



February 15-28

Long Island Turfgrass Management Short Course, Long Island, NY. Contact Cornell University: (607) 255-1792.

February 17

Penn State Cooperative Extension's Winter Grounds Seminar, Kutztown Grange Hall, Kutztown, PA. Contact Judy Schwank: (610) 378-1327, or Emelie Swackhamer: (610) 391-9840.

February 20-24

Western Canada Turfgrass Association (WCTA) 36th annual Conference & Show, Penticton Trade & Convention Centre, Penticton, BC Canada. Contact WCTA: (604) 467-2564.

February 22-23

New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA) Southeast Regional Conference, Holiday Inn, Suffern, NY. Contact NYSTA: (800) 873-8873 or (518) 783-1229.

February 22-26

Midwest Regional Turf Foundation's Indiana-Illinois Turfgrass Short Course, Willowbrook, IL. Contact Bev Bratton: (765) 494-8039.

February 23-25

Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference & Trade Show, Pittsburgh Expo Mart/Radisson Hotel, Monroeville, PA. Contact Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council: (814) 863-3475.

February 24-25

Southern Illinois Grounds Maintenance School, Gateway Convention Center, Collinsville, IL. Contact Ron Cornwell: (618) 692-9434.

STMA MESSAGE

Sports
Turf
Managers Association



The Wow Factor

By February, when you read this column, the greater part of winter will be behind us. Those of you in warm regions will already have players hitting your fields for spring sports.

Some great winter events will be history: STMA's 10th annual Conference & Exhibition in Mesa, AZ; the college football series of bowl games; and professional football's 1999 Super Bowl. What will linger in our memories is the "wow factor" — that special something that triggered a response in our minds and our emotions and made a lasting impact.

The wow factor can be a big event or achievement. For 12 sports turf management teams, the wow factor came from winning a Field of the Year Award. It was well-deserved recognition for the commitment and hard work they devoted to providing great playing conditions for their field users. Again, I offer my congratulations to you all.

For some of you, the prime wow factor of the season was the achievement of your sports team. For others, it was the 1998-1999 winter, and the bone-chilling cold, heavy rain, sleet, snow, and ice storms that swept across much of North America to help usher in the New Year.

Maybe your holiday travel plans were disrupted. Maybe you and your crews headed up or joined in the snow and ice removal for your facility, or executed clean up procedures to repair rain or wind damage.

The wow factor can even be a small, but very special moment. For some of you, this may be the expression on your child's face when that long-anticipated holiday gift was finally opened. Maybe it's the memory of watching one of your children experience the joy of giving for the very first time. Or maybe it's the smile of an older parent or family member who was able to join in the love and sharing of one more holiday celebration.

Whatever your own private wow factors may be, my guess is that there's a "people connection" at the heart of every one of them. Your holiday wow factor memories may be connected to that teenage niece who volunteered to entertain your tired and cranky two-year old so that you could relax for a few minutes.

Consider those snow storms. If you and your crews were struggling through the snow removal nightmare, your wow factor memories are probably connected to the individuals who worked harder and longer under far from ideal conditions, yet still retained their sense of humor.

As we move into another season, it's time to remind yourself and your staff that the core of the wow factor is what one of STMA's founders, George Toma, calls "and then some." What makes the memories and earns the honors is that extra effort and commitment to excellence. What you do and how you do it does make a difference.

Stephen Guise, STMA President
(714) 704-0403