

# FROM THE PUBLISHER



**R**ALLY 'ROUND THE FLAG... That call has been heard many times over the years. I'm sure that as each call went out it awakened a body of people. Well, the call is going out again, this time to a very select group—you, the professionals who maintain our golf courses, stadiums, recreational areas, campus grounds, etc. The call is for awareness of those who maintain our country's sports and golf complexes. You need to be recognized for the professionals you are. I hope the call is answered. I believe the companies and municipalities that you toil for don't fully understand the challenges you are faced with each and every day. They don't realize the vast areas of knowledge that are required for one to be able to supervise a crew of people to maintain these complexes. How can they appreciate the skills you possess if they don't know about them?

In my mind a professional must have a knowledge of trees. Which tree will do well in a northern exposure and which will thrive in a southern exposure? This professional should know what insects and diseases attack the trees and how the problem should be treated. Many complexes have shrubs and flowers for color around their buildings. The professional should have a working knowledge of these groundcovers, shrubs and flowers, how to identify insect and diseases and how to treat them.

A professional should know about hardscapes, softscapes and waterscapes. He needs to know about grading and drainage. Surely he must be knowledgeable about irrigation and the many components that make up his system. He must know how to troubleshoot when something goes wrong.

Most importantly he must have a good knowledge of turfgrasses. Should he use sod, sprigs or seed? What grass or mixture of grasses will do well in his climatic area? What turf will hold up better for his purposes. He must be able to diagnose the insect and disease problems and be able to treat them. He will probably employ preventive care, because the damage is done. He needs to know about fertilizers and what combination of formulas to use at what time of the year.

He surely has to know how to manage people. He makes decisions on capital expenditures at universities. They are developed in the field and polished with experience. Electricians must have knowledge of electricity and wiring. Plumbers must know about pipe fitting and hydraulics. They, too, are craftsmen, but their skills are limited to their own craft. The professional grounds manager is truly a Jack of all trades—and Master of all as well. With all of the knowledge we must have to maintain our properties, we are constantly defending ourselves in front of our Green's Committees or city managers or whoever else we report to, because someone feels our grounds are not always in the best condition.

They complain that we have a budget, 'So why don't our grounds look good?' Although one can try to explain that you're dealing with nature, and sometimes Mother Nature doesn't cooperate, you end up being the scapegoat.

We can't control Mother Nature, but we can use our skills and knowledge to make the best out of any condition. Still, we have to let management know that we are doing the job on getting this message out. That could be one reason we don't have the high respect we deserve.

If we are not doing our best, if we do not continue to learn, we are helping to project a poor image.

You deserve better than that. The skills you have polished took years to attain. I hate to see you put down because management doesn't understand what you are up against. **SportsTURF** magazine is an integral part of the learning process. We try to give you insight into what others are doing. We report on the newest technology and we report the industry happenings. This journal is for you, by you and of you. So use it. Let **sportsTURF** be your flag, and... **RALLY 'ROUND THE FLAG, BOYS!**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a background of horizontal lines.