

An open letter from George Toma

Dear STMA Member,

I am constantly amazed at how far our association and our profession have come.

When I started out in the 1940s, it was every man for himself. Fortunately, two great men, Emil Bossard of the Cleveland Indians and Dr. James R. Watson of Toro, took me under their wings. Without them, there would be no George Toma. I also leaned heavily on Joe Mooney in Boston, Dick Erickson in Minnesota, and Pat Sandarone in Baltimore.

Other groundskeepers of my generation were not so fortunate. That's why Dick, Harry Gill of Milwaukee, and Dr. Bill Daniels of Purdue University and I sat down one day and founded the Sports Turf Managers Association. From those humble beginnings, we have grown to more than 2,500 members.

Remember, we have all kinds of members, from those with advanced college degrees to those who didn't graduate from high school. Our association is big enough to accommodate everyone. And the members who are doing a great job at the high school, college, minor league or park and recreation levels are just as valuable as those in the big leagues.

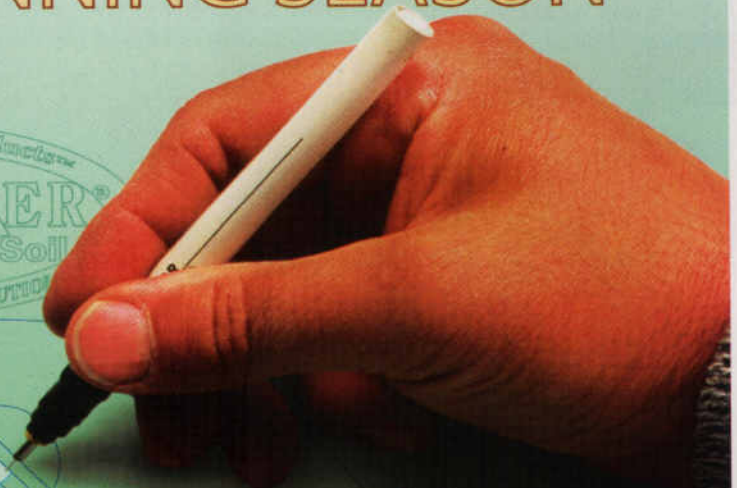
In the last 50 years, and I have been a groundskeeper for 61 years, I have been trying very hard to improve the image of groundskeepers from "just a grass cutter" to a professional. Until the rake is plied from my cold dead fingers, I will always try to help dedicated groundskeepers, from preschool to the professional ranks, do the job, attain respect on all levels and then some, which distinguishes the great from the mediocre.

Sincerely,
George P Toma
July 2003

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