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## New Mission, Vision guide STMA into the future

**D**uring the STMA Summer Board meeting a full day and a half day was dedicated to strategic planning. Facilitators from Leading Associations helped the Board look to the future and create five strategic goals. As part of the process, the Board spent time evaluating its mission to be certain it answers the question, “Why does STMA exist”? Consensus is that our mission has been functioning more as a vision for STMA. Thus, the Board created a new mission for STMA and officially established a vision, which it has not previously had.

These new guideposts for STMA are:

**Mission:** STMA advances professionalism in sports field management and safety through education, awareness programs, and industry development.

**Vision:** To be the recognized leader in strengthening the sports field industry and enhancing members’ competence and acknowledgment of their profession.

Although the strategic plan has not yet been finalized, there was agreement around five strategic areas: communication and brand awareness; the value of commercial members to the association; establishing our members as environmental stewards; the importance of

natural grass athletic fields to outdoor sports; and providing members with relevant and timely continuing education. Once the objectives for each goal are set, which will include metrics for success, STMA’s Committees will be heavily engaged to brainstorm tactics on how to best reach these objectives.

The planning process included an exercise on defining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the association and also an assessment on the success of the current strategic plan. STMA has made significant progress on its current strategic plan, which is scheduled to be completed by December 31. Highlights from that plan will be shared in **SportsTurf** at the end of the year, and the new plan will be rolled out in January during the conference and in the magazine.

The primary facilitator, Sam Albrecht, CAE, gave high praise to the board for their dedication. He wrote in his summary report, “This is a well-functioning group with the best interests of the membership and the industry at the top of their lists. The passion and commitment in the room was as good as I’ve seen in any organization.”—By Shant S. Thomas, STMA Sales & Marketing Manager & STMA Staff. ■

## STMA’s public relations and marketing engagement efforts see tangible results

**B**eginning in the Fall of 2013, STMA engaged a multipronged public relations and marketing effort to more comprehensively tell key audiences, including sports turf managers’ employers, the general public, and those in sports media, about the benefit of the profession and necessity of having a sports turf manager on staff. This effort took an initial two-pronged approach: one, hire a public relations firm with sports and general media contacts to get the word out about STMA and sports turf managers; and two, produce and air a PBS special entitled “Spotlight On: The Field.” Both of these efforts were detailed by STMA CEO Kim Heck in San Antonio at STMA’s Annual Meeting and Lunch last January.

### Buffalo Communications: telling STMA’s story

STMA hired Virginia-based Buffalo Communications (BC) in November 2013 to spearhead an aggressive media relations effort on behalf of the association. Buffalo is a division of Billy Casper Golf, owner-operator of more than 130 golf properties nationwide, and has offices in New York, Phoenix, Boston, Minneapolis and Pinehurst, NC, according to its website.

The ultimate goals of engaging a firm such as a BC are varied but interconnected. The driving impetus and goal behind everything, how-

ever, is the increase in profile of the sports turf manager and profession as a whole. Some strategies to achieve this include:

- Telling “human stories” of STMA members and the extraordinary jobs they do. This makes field management something the layperson can more easily relate to. Buffalo Communications reaches out to sports turf managers across the country and helps facilitate connecting these individuals with members of the media in their area.

- Identifying technology and trends in field management to underscore the specialized, expert nature of the sports turf management profession. This effort also stresses why having a sports turf manager/Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) on staff is critical.



Glenn Gray

PR specialist Glenn Gray is STMA’s day-to-day contact and works closely with headquarters staff to identify and promote STMA members and trends.

For example, Gray is currently working with Marcela Munoz and Roberto Gurgel in Brazil to extend the media lifecycle of natural grass storylines (all 12 World Cup stadiums). He recently reached out to Sporting KC to secure quotes from Matt Besler and Graham

Zusi about their preference for playing on natural grass during the World Cup. Glenn and BC have also recently conducted a number of interviews with STMA members including Seth Whitehill (Little League Baseball), Jeff Salmond, CSFM (University of Oklahoma), Mike McDonald, CSFM (University of Minnesota), Michael Stachowiz (National Park Service), Tony Leonard (Philadelphia Eagles), Dave Mellor (Boston Red Sox) and others.

Buffalo Communications media relations efforts have resulted in stories of sports turf managers appearing in *Sports Illustrated*, *Minnesota Star Tribune*, *BleacherReport.com*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Boston Globe*, *The Tennis Channel*, *USA Today*, Michigan's Big Show, *Washington Post*, *Recreation Management*, *SportsBusiness Journal* and more. For a complete list of this media relations effort, please visit [stma.org](http://stma.org).

