

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

HELP PUT STMA INTO ORBIT



Seems like it was just a few months ago when I was sitting in Harry Gill's hotel room in Denver with six sports turf managers from across the country, talking about the future of the Sports Turf Managers' Association. In fact, it was more than four years ago—and STMA had roughly 60 members, no executive director, and no headquarters of its own.

In that cramped hotel room, the small group charted a course for STMA that would enable it to expand its help and influence throughout the country. Today STMA has more than 700 members, an executive secretary, its own headquarters and a full-time assistant. Admittedly, that's a far cry from GCSAA's 7,000 members and staff of 30. But it is definite progress, and has already resulted in a marked improvement in the safety of sports turf at all types of facilities in the U.S.

It took a great deal of personal time and energy by a growing number of dedicated sports turf managers, extension specialists and suppliers to make it happen. Every dime of revenue has been poured back into the organization to fund its growth and build a foundation for the future.

Like the U.S. Space Program, STMA has built the launching pad and a shuttle for future exploration—now it needs the support of everyone to get into orbit, as did Discovery a few years ago.

I urge all sports turf managers to help launch STMA into its own badly needed orbit, by joining the organization and attending its first national trade show and conference at Dodgertown, Vero Beach, FL, this January.

In one long weekend, you will discover and absorb a tremendous amount of knowledge that you can take home and apply directly to your facility. This kind of pertinent information will come from fellow sports turf managers from across the nation who face the same challenges you do, day in and day out.

In Dodgertown's relaxed setting, you will have time to discuss your most pressing problems with those who share your concern and have already tried a number of available solutions. Suppliers will have equipment designed just to meet your needs on site for your evaluation and operation. The latest chemicals and supplies will be displayed by those who are highly versed in their use and application. This type of first-hand exposure is generally non-existent to most sports turf managers on a local basis.

The obvious question is how can you justify the cost? My response is that you can barely afford *not* to go, if you and your management fully appreciate the positive benefits of safe, durable sports turf... or the negative cost of marginal, potentially unsafe turf.

The icing on the cake for sports turf managers who have attended STMA regional events is the pride you and your facility will share when a bare-bones field is upgraded into a showplace for athletes who use it. It's hard to describe, but this feeling of accomplishment can be the most rewarding aspect of your profession.

That feeling is available to everyone. Take the first step. Turn the page. There you will find the conference registration form. Fill it out and send it to STMA today. You have everything to gain and virtually nothing to lose. Best of all, you will help put STMA into orbit to benefit the sports turf universe for years to come.

Bruce F. Shank

EVENTS

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

8-11 Turf and Grounds Exposition, Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, NY. Contact: New York State Turfgrass Association, P.O. Box 612, Latham, NY 12110, (518) 783-1229.

8-11 Oklahoma Turfgrass Conference, Tulsa Convention Center, Tulsa, OK. Contact: Dr. Michael Kenna, Dept. of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, 360 Agricultural Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, (405) 624-5414.

9 Guelph Turfgrass Symposium, University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Contact: Division of Continuing Education, Room 160, Johnston Hall, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1, (519) 824-4120.

13-15 Southern Turfgrass Conference and Show, Montgomery Civic Center, Montgomery, AL. Contact: Dr. Jeff Krans, (601) 325-2311.

14-16 Penn State Golf Turf Conference, Keller Conference Center, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA. Contact: Dr. Joseph Duich, Dept. of Agronomy, 405 Ag. Admin. Bldg., University Park, PA 16802, (814) 865-9853.

18-20 Green Team Conference and Trade Show, Buena Vista Palace, Walt Disney World, Orlando, FL. Sponsored by the Professional Grounds Management Society and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America. Contact: Allan Shulder, PGMS, 12 Galloway Ave., Suite 1E, Cockeysville, MD 21030, (301) 667-1833.

DECEMBER

5-8 New Jersey Turfgrass Expo '88, Resorts International Hotel, Atlantic City, N.J. Contact: Dr. Henry Indyk, (201) 932-9453.