KAFMO’s involvement with Little League

OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS the Pennsylvania Chapter of STMA, officially the Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization (KAFMO), comes together at the end of summer as millions from around the world turn their eyes to South Williamsport, PA. Kids from all over the world play the game of baseball in hopes of playing in the Little League World Series. Sixteen teams of players 11 and 12 years old descend on the Little League complex in Lycoming County, PA in hopes of being crowned the only true sports “World” Champion.

The Little League World Series has become a grand event. Television coverage of every game played during the series on the ABC/ESPN family of networks has turned up the exposure that the event has seen. In 2012 the television ratings were high with millions watching and attending. It is estimated that the event injects $20 million dollars into the economy of Lycoming County.

With the players, coaches, managers and umpires on the field, announcers, scorekeepers, security, ushers, cameramen and television production crews in place everything is set to “Play Ball!” But wait, what about the field, is it ready? Is it safe for play? Will it look good on television? That portion of the series is left to members of KAFMO.

“The chapter has been honored to assist Little League Baseball with field preparation for 15 years,” says Jeffrey T. Fowler, Penn State Cooperative Extension Turfgrass educator and Board member for the KAFMO chapter (and national STMA). “We arrive before the series begins, we level the playing surface, edge the fields, resod any areas that are worn from summer play, all in preparation for the games that will be played and televised during the 10 days of the series.

“Our number one goal is providing a safe playing surface for the kids to play on,” says Fowler. Fowler is quick to credit Seth Whitehill, groundskeeper at the complex, for his hard work and dedication throughout the year. “Seth does a great job year round preparing the fields for the Series; he applies fertilizer, sprays and mows throughout the year when there are no television cameras around to see everything that is going on.” Seth graduated from Penn State in 2008 with his bachelor’s degree in Turfgrass Science.

“We have approximately 40 volunteers that are a part of the grounds crew. These volunteers are members of STMA or one of its chapters. People take vacation time from their own work schedules and leave family at home to come to the series to assist with field preparations. Some stay for the entire time (2 weeks), others help out for a few days,” Fowler says. “The crew that we assemble for the Little League World Series is second to none; not only do they have the fields at the forefront of their minds, but their professionalism is [super]beyond paying annual membership dues. These highly involved members have attended and presented at our conferences, participated in leadership roles in the association, and served as volunteers on committees and in their individual chapters. Their efforts have guided STMA to being a strong and vibrant association of professionals. Thank you!”

STMA recognizes and thanks its 25 & 30 year members

STMA salutes its long-time members for their dedication and commitment to the association and the profession of sports turf management. They have supported STMA through the years in many ways beyond paying annual membership dues. These highly involved members have attended and presented at our conferences, participated in leadership roles in the association, and served as volunteers on committees and in their individual chapters. Their efforts have guided STMA to being a strong and vibrant association of professionals. Thank you!

Celebrated 30 YEARS in 2012

Harold Howard, Ph.D.
Turfscience, Inc.
Phoenix, AZ

Paul C. Zwaska
Technical Sales Support
Beacon Athletics
Middleton, WI

John A. Fik, CSFM
Grounds & Sports Field Consultant
Sodexo Education Services
Vermontville, NY

Celebrating 30 YEARS in 2013

Mark Hodnick
(Retired) City of Indio
Beaumont, CA

James R. Watson
(Retired) VP Agronomist
The Toro Company
Littleton, CO

Brian Petonic
Turfgrass Supervisor
M-NCPPC Maintenance & Development
Upper Marlboro, MD

Celebrated 25 YEARS in 2012

Rich Ericsson
Head Groundskeeper
Three Village Central
School District
E Setauket, NY

Ken Mrock
Head Groundskeeper
Chicago Bears Football Club
Lake Forest, IL

Frank T. Bowyer
Manager of Grounds
Amphitheater Public Schools
Tucson, AZ

Marc Van Landuyt
President
Van’s Enterprises, Ltd.
Waukegan, IL

Greg Petry
Executive Director
Waukegan Park District
2000 Belvidere St
Waukegan, IL

John Anderson
Arthur Clesen, Inc.
Naperville, IL

Ted Thorn
Director/Grounds
University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA

C. Tom Rudberg, CSFM
Athletic Turf Division Manager
S & S Tree & Horticultural Specialists
5 St Paul, MN

Jim Frellich
Turf Consultant
J R Frellich & Associates, LLC
Salem, OR 97305

Timothy M. Burke
Park Superintendent
Town of Westport
Westport, CT

Stephen E. Horne
Director of Field Operations
Scranton Wilkes-Barre Yankees
Moosic, PA

Leo A. Goertz
Athletic Fields
Maintenance Manager
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX

David D. Minner, Ph.D.
Professor
Iowa State University
Ames, IA
Committee Corner

STMA HAS 23 COMMITTEES and will be recognizing the work of two committees each month in the magazine. Last month featured the Conference Education and Environmental Committees. The International and Awards Committees are featured this month.

STMA International Committee
This Committee began as a Task Group in 2010 and became a full committee one year later. Its primary purpose is to position STMA as a global leader in sports facility management and as the go-to resource for those who work internationally in the industry. One way it gains recognition is by sharing association and technical information with those in the sports turf profession in other countries. The committee has reached out to international sports organizations to introduce STMA. It has developed a network of contacts in academia and in the commercial sector who work internationally and who will promote the association when traveling abroad. Much of the efforts have been centered on developing appropriate technical resources, and trans-

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STMA Awards Committee
The Awards Committee judges three programs including the Field of the Year, Minor League Baseball Sports Turf Manager of the Year, and the Innovative awards programs. It also develops strategies to enhance these awards programs. For the Field of the Year, the Committee may present awards to five field types: Baseball, Football, Soccer, Softball and Sporting Grounds. For each field type, awards may be given in three categories: Professional, College and University, and Schools and Parks. For Minor League Baseball, it awards in four categories, Triple A, Double A, Class A and Short Season or Rookie. The Innovative Awards Program is for commercial exhibitors, and there is not a set number of awards given each year.

Last year the Committee re-developed the Field of the Year program to an entirely online process for submittals and judging, and this year it further refined that process. The members of this committee spend a minimum of 15 hours reviewing applications over a 3-week period. The committee is currently discussing the creation of a new “Volunteer of the Year” award.

Committee Members: Chair - Allen Johnson, CSFM; Patrick Coakley, CSFM; Bradford Garrison; Stephen Horne; Joe Kovolyan, CSFM; Alec Kowalewski; Sarah Martin, CSFM; Ben Polimer; Mike Schiller, CSFM; George Trivett, CSFM and Charlie Vestal. Staff Liaison: Kim Heck.