



Spirit in St. Louis

From what I heard, St. Louis experienced fantastic weather between Jan. 12-16.

Personally, I wouldn't know. Not because I wasn't in the "Gateway to the West;" I was. I just didn't get out much.

Almost all the features of the 11th Annual Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Conference and Trade Show were held in the Regal Riverfront Hotel. Registration, meals, educational sessions, workshops, the trade show and the awards ceremony were all held under one roof. Overall, there were more than 500 registered attendees at the convention, plus 245 exhibiting personnel from the 88 companies participating in the trade show.

Many of you were with me in St. Louis for this event, and I had a great time meeting several of you, finally putting names and faces to people I had known only as voices on the telephone or pictures in a magazine. From talking with you—either formally in sessions, conferences, discussions and workshops, or informally at meals and in elevators—I learned a wealth of invaluable information about the sports turf industry.

The highlight for me was the STMA Annual Awards Banquet, held on Friday evening. The air of formality was lifted from the banquet when, after Steve Trusty gave his invocation, four large, bearded men wearing leather and denim stormed the hall, shouting out as they marched between the tables. There was nervous laughter as Steve called out for security, but it soon became obvious that these men were part of the show. The four men, members of a musical group called "Expanded Sound," mounted a small stage and cracked jokes in between humorous songs sung in the style of a barbershop quartet. They returned after dinner, this time in golfing attire, to do their act again and received another great response from the crowd.

The round table discussions held on the last full day of the conference showed me the true spirit of the STMA. I listened to Steve Wightman, stadium turf manager of QUALCOMM Stadium, share tips, secrets and stories with turf managers from minor league, college and recreational ball parks across the country. There was no hierarchy to the discussion, no sense that because Steve works at a Major League facility he had a higher standing among those seated around him. They were just men and women talking turf, pure and simple, and it was very encouraging to see.

Business

It wasn't all talk in St. Louis. The board met on Saturday for its annual meeting, where Stephen Guise handed the (enormous) presidential gavel to Rich Moffitt, who addressed the crowd for the first time as Association President. Check the masthead on page 40 for an updated listing of STMA officers and board members.

All in all it was a great week in St. Louis, filled with laughs, learning, networking and some moderate drinking in the Dugout Bar. And while I never was able to experience the great weather outside, I can say this much: The temperature in the hotel was just fine.

Michael SanFilippo
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Calendar of Events 2000

February 8-12

Turfgrass Producers International (TPI) Midwinter Conference & Exposition: "Turfgrass Sod Production for the New Millennium," Adam's Mark Hotel, San Antonio, Texas. Feb. 8: Inaugural Al Gardner Memorial Golf Outing, The Quarry Golf Club, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Tom Ford: (800) 405-TURF (8873)/(847) 705-9898, or Turf-Grass@msn.com.

February 9-11

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

February 15-16

Rutgers University (RU) continuing education course: "Successful Identifying and Effectively Managing Turf Weeds," RU, New Brunswick, N.J. Contact Kurt Martens: (732) 932-8451.

February 21-25

Cornell University's Turfgrass Management Short Course, Holiday Inn and Conference Center, Fishkill, N.Y. Tuition: \$600. Contact Joann Gruttadaurio: (607) 255-1792 or jg17@cornell.edu.

February 22-24

Ohio State University Professional Grounds Maintenance Short Course, Holiday Inn on the Lane, Columbus, Ohio. Cost: \$190. Contact Barb Bloetscher: (614) 292-7457.

STMA MESSAGE



www.sportsturfmanager.com



Gateway to the Future

Welcome to the new millennium. It's fitting that we started this new century in our nation's Gateway City—St. Louis—with STMA's 11th Annual Conference & Exhibition, "Gateway to the 21st Century." My wish for all of you is that this new century will be filled with exciting challenges and positive outcomes, and with peace, joy and prosperity.

I thank you members of the Sports Turf Managers Association for the pleasure and honor of allowing me to step up to the office of president of the Association. I look forward to serving you. I've been privileged to hold several different positions while serving as a member of your board of directors: membership chair, treasurer, conference chair and president-elect. In each of these positions, I've gained experience in the many aspects of STMA as an organization and I've had the opportunity to learn about the needs and wants of our members.

I initially became involved in STMA because of a need of my own. As director of grounds and materials management for Saint Louis University, I'm responsible for all the grounds, including the athletic fields. In 1990, the university had only one turf sports field, a baseball field, and I was to take charge of rebuilding it. During a bull session with a colleague of mine, Dr. Dave Minner, I mentioned the project as one more thing added to my already crowded schedule. Dave, who was at that time on the STMA board of directors, noted that STMA was filled with resources I could tap into, urged me to get involved and supplied me with the names of several members to contact.

I started calling those people and they all connected with me, and they also led me to still other people. I basically built a baseball field over the phone thanks to all these people sharing so much of their time and expertise. I was impressed.

So I became a member and attended the next STMA Conference, and it was like my phone experience all over again. There I was, a new guy, with what at that time was a small sports field base, and everyone treated me like one of the group, welcomed me to conversations and answered my multiple questions.

Through all this, I've built a nationwide network of people I can connect with to talk, to share ideas and to exchange information. Many of these contacts have developed into good fellowships and friendships over the years.

Now, as I look ahead for STMA, while we clearly want to retain the important networking factor, to continue to expand our membership and to retain the strong financial position we've achieved, another prime goal is to develop a strategic plan that will allow the association to expand our services to members in areas of communication, recognition, research, scholarships and more.

We've already made tremendous strides with the certification program. Working together, we can elevate the status of the sport turf manager in the United States and around the world.

Rich Moffitt
STMA President
(314) 977-2956

February 29

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

February 29-March 1

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

March 6-9

New England Regional Turf Conference & Show (NERTCS), Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, R.I. Pesticide re-certification credits available. Contact NERTCS: (401) 848-0004.

March 9

NYSTA's Western Regional Conference, Radisson Hotel & Suites, Buffalo, N.Y. Contact NYSTA: (800) 873-8873 or (518) 783-1229.

March 9-10

Ohio State University Sports Turf/Athletic Field Short Course, Camp Cheerful, Cleveland, Ohio. Cost: \$190. Contact Barb Bloetscher: (614) 292-7457.

April 5

NYSTA's Adirondack Regional Conference, Hilton Lake Placid Resort, Lake Placid, N.Y. Contact NYSTA: (800) 873-8873 or (518) 783-1229.

July 22-24

Outdoor Power Equipment Institute's (OPEI) 17th annual International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo (EXPO 2000), Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville, Ky. Contact Sellers Expositions: (800) 558-8767 or (502) 562-1962.

October 4-5

Southern California Turfgrass Council's (SCTC) Turfgrass Landscape and Equipment Expo, Orange County Fairgrounds, Costa Mesa, Calif. Contact SCTC: (800) 500-SCTC (7282) or (818) 764-5016, or expo@turfCouncil.org.