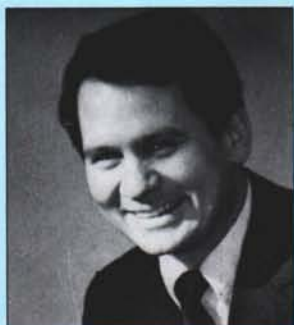


# THE FRONT OFFICE

## OPINION PAGE

### A MESSAGE TO MANAGEMENT



The most bizarre story I heard last year was about a respected college groundskeeper who did too good of a job. That's right, he made the athletic facilities and campus look fabulous. Other groundskeepers in his region visited him regularly to learn his techniques. His reward was a demotion and transfer, which he turned down.

The person who cut him off at the knees knew virtually nothing about sports or campus landscaping. She apparently had no understanding of what it takes to keep sports fields and campus grounds just alive, much less spectacular. But, she was the vice president of finance for the school whose job it was to keep expenditures down. She said the campus looked too good for such tough economic times and therefore the school must be spending too much. Instead of simply demanding a budget cut, she insisted that the groundskeeper be released.

The state university had won many awards for this groundskeeper's hard work and ingenuity. The president of the school praised him one month and turned his back on him the next. The groundskeeper left the school as clearly evidenced by the condition of the campus and the questionable safety of the athletic fields.

In another case, the owner of a professional sports franchise asked his groundskeeper to help design and build a practice facility. Half way into the project, the owner allowed one of his management staff to get involved. The new manager and the groundskeeper tangled, so the groundskeeper returned to his regular duties. Problems arose during construction, a consultant was called in at considerable expense, and finally the groundskeeper was asked back to fix and maintain the resulting mess.

Management, if you delegate authority to a skilled groundskeeper, stick with him. Hire a knowledgeable individual in the first place at a respectable salary and let him do his job. Experience has shown that the money you think you'll save in salary will be tiny compared to the cost of mistakes later.

I'm beginning to think that field injuries aren't caused by a lack of money or knowledge. Instead, they are the result of poor management decisions.

*Bruce F. Shank*

# EVENTS

## CALENDAR

### MARCH

**23-24** Athletic Turf Management Seminar, Providence, RI. Contact: National Institute on Park and Grounds Management, (414) 733-2301.

**24** Sports Turf Institute and Grounds Operations Conference, Cal Poly, Pomona, CA. Contact: Dept. of Horticulture, Cal Poly, (714) 869-2219.

### APRIL

**13-14** Southeastern Turf Conference, Tifton, GA. Contact: Glenn Burton, Coastal Plain Station, (912) 386-3353.

### JUNE

**17-18** Midwest Grounds Management Conference, Midwest Association of Physical Plant Administrators and the Professional Grounds Management Society, Miami University, Oxford, OH. Contact: PGMS, 10402 Ridgland Rd., Ste. 4, Cockeysville, MD 21030, (301) 667-1833.

### JULY

**1** 1992 Cornell Turfgrass Field Day, Pine Island, NY. Contact: New York State Turfgrass Association, (800) 873-TURF.

**24** Midwest Sports Turf Institute, Sports Turf Managers Association, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL. Contact: Greg Petry, Waukegan Park District, (708) 244-7275.

See STMA IN ACTION for information on Sports Turf Managers Association Events.

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.