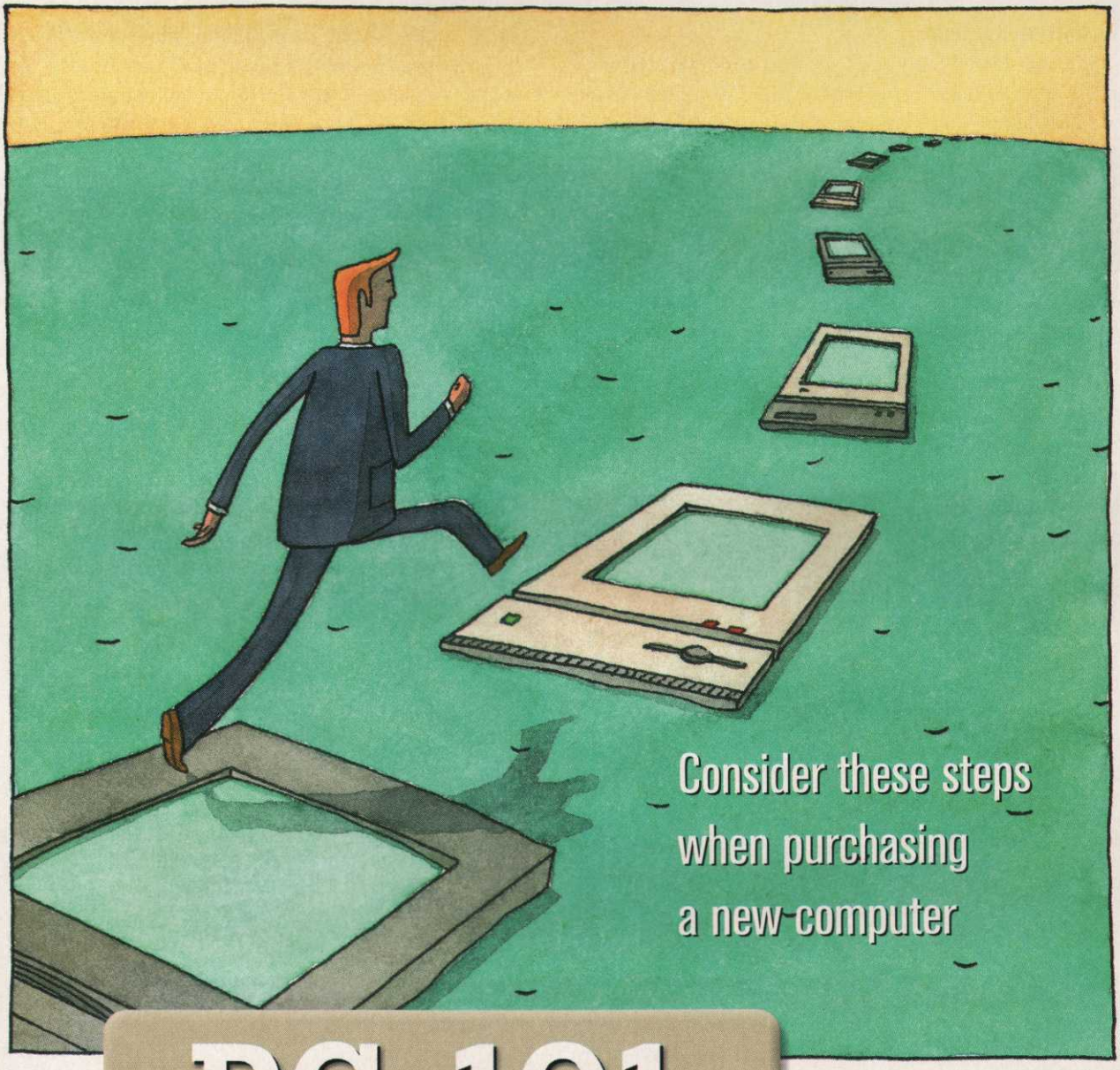

ARTVILLE

PC 101

BY MARK LUCE

Technological obsolescence happens the minute you open up the box for any new personal computer. By the time you get it out of the box and running, there's another PC coming off the manufacturing line that's bigger, faster and stronger than your machine.

As processor speeds continue to increase, data storage becomes more and more efficient, and Internet access becomes quicker. Since more of our lives are governed by computers, it's important not to have second and third thoughts after dropping a cool grand or two on a "new system." You need to make sure that what you're buying today will still meet your needs in a few years.

For superintendents, computers can help do everything from run irrigation systems,

Continued on page 58

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Continued from page 56

manage payroll, control operations and create presentations, in addition to the more communicative tasks of e-mailing, memo writing and buying supplies online. As Peter Brooks, CGCS of the Everglades Club in Palm Beach, Fla., says, "I'd be lost without my computer."

Here are a few steps to find the new computer that best suits your needs:

The rebate question

The PC market is filled with deals too good to be true, such as $400 to $700 rebates when you purchase a machine. Read the fine print because most of those rebates are tied to buying three years of Internet service. Do the math, and often you'll find that you aren't saving money. Further, there's the possibility that prices for Internet service providers may drop so they can compete with the coming wave of super-quick broadband connections like DSL or cable modems.

