Turfsters’ paradise in Phoenix

There aren’t any similar meetings. Plenty of the best managers and researchers in the profession (the best on the planet, really) all gathered in one place yet in numbers that enable you to easily seek out individuals, whether it’s to question an expert or buy a beer for a new friend. Megakudos to the Conference Committees, Kim Heck and her staff at STMA headquarters, and David Rosenberg, Andrea Rollin, and Liz Zalewski from the STMA Show office.

The Jacobsen-sponsored golf tournament, which benefits SAFE (Foundation for Safer Athletic Field Environments), didn’t get iced out this year but instead we had a chance to relax and enjoy the warm desert sun. Rumor had it that Jake’s Monty Montague and his scoring system denied me another victory for Steve LeGros, Dan Douglas, Luke Yoder and Bobby Piccolo.

Another pre-Conference highlight was the Seminar on Wheels tour, which included a stop at the Super Bowl venue, where Tim Peterson of the Cardinals and the illustrious George Toma held court on the movable turf outside the stadium. Yes, I touched the turf on which Tom Petty walked!

Equally impressive was the Rio Vista Regional Community Park in Peoria. Not only were the fields looking good but there was a large skate park and a new community center, which features state-of-the-art workout equipment and a beautiful gymnasium. Heads were shaking when we learned that residents pay only $25 a month for memberships. Chris Calcaterra, STMA treasurer and organizer of the tour, and his neighbors must pay an arm and leg in taxes to subsidize that place.

I don’t have space here to describe the real meat of the Conference, the educational sessions and exhibit hall; rather, I suggest that you make preliminary plans now to attend next year’s event in San Jose, CA. Sports turf managers are a lucky bunch to have these opportunities.

Now, where’s my “Installing a light bulb” manual?