

## OKLAHOMA IN 2007

by Ferdie J. Deering

Published in The Sunday Oklahoman, April 22, 1967

Celebrate Oklahoma's sixtieth anniversary of statehood, and do it well. But don't use up all of your energy. Wait for the centennial in the year 2007. That will be the big one!

There's a good chance that most Oklahomans now under 20 will be around then, along with others now ranging well past 50. It's only 40 years away, and I expect to be around to report the event. In my imagination, I can see it now!

Of course, it won't be necessary to write it out on a typewriter, because we will then be using thought machines to translate brain waves into computer memory systems for electronic recall or transmission whenever and wherever needed. This is an idea that I have been anticipating ever since I started punching out stories on a typewriter one letter at a time.

We can expect advances of this nature will be made in every aspect of our lives. Oklahoma in 2007 will be as different from 1967 as today is different from 1907!

For one thing, Oklahoma will then have a population of five million people. It would be more except that the legislature will have passed a law restricting it to that number, sneaking it through the house and senate as a rider on a bill limiting the annual sessions to 313 days at full pay plus a 60-day paid vacation.

Oklahoma City then will be a city of 1,100,000 with its limits covering 998 square miles, including Nichols Hills and Midwest City, both of which will vote to come in along in the late 1990's. Tulsa will exceed 500,000, while Lawton, Enid, Muskogee, Ada, Shawnee, Ardmore, Ponca City, Bartlesville and several other major communities will exceed 100,000 each. Towns of less than 5,000 will unite with other in the area to form a federated town and country government and school district.

Fears that we might run out of land will have been eliminated by the twenty-first century, as vast new living areas are opened up. Laser beams and atomic power will be used to burrow deep into the ground to construct homes and factories far away from the boom of supersonic planes. Some people will prefer to live at the bottom of lakes or oceans, where they may observe nature and perhaps grow their own algae for food. By then Oklahoma State University scientists will have learned how to keep algae from tasting like stale spinach; by 2007 it can be made to taste like steak, ham, carrots or even cake.

And, of course, some Oklahomans will have established colonies on the moon and possibly other places in our solar system. However, they will go there only to seek out new scientific frontiers and for the sake of adventure, because a professor at the University of Oklahoma will have devised a radar camera that will photograph, sample and analyze all sorts of materials on any planet or asteroid without a visit by man. This operation will be so efficient that

sensations experienced by explorers will be roughly equivalent to a trip to, say, Mars without wasting valuable light-years going there and back.

Because of population pressures around the world, Oklahoma will have set up immigration quotas and a government permit will be required in advance to have a child, with severe penalties for violations. However, such permits will not be issued as political patronage, but will be based upon idealistic matings of intelligent persons shown to be capable of producing great Oklahomans. These individuals whose offspring might become dropouts, criminals, idiots, indigents, or other types of undesirable citizens will be permitted to marry but not to have children. Complete records of generations of families and computerized analysis of transmissible genes will be used to calculate whether a couple might improve Soonerland by having children.

So, technically, life may be more complex than now but practically it will be much simpler because you won't have to worry about a lot of matters that cause people to have ulcers and heart attacks nowadays. Suppose you do have an ailment. No longer will you have to sit in a waiting room with other sufferers to see a doctor. You will simply call the computer at your designated health center. Or rather, you will call a secretary, who will transmit your identification into the computer at the state health center and recite your symptoms to a message machine. Or if you insist on the personal touch, you may have a secretary take them down. The computer will have stored on your health disk all previous data and health history, which it will use in diagnosing your ailment. If it happens to be a highly conservative computer, it may request that 1 or more diagnostic tests be run, possibly even by human technicians. Results will go back to the computer, which will prescribe treatment. Whenever the computer discovers a case of unusual interest, it will contact the doctor at the golf course or at his farm to report it. In rare instances, the doctor will actually see the patient.

This won't be as bad as it may sound, because by 2007 Oklahomans will have available replacement parts for hearts, lungs, eyes, ears and no telling what else. Disease-carrying insects and most germs will have been eliminated and actually health problems will be few.

You will live in a climatized house, probably either a vast dome or a 6-sided structure to which rooms may be added or subtracted as your family grows and shrinks. Your house will include a pool if you like to swim, a miniature all year garden if you like flowers, and a tennis court or other recreational facility. You will need something, because you will be working only two or three days a week, and might not even have to leave home to do that.

Possibly, Oklahomans will find their biggest personal problem in 2007 will be to find interesting, pleasant and useful ways to use time.

Life will be much easier. Food preparation, for example, will be so simple that a child, or even a husband can do it. Shopping will be done by picture-phone, unless the customer just wants to visit the

a store. Even there, she won't find acres of shelves stacked with cans and bottles. From a display of samples, she will select and indicate on her electronic shopping card what she wants. It will record the purchase and signal the storeroom. By the time she gets back to her car or whatever succeeds the car, the merchandise will have been neatly packaged and placed in it. The cost will have been neatly transferred from her bank account to that of the store.

The homemaker also may shop at home, seated between her house-keeping computer and her picture-phone. The computer not only will assist her in preparing menus, but also will calculate optimum buys of ingredients of those few recipes that will not come pre-cooked ready to serve. This computer will be able to perform other chores, such as remembering anniversaries and ordering gifts, planning trips and making reservations, along with automatically changing the disposable sheets on the beds and restoring to its proper position any piece of furniture that becomes displaced from its electromagnet. It will be great for cleaning up after parties.