If you are a member with a great story to tell, reach out to Sales and Marketing Manager Shant Thomas at [stthomas@stma.org](mailto:stthomas@stma.org) so we can get it out there!

## Spotlight: On the field, and on STMA

Many sports turf managers don't like to be in the spotlight; they prefer to let their great playing surfaces speak for themselves. Recently however, the profession was highlighted in a PBS special entitled "Spotlight: On the Field" produced by the association and aired nationally. STMA CEO Kim Heck played the special at the association's Annual Meeting and Lunch in San Antonio this past January with a promise to update members when the results of those airings came in. "Spotlight: On the Field" was a rousing success!

With this specific type of video, the interested producing party works with a company to put together the piece, which is then submitted to a central pool of videos that PBS stations across the country can then draw from. STMA was guaranteed a minimum number of airings, but that number can be exceeded if station managers receive requests to re-air a broadcast or simply choose to re-rerun it.

In a letter to STMA, Tower Productions Vice President of Communications Michael Casey stated the video "did well," adding it "air[ed] 878 times in 49 percent of all U S television households, reaching a gross audience of 4,431,900 viewers." These airings took place in 207 major markets, from New York, NY and Bowling Green, KY to Las Vegas, NV and Terre Haute, IN.

Thank you to all who assisted in the production of this video to place a much-needed spotlight on our fields. The video is available for viewing on the association's website, [stma.org](http://stma.org) and via our YouTube channel (accessible via [stma.org](http://stma.org)). -By Shant Thomas, Sales and Marketing Manager. ■

## Press coverage and other highlights: sports turf managers in the news

"I've always enjoyed competing at the highest level on natural grass and I'm glad FIFA decided to go this route with all 12 World Cup venues," says Matt Besler, Sporting KC and US men's national team defender. "I was very impressed with the playability and conditions in Brazil, especially how well the field drained in Recife for our final group stage match against Germany."

Quote secured by Glenn Gray/Buffalo Communications, July 31, 2014

"Natural grass fields take much more energy to prepare for elite competitions like the FIFA World Cup," says Graham Zusi, Sporting KC and US men's national team midfielder. "The time spent preparing them is much appreciated by the players, as the touch and feel on grass is more consistent."

Quote secured by Glenn Gray/Buffalo Communications, July 31, 2014

### The Boston Globe

"Maintaining immaculate yet playable grass tennis courts is a balancing act for head groundskeeper Mike

Buras, CSFM and his 12-person crew at Longwood Cricket Club in Chestnut Hill. The fibrous *poa annua* species used on Longwood's 25 grass courts is a native variety that is frequently labeled a weed, but Buras says when properly managed, it makes a desirable court surface. 'Grass is a living thing, and we learn to push the limits to make the courts as good as can be,' said Buras, 53."

From "Serving up the right grass for tennis" by Cindy Atoji Keene, Boston Globe correspondent

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2014/08/02/groundskeeper-serves-grass-courts-for-tennis/1p0fU2zYXkskbFPTq8giul/story.html>



"When the Giants opened up a new team headquarters called Timex Performance Center (since renamed Quest Diagnostics Training Center) in 2009, the organization hired [Rob] Davis to be its head groundskeeper. This past week, Davis, also a member of the Sports Turf Managers Association, put

the finishing touches on a Quest facility that will host its second consecutive training camp after the Giants moved home from the University at Albany last year."

From "Behind the Scenes: New York Giants Head Groundskeeper Shares His Insight" by Kevin Boilard, Featured Columnist, BleacherReport.com

<http://bleacherreport.com/articles/2135198-behind-the-scenes-new-york-giants-head-groundskeeper-shares-his-insight>



"Andy McNitt is a leading authority on all grasses, both natural and artificial, as the director of the Center for Sports Surface Research at Penn State University. He is also a long-time member of the US-based Sports Turf Managers Association. McNitt sees no reason why the Blue Jays will not be able to lay grass down within Rogers and have it thrive.

"It's going to be a big investment in the lights, but certainly we have the technology to grow grass indoors," he said."

