

As we approach the year 2000, everybody seems to be looking back at the last century. We have stories of the greatest athletes, people, events, inventions, teams, movies - there is probably someone out there doing a story on the 50 best commercials ever made, the 50 most beloved animals or the 50 greatest Frat parties. We've got 'em all folks!

I feel that this exercise in perception is all pretty much unnecessary. After all, what has happened over the past 100 years has already happened and how we rank them will not change anything. What's done is done, I always say.

Oh sure, I'm just upset because they didn't even mention Sherman Moffitt in their 50 greatest athletes. I promise you nobody brought more fear to a little league ballpark than my big, powerful, gentle friend Sherman. How well I remember wetting my pants when he stepped into the batter's box, praying that he would not hit another one of his rockets my way. He was an intimidating figure in a league where the rest of us usually had sore arms from holding up our oversized mitts for seven innings. I vow never to watch ESPN again for excluding the man who, by 5th grade, was known as Sherman Tank. Michael Jordan was a wimp compared to the Tank, I promise you that.

Be that as it may, I still think looking back on what has been is nowhere near as challenging as looking forward to what might be. I had a great time as a teenager in the sixties, but have no desire to stand around talking about it much today. When my daughter tells me how great her 311 concert was, I don't counter with that boring, "when I was your age I went to see Jimmy Hindrix – now that was rock n roll, baby".

Though I certainly appreciate the lessons we can learn from understanding our history, I'm much more interested in looking forward at the possibilities of the history yet to be created.

So I will not bore you with my opinions as to what has been. I would much rather bore you with my thoughts of what I think might be. What will be the biggest stories of the next century?

To begin with, the obvious. The American League will finally realize that baseball was meant to have pitchers in the batter's box and stop the madness of prolonging

washed-up player's careers with their DH crap. The strategy of bunting, sacrificing and negotiating lineup cards is as much a part of baseball as the home run.

But that's a no brainer. Everybody knows that one except the idiots who hold a position that can actually do something about it. I'll dig a little deeper.

As I look ahead, I think there are two stories that will have great impact on us during the next century.

First, I have long thought it was pretty lame of us to think that we were the only show in town – and quite egotistical, if I may say so. I think the time is drawing near when we will finally have to admit that we are not alone. With all the solar systems, planets, stars and what-not that they are finding out there, I think it just makes sense that they will find life on some other planet. But the big story will not be in finding life on other planets, but in what we do with this knowledge. How will this new neighbor affect us? It is truly an intriguing probability that I hope I'm around to see.

The other story will be the exciting developments in the genetic research already going on. Cloning sheep and busting criminals from DNA is just the tip of the iceberg, my friends. By the end of the next century, the list of diseases and human frailties that potentially could be extinguished will be incredible. And the quality of life coming from understanding the very roots of our genetic makeup will be astonishing.

Of course, there is a down side to everything that comes in the name of progress. But I have always been a strong believer in the goodness of the human spirit. Whatever challenges we face, we have always done so with a core foundation of wanting to do what is right and will be of benefit to all.

And on a personal note, the saddest story of the next century will come about a year after I leave this planet. Someone will be going through all my writings and say the words a writer dreads to hear, "Gee, that Andy really could write". A writer seldom gets his due recognition until after it no longer really matters. After all, what should I expect from a world that couldn't even recognize Sherman Moffitt's impact on the 20th century?

Just A Thought