The engine

The processor drives the computer, and Intel is the leader in making these chips. With new computers touting 700 megahertz speeds — undreamed of just a few years ago — one may be tempted to find the highest number available and snag it. But for the type of tasks superintendents do with a computer, anything from 350 MHz to 500 MHz should work. The differences in speeds as one reaches higher MHz levels will not be noticed unless you want to play high-end video games.

The gas tank

Random-access memory, or RAM, is probably the most important thing to understand when buying a computer. Not only will it make the machine faster, but it will allow you to have several applications open at once. One needs at least 64 megabytes of RAM, but it is probably better to have 96 or 128 MB. Make sure you can upgrade the memory on your new computer because larger-sized applications will eat up more RAM in the future.

Storing it all

The hard disk is basically the storage area for your data, including your programs and files. Bigger is better, and 6.4 gigabytes should hold all your stuff. But again, as programs increase in size, they will gobble up more and more of your hard drive, so a 10 GB drive might be a better choice. You can buy external hard drives in all types of varying sizes.

The eyes have it

Unless you like frying your pupils, get at least a 17-inch monitor. In many bundled computers (where you get the tower, printer, monitor in one package), the monitor is only a 15-inch model. The larger monitor will cost more — usually around $325 to $500 — but it will make the work appear larger and save you from eyestrain.

The digital age

More and more, computers are coming with recordable/rewriteable CD-ROM drives. The CD-ROM is quickly replacing the old 3.5-inch floppy discs, and having a rewriteable CD-ROM will make backing up your system a snap. Plus, you can use the drive to listen to music while you work. If that seems a bit much, try adding a Zip drive, which has discs that can store nearly 100 times more than a standard floppy, making it perfect to store high-tech presentations.

Plugging In

Ports, and plenty of them, are necessary to hook up peripherals, such as printers, scanners, extra hard drives and Zip drives. Increasingly, computers are equipped with universal serial bus ports.

Unlike the old ISA or PCI ports, USB devices are plug and play, meaning no restarting the computer to use a different device. Buy a computer that has at least two USB ports. If you are sticking with an older printer, external modem or another peripheral, however, you may have to purchase some rather expensive connectors to use the older peripherals on the new machine.

A couple of other things to note: If you are going to be hooked to other computers, make sure that you get Ethernet connections. A dedicated memory bank, the L2 cache, speeds up the computer. Usually, this will be listed separately from the RAM memory and 512 K should work fine.

Final thoughts

As in all things, the best thing to do is shop around and ask questions. The computer you think you want may not be the one you really need. Assess what you already have, think about your needs for the future and make sure you know going in how much you (or the club) is willing to spend. Ask friends and colleagues how their computers have performed for them.

While it is often best to stick with the tried and true — Dell, Gateway, Compaq — don't be afraid of custom-built machines by local dealers. If you trust the people working there, going this route can save some money. While it's enticing to buy a computer online since there's no sales tax, check the shipping charges.

Remember, the key isn't how many bells and whistles and cool screen savers your computer has; it's how well it does what you need it to do. What you are really looking for is reliability, flexibility and a good deal. ■

Mark Luce is a free-lance writer from Lawrence, Kan.

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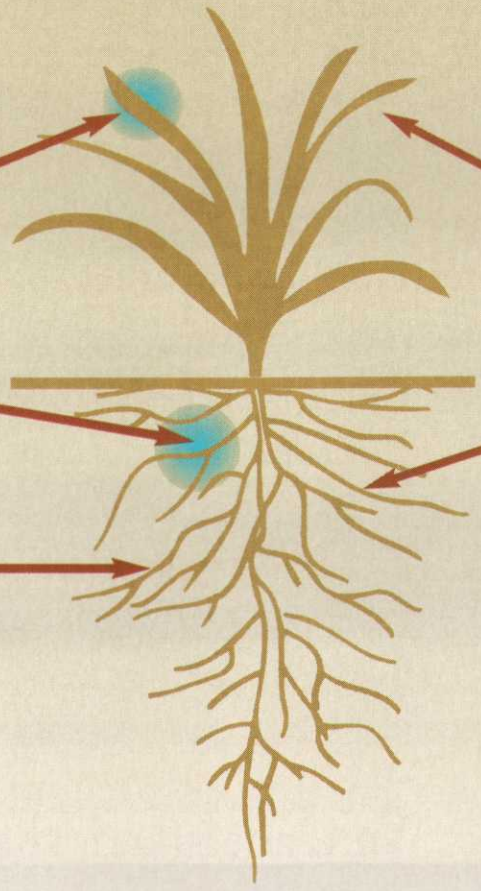

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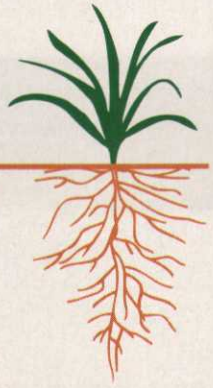

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