

TECHNOLOGY AMPLIFIES HUMAN SKILLS



In the Chalkboard section of this month's *Golf & SportsTURF*, David Frey, director of field maintenance for Cleveland Stadium, takes a look at "Maintenance For The 1990s." He discusses reducing labor costs by using more efficient equipment, which requires fewer, yet more highly skilled operators. As the old nautical chartmakers' saying goes, "Beyond here there be dragons."

Reducing labor through technological advancement guarantees passionate debate, at

least. Proponents argue that by using cutting-edge equipment run by a few well-trained operators, they increase productivity and cut labor costs. Opponents say that such practices cut *more* than costs—that human beings are discarded for the sake of profit. They believe that no machine can replace human judgement, creativity, or devotion.

On this final point, I think, the anti-technological advancement argument strays. I agree that machines cannot replace the human heart or mind, but I have yet to hear any sensible person claim they *can*. Machines, from Apple computers to Frey's tarp roller, are modern-day beasts of burden, good for repetitive, labor-intensive tasks or pure muscle work—nothing more.

As I type this editorial on the computer, the words appear on a screen to my left. After this "file" is copy edited it will be transferred to our main computer, spell checked, and "paginated" by our art director, Sue Noble. The computer can do just about anything she tells it—wrap type around photos or set headlines of various type styles and sizes—before she transfers the layout to floppy discs and sends them off to the printer.

But here's the most salient point: Unless Sue tells the computer exactly what to do, this expensive machine is ultimately worthless. And she had to *learn to use it*—Sue was born creative, not computer literate. Far from eliminating her need for creativity, the computer actually demands more of it.

Technological advancements will always be toughest on "unskilled" labor. Long unemployment lines near factories that have been automated bear harsh witness to this. It's a real problem. There are no simple solutions.

For the person with the opportunity to learn and apply new technology, the possibilities for career growth are limitless. For professional sports facility managers like Frey, technology offers reduced labor costs and high productivity, with no sacrifice in field quality.

Finally, I'd like to strongly encourage all groundskeepers to enter the Baseball Diamond of the Year Award now. The deadline is next month. You'll find the entry form on page 15. The judges are looking forward to seeing your best work.

OCTOBER

16-17 Texas Turfgrass Conference, West Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association. Contact: George Fugitt, WTGSSA, 5402 21st Street, Lubbock, Texas 79407, (806) 792-7442.

16-17 Annual Conference, Southwest Turfgrass Association, Farmington Civic Center, Farmington, NM. Contact: Lynn Ellen Doxon, Executive Director, 9301 Indian School Road, NE Suite 201, Albuquerque, NM 87112, (505) 275-2576.

23 Northeast Regional Institute, Sports Turf Managers Association, Foxboro Stadium, Foxboro, MA. Contact: STMA 1455 E. Tropicana Avenue, Suite 390, Las Vegas, NV 89119, (702) 739-8052.

30 Mid-West Regional Institute, Sports Turf Managers Association, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL. Contact: STMA E. Tropicana Avenue, Suite 390, Las Vegas, NV 89119, (702) 739-805

NOVEMBER

3-5 Annual Meeting, Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association, Jekyll Island Club Resort, Jekyll Island, GA. Contact: Karen White, GGCSA, P.O. Box 683, Watkinsville, GA 30677, (404) 769-4076.

5-8 Turf And Grounds Exposition, New York State Turfgrass Association, Rochester, NY. Contact: NYSTA, P.O. Box 612, Latham, NY 12110. Telephone (518) 783-1229 or (800) 873-TURF

7-9 Arbor Expo 91, Arbor Age Magazine, Springfield Civic Center, Springfield, MA. Contact: Jeff Tappeiner, Arbor Age Magazine, P.O. Box 8420, Van Nuys, CA 91409, (818) 781-8300.