The food preparation center will feature a device that will receive measured ingredients, mix them and cook them electronically, without heat. There will be no dishwashing, as everything will be prepared in disposable utensils. Neither will there be any laundry. Water-repellent, wrinkle-resistant, non-shrink and stainproof garments will be discarded after wearing.

There will no longer be any public utilities, as conversion units will capture rays of the sun for power, heating and cooling. No cords or gas pipes will be needed. Not even any plumbing system, as each home will have its own unit for conversion of all wastes into useful materials. Air and water pollution of all kinds will be outlawed.

In fact, Oklahoma will no longer be producing petroleum. Tulsa will no longer care for its claim as "Oil Capital of the World" but, like Oklahoma City, will feature its fine cultural qualities. Neither planes, cars, nor ships will use petroleum as fuel. All forms of transportation will be noiseless, smokeless and fast. Residents of Broken Bow and Boise City will be able to visit each other regularly, and if they want to stop off in London, England, or Sydney, Australia, on the way, it will be easy to arrange from the Oklahoma City airport. Either place will be only 58 minutes away.

Ground vehicles will appear in a variety of forms. Intercity traffic will be limited to solar power, utilizing magnetic forces to follow traffic controls imbedded in the multilane, multideck super-duperhighways. Driver will program his route by computer, check on and relax in the car's entertainment center. He will resume control when his vehicle is automatically switched off at destination.

Minicars will be used for personal transportation within cities, while speedline capsules converging from Quail Creek, Edmond, Norman, El Reno, and Spencer will hurry commuters to business centers.

There won't be any motorcycle cops but that won't keep careless drivers out of trouble. Suppose a visitor from Durant flies to Oklahoma City and rents a car at the airport. This will be easy, because he will simply insert a bank card and microphoto or his fingerprints in

in a slot to get the keys. Even at busy hours, he won't have serious traffic problems, because signals will be controlled by computers. However, suppose he steps up above the speed limit. He may be unaware of it until he returns to Durant to discover his error was discovered by an electric eye, which recorded the vehicle number traced it to his account at that hour, and assessed a fine which was instantly deducted from his bank account (determined from his rental record). Computerized law enforcement probably will enter other areas, too.

Communications will be so vast that hardly anybody will be able to tell anybody anything that he doesn't want to know. The Daily Oklahoman and various magazines will be fed into the homes by electronics, neatly filed by microfilm or facsimile to await the reader's pleasure. Wall-size television screens will utilize holography for three-dimension pictures, perhaps even letting viewers see what is behind it all.

Each baby Oklahoman will have his own lifetime number assigned at birth, which he will use for public documents, communications, social security, military purposes, phone numbers, and for voting. Whole integers will be used for normal persons but others may be identified as improper fractions. Picture-phones will be used for private conversations but otherwise, a person may be subject to contact any-time any place by anyone who has his number, as each individual will be equipped with a wrist receiver and sender. Of course, there will be some wrong numbers, in which case the wrist-radio may have advantages over the picture-phone. In either event, you might find yourself talking to a message machine instead of a person.

Schools will be obsolete, insofar as centralized buildings with classrooms are concerned. Statewide consolidation will be in effect. Instead of pupils being grouped with other youngsters who happen to live in the same community, they will be teamed up with others in all parts of the state according to mental acuity, academic interests, and social ambitions. They will learn at home by means of closed circuit television and individual learning machines that will enable each child to progress as rapidly as he is able. Only slow learners will be required to attend central classes but others will be permitted to gather for group activities. Some may participate in school athletics, although for the most part football and similar games will be played by giant robots to eliminate injuries.

Of course, with a 20-hour work week and a 5-day weekend, there will be much less traffic going toward any business locality. Most shopping centers will have long since been converted to luxury apartments. By using dataphones and TV, many executives will be able to supervise business and factory operations from poolside at home. Business conferences and transactions may be executed by this method, although executives in charge of purchasing will still give salesmen a lot of static.

Oklahomans will not be using either money or checks by 2007. Banks will still exist, but there won't be any fly-in types; much less drive-ins. Deposits and withdrawals will be made by wire or radio, utilizing code cards. Loans will be determined by computer instead of

by vice-presidents, who will become available for longer luncheons and more frequent golf matches. Computers will do all of the work, utilizing centralized financial and character data available on all individuals. Stores will use neither cash nor credit, but simply will transfer amount of purchase from customer's account to their own. Churches will receive contributions by means of a chargeaplate, whether the member is present or not.

Computers will be used to help design this life of the future, and will be in daily use by 2007 to invent, manufacture and market new products, grow food, process cook and package it, hire and fire, read and write, learn and teach, and match up couples desiring to marry. That is, if the computers don't invent a machine that will make computers obsolete.

Globe-circling satellites will greatly improve weather knowledge long before 2007 and , to some degree, scientists may be able to practice rain control, counterspin hurricanes, untwist tornadoes, and deflect wind to more comfortable angles. However, weather in Oklahoma will remain unpredictable. But no matter. If a person finds it necessary to leave the ideal environment of his home, he will wear a suit that will air-condition his body either in severe heat or severe cold.

Government will continue to get bigger and bigger until it breaks into small units again, where the people may run their own affairs. Death and taxes will remain. Death rates will continue to go down and tax rates will continue to go up. Both are necessary. High taxes may very well become the only reason a person would want to die and leave this wonderful land of Oklahoma. And death may be the only way to escape the taxes!