



Fun in the Sun

Last month, the Sports Turf Managers Association held its annual trade show and convention in Tampa, Fla., the twelfth such event in the association's history.

One common theme stressed by President Rich Moffitt was how far the association has come since its inception. From the initial session on Thursday, to the Awards Banquet on Friday, to the final luncheon on Saturday, Rich would start his speech by asking all the first time attendees to raise their hands. After surveying the scores of hands raised across the room, he would shake his head in amazement and say, "outstanding."

It was an outstanding event, made all the more wonderful by the weather. Getting on a plane in single digit weather and arriving in temperatures hovering around 70 degrees was a great way to start the trip. But it was the people in attendance that really made the week wonderful.

Including the exhibitors, there were over 1,000 attendees present at the convention. And all those first timers that Rich was amazed by? They numbered nearly 250 strong, a great indication of the growing influence of the STMA. Currently, the STMA boasts 23 chapters and more than 1,800 members.

Rich also mentioned that with each passing year, the convention becomes less and less a business trip and more of a family reunion. This being my second convention, I understand completely what he meant. I got to meet up with all the folks I met last year in St. Louis, and spend some time chatting and catching up. I spoke with last year's winner of the *sportsTURF* Manager of the Year award, Eugene Mayer; he informed me that he's a sheriff now back in Ohio. Imagine what the lawn will look like at the police station!

Speaking of the Manager of the Year award, I had the honor of presenting this year's award at the Awards Banquet. This year's recipient, Ross Kurcab, received a standing ovation and endless praise from his peers, proving how truly deserving he was of the award. A quick gem from Ross' acceptance speech: On describing his work ethic, he quoted his father, who told him, "You can either work or starve."

Besides the awards banquet, the highlight for me was meeting Eddie Seaward, the head groundsman at The All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club in Wimbledon. It was an honor to meet the man responsible for some of the most high profile sports surfaces in the world, with 600 million fans watching the tournament on television last year. Look for an article by Mr. Seaward on what it takes to manage the 34 courts of Wimbledon in an upcoming issue of *sportsTURF*.

For those of you who haven't attended a convention yet, I strongly encourage you to sign up for the event in 2002, when it will be held in Las Vegas. There's so much to learn about the profession at the sessions, workshops, and discussions, and even more to learn at the bar, in the restaurant, or, next year, in the casino. I'm already saving my quarters!

Michael SanFilippo
(847) 882-1942

Calendar of Events 2001

February 5-9

The Ohio State University Golf Course Maintenance Short Course, Holiday Inn on the Lane, Columbus, OH. Register at (614) 292-4230. E-mail: bloetscher.1@osu.edu.

February 6

Turfgrass Advocacy 2001, Lobby Day, Legislative Office Building et al, Albany, NY. Contact: New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA), PO Box 612, Latham, NY 12110; (518) 783-1229/(800) 873-TURF (8873); fax (518) 783-1258; nysta@nysta.org. Web site: <http://www.nysta.org>.

February 20-21

Southern Illinois Grounds Maintenance School, Gateway Convention Center, One Gateway Dr., Collinsville, IL. Contact: Ron Cornwell, 200 University Park Dr., Edwardsville, IL 62025; (618) 692-9434.

February 22-23

The Ohio State University Professional Lawn Care Short Course, Holiday Inn on the Lane, Columbus, OH. Register at (614) 292-4230. E-mail: bloetscher.1@osu.edu.

February 26

Southeast Regional Conference, Holiday Inn, Suffern, NY. Contact: New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA), PO Box 612, Latham, NY 12110; (518) 783-1229/(800) 873-TURF (8873); fax (518) 783-1258; nysta@nysta.org. Web site: <http://www.nysta.org>.

February 27-March 1

Western PA Turf Conference & Trade Show, Pittsburgh Expo Mart/Radisson Hotel, 101 Mall Blvd., Monroeville, PA. Contact: R. Eric Oesterling, Westmoreland