

# THE FRONT OFFICE

## OPINION PAGE

### Aspiring Writers Need Apply



**H**ave you ever read an article in a magazine and thought, "How pathetic. I could do better than that"?

Last month, a reader from one of the other magazines I work on called me with exactly that complaint. The article in question, he insisted, was too academic. "It looks like something out of a textbook," he said and then went on, in great detail, to tell me what he'd "like to see."

I listened closely. Criticism fosters growth, particularly in this business. You'd have to be arrogant or foolish

not to at least listen to it. This reader not only had a specific complaint, but also offered a solution.

"I'd like to see that article written," he said, "from a real-world, practical point of view." He then discussed, in point-by-point detail, both the content and structure of the hypothetical article.

His ideas were terrific, and he explained them clearly. His concept of article structure was basic but sound.

"Sounds great," I said. "When can you start working?"

Dead air filled a long, fat pause. When he broke the silence, he wanted to know what I meant by when "he" could start working. Even though he'd already written the article in his head, he couldn't yet see himself putting it to paper.

I explained to him that quite a few of our articles are written by readers, like this month's "Speed Seed" piece by Todd Detzel, who are not "professional writers" per se, but are concerned professionals with good ideas and the basic tools for expressing them in print. The fundamentals of spoken and written communication are the same, I said, and I would enjoy helping him through any rough spots. He could call me any time, day or night, with a question or an idea as he assembled his article.

By the time he hung up, I could hear the creative wheels turning in his head. I imagine he hit his typewriter or word processor running. The article isn't finished yet, but I know that regardless of structural or stylistic problems, which can be handled in editing, if he sticks to his proposal the article will be well-worth printing.

Got an idea for a feature? Call me. About the only ideas I'll shoot down, or redirect, are opinions thinly (or cleverly) disguised as topics.

In 1993 more sports turf professionals wrote for *sportsTURF* than in 1992. A number of landscape architects are now frequent contributors, a fact for which I am indeed grateful. Will a 1994 issue contain your byline or the byline of a colleague? It's your call, and I'd love to answer it.

Matthew Trulio

# EVENTS

## CALENDAR

### FEBRUARY

**26** 63rd Massachusetts Turfgrass Conference. Springfield Civic Center, Springfield MA. Contact: Dr. Joseph Troll, (413) 549-5295.

### MARCH

**2** 26th Annual Professional Turf and Plant Conference. Huntington Town House, Huntington, NY. Contact: Nassau/Suffolk Landscape Gardeners Association, (516) 665-2250

**4-5** American Landscape Maintenance Association 6th Annual ALMA Lawn Equipment Expo. Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Contact: ALMA, (305) 925-7966.

**5-8** 45th Canadian Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show. Calgary Convention Centre, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Contact: Julie Law (for the conference) and Chuck Desveaux (for the trade show) (416) 602-8873. (Effective October 4, 1993, area code becomes 905.)

**10** Third Biennial Integrated Pest Management Conference. Swarthmore College, PA. Contact: Penn State Cooperative Extension, (215) 489-4315

**11** Turf Management Seminar, El Cajon Community Center, El Cajon, CA. Contact: David Shaw, (619) 694-2845.

### APRIL

**11-12** Southeast Turfgrass Conference, Tifton, GA. Contact: (912) 386-3353



Send announcements on your events **two months in advance** to: Editor, **sportsTURF** magazine, 68-860 Perez Road, Suite J, Cathedral City, CA, 92234. Fax (619) 770-8019.