

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

CUTS THREATEN TURF PROGRAMS



As my son nears his fifteenth birthday, the process of helping him choose a career has swung into full gear. The experience brings back memories of my own search to make productive use of whatever skills and interests I possess and the role my parents played.

The trick seems to be that parents must guide, not dictate. They have to stress the practical without downplaying the importance of enjoying one's work. They have to objec-

tively weigh the talents of their sons and daughters and compare them to the career hurdles designed to establish their worthiness in school and in the marketplace.

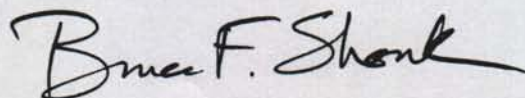
Still, each parent has visions of what careers his or her children might enjoy and at which they might excel. In my son's case, I think he is a natural for a career in sports turf management. He thrives outdoors, has tons of energy, is athletic, and appreciates nature. Throughout his life, he has exhibited tremendous curiosity about how and why things function the way they do.

To nurture his interest in the outdoors, we spend most of our time together in parks, around water, on athletic fields, and in gardens. Since he was eight, he has tagged along with me to golf courses, stadiums, landscape projects, and arboreta. Professors and students in the horticulture department at Cal Poly-Pomona know him.

This fall, Todd enters the tenth grade. Only one course in horticulture is offered at his high school and it fills up rapidly each semester. After three tries, he has not been able to take that class. The biology classes in high school barely touch on botany.

What aggravates me more, perhaps, is the condition of the educational system in California. Staff and enrollment in horticultural programs in state universities are shrinking. Some of the best programs in the state system are being cut to the bone. I'm deeply concerned that when Todd is ready for college...college won't be ready for him.

After covering the green industry for 20 years, I believe that it deserves more attention from our institutions of learning. The problem now affects me personally. I welcome your ideas about ways to achieve more support for turf management and landscape horticulture programs.



Bruce Shank

EVENTS

CALENDAR

AUGUST

26 Short course, "Landscaping for Wildlife," Cook College/Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. Contact: Office of Continuing Professional Education, Rutgers University, Cook College (908) 932-9271.

SEPTEMBER

20-23 Florida Turfgrass Association Annual Conference and Show, Prime Osborn III Conventional Center, Jacksonville, FL. Contact: Florida Turfgrass Association (407) 898-6721.

21-24 46th Northwest Turfgrass Conference and Exhibition, Sunriver Lodge and Resort, Sunriver, OR. Contact: NTA Office (206) 754-0825.

OCTOBER

7-8 32nd Annual Southern California Turfgrass Expo, Orange County Fairgrounds, Costa Mesa, CA. Contact: Southern California Turfgrass Expo (714) 951-8547.

NOVEMBER

8-10 Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association Meeting, King & Prince Hotel, St. Simons Island, GA. Contact: Karen White, GGCSA (404) 769-4076.

8-11 22nd Annual Education Conference and Show of the National Institute on Park and Ground Management, Richmond, VA. Contact: NIPGM (414) 733-2301.

16-19 Green Industry Expo, Indianapolis Convention Center, Indianapolis, IN. Contact: ALCA (703) 241-4004.

Send announcements on your events two months in advance to editor, sportsTURF magazine, P.O. Box 8420, Van Nuys, CA 91409 or FAX to (818) 781-8517.