From "Rogers Centre looking to make artificial grass a thing of its past" by Robert MacLeod, The Globe and Mail (Canada)

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/sports/baseball/field-of-dreams/article18955544/>

# Family affair at Little League World Series

## STMA volunteers celebrate 15th anniversary

**L**ast month, the world's best youth baseball players from across the globe descended upon the idyllic rural setting of Williamsport, PA for the Little League World Series (LLWS). These exceptional athletes, ages 11 and 12, traveled with family and friends for the chance to be immortalized with teammates as the 2014 LLWS Champion.

Eight domestic and eight international teams battled in the summer heat from August 14 to 24. LLWS games are contested each year at two premier Little League Baseball (LLB) stadiums, Lamade and Volunteer, in Williamsport. Each venue features Kentucky bluegrass natural surfaces and can accommodate up to 3,300 spectators with an additional 30,000 fans on the hill. LLWS continues to be one of the most elite junior sporting events and remains free for all to attend.

The 88-acre baseball complex features six fields, including Lamade and Volunteer stadiums, one full-sized baseball field, two practice fields and one practice in-field. In addition to providing superior playing and practice surfaces, LLB facilities are also home to four dorms. Participants reside here during the 10-day tournament.

Since first televising the event in 1994, the global reach and recognition of LLWS has helped grow the sport. More than 70 million viewers tuned to ESPN, ESPN 2, ESPN 3, ESPN U and WATCH ESPN in August. The additional media coverage has put a premium on producing secure, playable and visually-appealing fields for TV viewers.

Seth Whitehill, head groundskeeper of the LLB complex, was hired in April 2011. He manages one-part time employee and one intern during the summer. For the LLWS, he directed 40 Sports Turf Manager Association (STMA) volunteers for 2 weeks surrounding the event.

"Our number one goal is providing a safe playing surface for the athletes," says Whitehill, an STMA member since 2011.

This year marks the 15th anniversary of STMA assisting Whitehill's grounds crew, with representation from multiple STMA regional chapters. Some members traveled from as far as California to contribute to the 10-day event, taking personal vacation days and time away from their families. In addition to daily mowing and painting lines, the volunteer turf team carefully watered each field, broomed the edges and made necessary repairs to the clay in the home plate circle and pitcher's mound.

Jeff Fowler, Academic Rep for STMA's Board of Directors, has helped every year since STMA got involved and, again, coordinated logistics this year with Whitehill for the volunteers. But this year was more special than most as Fowler was joined by his father, Don, and son, Evan.

"It was an exciting year for our family as three generations were represented," says Fowler, District Director for Penn State University's Cooperative Extension. "Sports turf has been a common bond for all of us and it was great to share quality time with them."

Fowler credits his Dad for getting him involved with LLWS. In 1995, the stadium's premier field was not in top condition. Don was nominated as the renovation coordinator for an extensive project of re-sodding and refurbishing LLB's stadium. He led and directed fellow Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization (KAFMO) volunteers throughout the 782-hour process. The mini-major league facility debuted on August 24, 1996. Don's involvement and tireless efforts for nearly two decades has been instrumental to the success and popularity of LLWS.

Evan, Jeff's son, was a welcome addition to the grounds crew. He is a graduate of Penn State University and 2014 recipient of the James R. Watson Undergraduate Safer Athletic Field Environment Scholarship. Currently, he is an assistant groundskeeper with the Kansas

City Royals under STMA member Trevor Vance. Whitehill and the LLWS volunteers can credit this year's cohesion to three generations of Fowlers.

In addition to the STMA's milestone of 15 years of volunteer service, 2014 marks the 75th anniversary of LLB and the 68th anniversary for LLWS. The on-site LLB Museum was a hot attraction for tournament attendees.

LLB is the largest, best-funded youth sports organization in the world with 2.4 million players on 160,000 teams across 76 countries. This includes 1.9 million players and 5,500 leagues in the United States. Despite the major growth of the organization over the years, LLB remained true to its original purpose of being a member-oriented, service-driven non-profit that provides organization, insurance and other benefits to community leagues. It is operated solely by volunteers and guided by the principal that any child who wants to play will find a safe and structured place regardless of ability. ■



▲ **Jeff Fowler**, left, Academic rep for STMA's Board of Directors; his son, Evan, assistant groundskeeper with the Kansas City Royals; and Don Fowler, whose involvement and tireless efforts for nearly two decades has been instrumental to safe playing conditions for the Little League World Series.

## Several major STMA Awards deadlines fast approaching!

**S**everal STMA programs, including Innovative Awards, Field of the Year Awards, SAFE Scholarship and Founders Awards, have application deadlines October 15.

