

# THE FRONT OFFICE

## OPINION PAGE



### Bargain-Basement Balm

If you didn't attend STMA's 7th Annual Conference this past January, you missed a grade-A+ program. The 70 pages of notes I came away with captured a fraction of the wisdom and tidbits of information that flowed from STMA officers, speakers and rank-and-file members.

For sports turf managers who are typically unable to attend conferences because "there's no money for it," one member had some advice. The key,

he said, is to ask for the money well in advance, such as a year ahead of time. You might even ask that the time and money for attending the annual conference be included in your contract or budget. This is a common practice among golf course superintendents — which explains the reason their association's annual conference draws a hundred times more people than the sports turf managers' conference, even though there are probably three times more sports turf managers than superintendents in the U.S.

If administrators say the cost of sending you to the 8th Conference isn't worth the money, have them talk to Steve Roser in Rockford, IL, whose soccer fields were wiped out by the floods that devastated the Midwest in the summer of 1993. Thanks to advice and inspiration from the STMA, Roser not only had the fields fit for play by the fall of '93 but in the process won STMA's Soccer Field of the Year Award. The award was one reason Rockford administrators decided to fund a million dollar soccer complex, which has paid for itself many times over and generated mega-bucks for the city through the tournaments it's attracted.

Or have your administrators talk to Richard Moffitt at St. Louis University in St. Louis, MO. He says he has saved tens of thousands of dollars when building fields thanks to advice from STMA members.

Or ask your administrators to talk to the National Football League Players Association, which sent a couple of representatives to the 7th Conference because it appreciates the advancements the STMA has made toward creating safer playing surfaces. "While artificial turf was standing still," one of the representatives said, "turf managers have progressed, making grass better and safer. Now it's time for the STMA to promote itself and its statistics to the market." The representative urged this "not to put artificial turf manufacturers out of business but to provide the safest fields for kids" and others to play on.

At the 7th Conference, I saw the cheapest, surest way to achieve safety and aesthetics; I saw the best minds in sports turf and facility management. Some had famous names and talked from the podium; others were unfamiliar and sat in the audience. I didn't meet anyone who wasn't impressive in some aspect of maintenance or wasn't willing to share. I learned with a phone call or two their expertise could be tapped to solve a problem that might otherwise take months of reading and experimentation to figure out. As a quick fix for sports turf ailments, they're a bargain-basement special.

# EVENTS

## CALENDAR

### March

**27** South Florida Research Station Field Day and Exposition. Institute of Food and Agricultural Science, Davie, FL. Continuing education units will be issued. For more information, contact: John Mascaro (305) 938-7477.

**28** Turf and Golf Course Management," sponsored by the Committee for Sustainable Agriculture. San Leandro, CA. CEUs applied for. Advanced registration, \$65, includes lunch. Contact: (916) 756-6967.

### April

**22** Fourth annual Envirotron Golf Classic, to raise funds for the Florida Turfgrass Association's research facility. World Woods Golf Resort, Homosassa Springs, FL. For tournament information, call Glen Oberlander at (904) 795-7017.

**24-26** Pacific Equipment & Technology Expo (PETE '96). Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV. Contact: (800) 525-7383 or (510) 370-2200.

### May

**6-8** Southeast Turfgrass Conference. Tifton, GA. Contact: (912) 386-3353.

**15-16** Environmental Landscape & Equipment Conference & Show. Sheraton Suites Hotel and the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds, Pomona, CA. Contact: (800) 877-3107 or (702) 736-5958.

### June

**14-18** American Society for Plasmiculture 26th Conference. Atlantic City, NJ. Contact: Cook College, Rutgers University, Office of Continuing Professional Education, (908) 932-9271.

Send announcements of your events two months in advance to: Editor, sportsTURF, 68-860 Perez Road, Suite J, Cathedral City, CA 92234. Fax: (619) 770-4380.