

President's Message

Dr. Mike Goatley

Goatley@vt.edu



DIRECT MAIL LIST SALES

Cheryl Naughton 678-292-6054
cnaughton@specialtyim.com

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

Phone 845-856-2229 Fax 845-856-5822

REPRINTS

Cheryl Naughton 678-292-6054
cnaughton@specialtyim.com

Account Representatives:

Leslie Palmer
JAMES G. ELLIOTT CO., INC.
101 West Big Beaver Rd., Suite 1400
Troy, MI 48064
Ph: 248-530-0300,
ext. 1402
lpalmer@specialtyim.com

Scott Hill

134 N. LaSalle St., Suite 1700
Chicago, IL 60602
312-348-1206
shill@specialtyim.com

Classified Sales/Marketplace:

Glenn Datz

Phone: 213-596-7220
Fax: 213-624-0997
gdatz@specialtyim.com

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE: We Assume No Responsibility For The Validity Of Claims In Connection With Items Appearing In Sportsturf. Reader Service Numbers Are Given To Facilitate Further Inquiry. Mention Of A Commercial Product Does Not Imply Endorsement By Sportsturf Or Specialty Information Media, Or Preference Over Similar Products Not Mentioned.

Surprise, surprise, surprise

I CHANNEL THE WORDS OF GOMER PYLE into this month's message title, proving that you never know when one's familiarity with "The Andy Griffith Show" can pay dividends (and you will see that eventually it works with what I have to say). As hectic and crazy as my travel has been this spring, I participated in a recent educational program that gave me a nice boost in morale. My latest positive reinforcement came in early April at Virginia State University, Virginia Tech's sister land-grant university, and the United States' first fully state-supported, 4-year institution of higher learning for black Americans. The VSU Dean of Agriculture, Dr. Jewel Hairston, asked me to help develop a Turfgrass Management Workshop for about 150 students. I asked some of my state's top turfgrass professionals to join me in the workshop. These men were every bit as good as I expected in detailing their careers in golf turf, lawn care, sod production and sports turf. Before my day was completed, it was the presentation on sports turf that generated the largest number of questions for me.

Jimmy Rodgers, CSFM, gave that presentation, talking about his experiences with George Mason University, the University of Virginia, and the Washington Nationals. These young men and women got a nice taste of what is involved in sports turf management at the highest levels. The students were pleasantly surprised (and excited) to learn that Jimmy was an English major by academic training. He let them know that if they had a strong work ethic and a desire to learn that internships in sports turf management at all levels were available.

My colleagues and I agreed that these were collectively some of the best spoken, best dressed college students we have engaged in a long time. I asked some what their goals were, got some great answers, and a few even said their goals might have changed because of the workshop. One young man stayed late to talk one-on-one with me, and it was evident he had a great personality. Before I knew it we were talking about March Madness, Wrestlemania, and even music. He listens to Drake, I like The Infamous Stringdusters, and we decided we didn't have any more to talk about in that category!

Then he turned my "What are your goals?" question back on me. I had to think for a bit. Finally, I said I wanted to come back to VSU in 5 years to do the program again. And this time, instead of having four white men talking about their careers, I would like to see a young man or woman from VSU joining me. He looked me in the eye and said, "Don't be surprised if that happens."

My day at a school that does not even have a turfgrass management program opened my eyes to a large pool of talented and motivated young men and women who might make outstanding sports turf managers one day soon. Are there any potential "surprises" out there waiting to be uncovered by you? ■

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Goatley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.