### STMA Innovative Award

The deadline for STMA Commercial Members to apply for the STMA Innovative Award is October 15. All commercial companies that are exhibiting at the 2015 STMA Annual Conference & Exhibition are invited to submit an entry (electronically only) to be recognized as an Innovative Award Winner.

New this year: **All entries will be recognized on signage and in the conference on-site guide.** This recognition will help attendees identify new products, the company that developed them, and the booth number.

As you select the product, equipment, technology, or service to enter, consider this description of "innovative":

- is cutting edge
- has never been seen

Any STMA Commercial member who is exhibiting at the upcoming STMA Annual Conference and Exhibition is eligible to submit one entry annually. The company must display the innovation in its booth and have introduced it for sale within a 2-year period. The only criteria that the innovation must meet is that it should substantially enhance the effectiveness of the sports turf manager and/or make the surfaces safer and more playable for athletes.

A panel of non-commercial STMA members representing all segments of membership will judge the entries and may give the award to multiple companies that meet the criteria.

Winner(s) will be kept confidential until announced during the first day of the STMA Trade Show. Winner(s) will be able to use the special Innovative logo in their promotion of the winning product, service, technology or equipment and will receive an award to display. STMA will publicize the winners through its communication vehicles, STMA press releases, signage at the conference and with special recognition during the Annual Awards Banquet.

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**Start taking pictures and documenting your progress now!** The STMA Awards Committee encourages sports turf managers to be creative in their applications and pictures, while still working within the framework of the program.

### STMA Field of the Year

The STMA Field of the Year program deadline is October 15. All materials must be submitted electronically by this date. Be sure to read the application carefully, as the entire process is done electronically. The process requires that applicants fill out no less than four STMA Playing Conditions Index (PCI) worksheets to apply for Field of the Year. The STMA PCI is also available online.

New this year: **Now only PCI scores need to be transferred to the application; the full PCIs do not need to be attached.**

Through the Field of the Year program, STMA is able to significantly further one main element of its mission: To gain acknowledgement for the professionalism of its members. This year, based on the results of the judging, the "Fields of the Year" Awards will be presented at the STMA Annual Awards Banquet, January 16, 2015, in Denver. In addition to being featured in this magazine, winning fields will also receive:

- A plaque recognizing the field and the Sports Turf Manager Registration to the STMA Conference
- Three nights of lodging, excluding incidentals, at the STMA Conference
- STMA signature apparel for the winning sports turf manager and their crew

Suggestions from the STMA Awards Committee on Putting Together Winning "Field of the Year" Award Entries:

Start taking pictures and documenting your progress now! The STMA Awards Committee encourages sports turf managers to be creative in their applications and pictures, while still working within the framework of the program. The committee encourages creative photos, photos that show the versatility of the field, display unique characteristics of the field, and photos that show the unique talents of the crew. Focus on issues specific to your field which tell the story; issues such as drainage, traffic, weather, etc. Provide before and after shots. Do not simply provide "beauty shots" of your field, as they do not reflect the true struggles and triumphs of you and your crew.

### SAFE Scholarships & Grants

SAFE Scholarship applications are due October 15. All materials must be submitted in one packet and faxed applications will not be accepted.

### STMA Founders Awards nominations

STMA Founders Award nominations are due October 15. These are STMA's most prestigious awards and are presented in honor of the founders of STMA: Dr. William Daniel, Dick Ericson, George Toma and Harry Gill. More information is available online at [stma.org](http://stma.org). For applications, nomination forms, to get the STMA ■

# A summer with SAFE: an intern's diaries

**T**he SAFE Foundation strives to champion safe, sustainable sports and recreation fields for all athletes, and I had the amazing opportunity to intern for them this summer. As a student at the University of Kansas, I was pleased to discover such an amazing non-profit so close to my heart right here in Lawrence! I played competitive softball for 15 years growing up, and understand how critical it is to have safe fields for athletes to play on. Even during my college career, intramurals depended on safe fields to ensure a fun and successful game.

I got to work on a variety of projects as an intern for the SAFE Foundation. Not only did I get to learn what the SAFE Foundation was all about, but I also got to help improve the foundation for the future. From an intern's perspective, you can't really get a better opportunity than that.

