



### Southern Hospitality

Last month, I traveled to Baton Rouge, LA to participate in the South East Conference Turf Managers Meeting. Jeff Kershaw and Harvey Crenshaw of Louisiana State University (LSU) hosted this year's meeting, which brings together college/university-level turf managers, researchers, and even assistant athletic directors (if you count Bucky Trotter) to discuss current issues and persistent problems.

I have to give these guys credit — they sure know how to throw a meeting. The group's small size created a casual and comfortable atmosphere, and I was able to have conversations with just about every attendee during the three-day event. Everyone made me feel very welcome, despite my Yankee origins.

Building lines of communication has been a persistent theme since I've been with the magazine, and the topic figured prominently at the meeting. In his recent article, "Growing Pains," Scott Gaunky asked, "Wouldn't it be great if you could get the coaches and others who use your fields into a classroom to educate them in turf survival?" The SEC meeting made great progress in this direction, and it came close to fulfilling Gaunky's wish.

LSU Athletic Director Joe Dean welcomed attendees to open the conference, before turning the floor over to Head Football Coach Gerry DiNardo. The Coach recognized the important role the grounds staff plays in LSU's program, and he expressed his appreciation. He and Kershaw acknowledged that they don't always agree, but both cited communication as a means to come to terms.

These guest presentations took up only a small fraction of the meeting's schedule, but they accomplished a great deal. To build bridges of communication, you must first build respect. Bringing coaches and athletic directors into these meetings allows them to more fully appreciate the scope of sports turf management. When these decision makers see sports turf managers coming together to share ideas as professionals, they may be more apt to listen when it comes time to make decisions about fields.

Professionalism was another major theme of the meeting. Dr. Gil Landry of the University of Georgia held an open discussion on the topic to gauge people's views.

Gil cited the STMA for its contributions to building respect and recognition for all sports turf managers. He joined Bob Campbell in urging attendees that were not already members to join the organization.

Attendees seemed to agree that certification was a good way to promote professionalism. Most were anxious to see what the final STMA Certification program will look like. The group agreed that professional conduct and appearance must be maintained both in the office and out on the fields, and that balancing these two sides of management is fundamental.

Overall, the meeting was a great success. Other speakers included Dr. Jeff Higgins of Percell Technologies, Dr. Grady Miller of the University of Florida, and Dr. Mike Goatly of Mississippi State University. I even wound up on the schedule by some dumb luck, but I won't bore you with the details.

**Steve Berens, Editor**  
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#### August 17

Cornell Field Day, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. Contact Joann Gruttadaurio: (607) 255-1792.

#### August 18

Sports Turf Association's (STA) 12th annual Field Day, Guelph Turfgrass Institute, Guelph, ON, Canada. Contact STA: (519) 763-9431.

#### August 18

University of Rhode Island Turf Field Day, Kingston, RI. Contact Dr. Bridget Ruemmele: (401) 874-2481.

#### August 18

Michigan Turfgrass Field Day, Hancock Turfgrass Research Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. Contact Kay Patrick: (517) 321-1660.

#### August 18

Ohio State University (OSU) Turfgrass/Horticulture Research Field Day, OSU Turfgrass Research Facility, Columbus, OH. Contact Kevin Thompson: (888) 683-3445, ext. 3151.

#### August 23-27

Floyd Perry's Groundskeepers Management Academy, Colonial Heights, VA. Other dates and locations: Aug. 30-Sept. 3, Orlando; Sept. 12-16, Dallas; Sept. 19-23, Denver; Oct. 10-14, Davis, CA. Contact Grounds Maintenance Services: (800) 227-9381.

#### August 26

University of California (UC) Cooperative Extension Turf and Landscape Research Field Day, UC Bay Area Research and Extension Center, Santa Clara, CA. Contact Dr. Ali Harivandi: (510) 639-1271.