

# president's message

## Sports turf managers in the spotlight

One of STMA's own was honored as part of the Pro Football Hall of Fame's 2001 Enshrinement Weekend celebration. George Toma, Playing Field Consultant for the National Football League, and one of STMA's Founders, was presented with the Daniel F. Reeves Pioneer Award. As noted by the NFL, "This Award honors an individual whose innovative ideas have contributed to the game of professional football." This is an honor well deserved by a true pioneer in our industry, and one who has done an excellent job of gaining public recognition of the role of the sports turf manager. Congratulations, George!

Also in Canton for the Hall of Fame events was the winner of the first SAFE Foundation Drawing, Dave Ditzler, Turf & Irrigation Specialist for Grinnell College in Grinnell, IA. Dave and his wife, Tami, took part in many events and had a terrific time. A highlight for Dave was meeting George Toma in person at the Hall of Fame pre-game Tailgate Party. Please see page 8 for more from Hall of Fame weekend.

### No SI jinx here

And that's not all. "Diamond in the Rough" was the title of "The Life of Reilly" column written by Rick Reilly for *Sports Illustrated's* July 23 issue. With tongue in cheek humor, Reilly relates a few of the obstacles overcome to allow the reconstruction project (using funds donated by "a couple") of what he calls, "the worst baseball field this side of Chernobyl." This was the Denver area neighborhood field used by "The Nuts," a youth recreation team he had coached for 8 years.

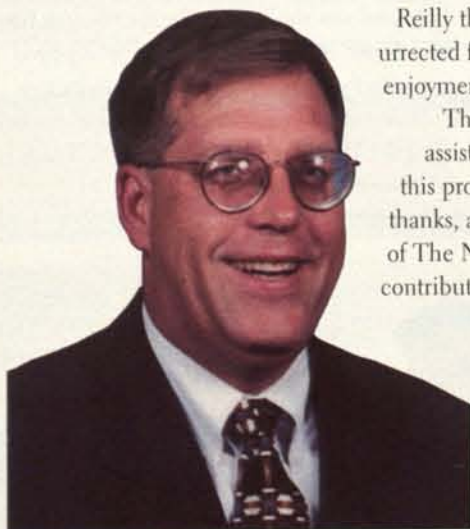
With the project underway, he notes, "...a field started popping up with stuff the Nuts had never known: A mound! Dugouts! Infield grass! ..."

The reconstructed site was joyfully christened Fishhack Field. But Reilly continues, "Unfortunately, two weeks after the construction crews were gone, Fishhack resembled a dead mackerel. The sod was yellow, home plate was a swamp, and the infield dirt had more ruts than deer-mating season."

He then briefly recounts the steps he and his team members took to "try to turn Fishhack into Coors Field" and admits that when they were finished "the field actually looked worse." That's when he turned to STMA Board Member and Coors Field Head Groundskeeper Mark Razum, who agreed to check out the field. Reilly says, "After he (Razum) laughed for 10 minutes, he offered some pointers on grooming the field and promised equipment and a day of his crew's time. Mark Razum is God."

Reilly then recounts the success of Razum's intervention, the resurrected field's impact on the team's season and the community's enjoyment of it, noting, "Things have gone Nuts ever since."

Thanks, Mr. Reilly, for putting this positive light on Mark's assistance and on our profession. Mark didn't even mention this project at the following week's STMA Board meeting. And thanks, as well, to Mark and his wife, Katherine, for your support of The Nuts and the baseball experience and for your generous contribution in funding the Fishhack Field project.



Rich Moffitt,  
STMA President

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