Over the course of the summer I had many different things on my plate, but the main focus was the scholarship anniversary articles. As seen in the August issue of *Sports Turf*, and also in the upcoming November issue, I got the opportunity to interview and talk with some amazingly successful people about their scholarship experience through SAFE. Speaking with those celebrating their 10-year

and 20-year anniversary since receiving their scholarship, I was able to learn how the SAFE scholarships can benefit students and their future careers. The best part about speaking with these individuals was what they had to say about the sports turf community. Every person I talked to raved about the camaraderie and friendships they had within the industry, and how receiving their scholarship and being introduced to STMA was a great launching point.

Most of these friendships rekindle when they join forces at STMA's Annual Conference. Since the SAFE Foundation's funding greatly benefits from the raffles, auctions and events at the conference, my responsibilities included promoting and requesting donations for these events. I also did a little investigation into more options for our silent auction for women. Looking into such options as athletic wear to a relaxing spa day, SAFE is hoping to cater toward the women of our industry.

Another main task for me this summer was working on the SAFE Foundation's social media and website. Since more and more people are taking to the internet and smart phones to find information, my job was to help find ways to make this more accessible to

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## STMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

**Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona:** [www.azstma.org](http://www.azstma.org)

**Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.cstma.org](http://www.cstma.org)

**Florida #1 Chapter (South):**  
305-235-5101 (Bruce Bates) or  
Tom Curran CTomSell@aol.com

**Florida #2 Chapter (North):** 850-580-4026,  
John Mascaro, [john@turf-tec.com](mailto:john@turf-tec.com)

**Florida #3 Chapter (Central):** 407-518-2347,  
Scott Grace, [scott@sundome.org](mailto:scott@sundome.org)

**Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.gatewaystma.org](http://www.gatewaystma.org)

**Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.gstma.org](http://www.gstma.org)

**Greater L.A. Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.stmalabasin.com](http://www.stmalabasin.com)

**Illinois Chapter STMA:** [www.ILSTMA.org](http://www.ILSTMA.org)

**Intermountain Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:** <http://imstma.blogspot.com/>

**Indiana -** Contact Clayton Dame, [Claytondame@hotmail.com](mailto:Claytondame@hotmail.com) or Brian Bornino, [bornino@purdue.edu](mailto:bornino@purdue.edu) or Contact Joey Stevenson, [jstevenson@indyindians.com](mailto:jstevenson@indyindians.com)

**Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.iowaturfgrass.org](http://www.iowaturfgrass.org)

**Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.kystma.org](http://www.kystma.org)

**Keystone Athletic Field Managers Org. (KAFMO/STMA):** [www.kafmo.org](http://www.kafmo.org)

**Michigan Sports Turf Managers Association (MiSTMA):** [www.mistma.org](http://www.mistma.org)

**Minnesota Park and Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.mpstma.org](http://www.mpstma.org)

**MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.mokanstma.com](http://www.mokanstma.com)

**New England STMA (NESTMA):** [www.nestma.org](http://www.nestma.org)

**Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey:** [www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org)

**Sports Turf Managers of New York:** [www.stmony.org](http://www.stmony.org)

**North Carolina Chapter of STMA:** [www.ncsportsturf.org](http://www.ncsportsturf.org)

**Northern California STMA:** [www.norcalstma.org](http://www.norcalstma.org)

**Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA):** [www.ostma.org](http://www.ostma.org)

**Oklahoma Chapter STMA:** 405-744-5729;  
Contact: Dr. Justin Moss [okstma@gmail.com](mailto:okstma@gmail.com)

**Oregon STMA Chapter:** [www.oregonsportsturfmanagers.org](http://www.oregonsportsturfmanagers.org)  
[oregonstma@gmail.com](mailto:oregonstma@gmail.com)

**Ozarks STMA:** [www.ozarksstma.org](http://www.ozarksstma.org)

**Pacific Northwest Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.pnwstma.org](http://www.pnwstma.org)

**Southern California Chapter:** [www.socalstma.com](http://www.socalstma.com)

**South Carolina Chapter of STMA:** [www.scstma.org](http://www.scstma.org)

**Tennessee Valley Sports Turf Managers Association (TVSTMA):** [www.tvstma.com](http://www.tvstma.com)

**Texas Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.txstma.org](http://www.txstma.org)

**Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.vstma.org](http://www.vstma.org)

**Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.wstma.org](http://www.wstma.org)

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**1 What is your company's primary business? (check ONLY ONE)**

F  Sports Complex G  Athletic Field and/or Park Architect/Designer  
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**5 Please also send a free subscription to the following people at the same location**

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them. Using the SAFE Twitter handle, I was able to promote SAFE's scholarship opportunity and their new Night of Entertainment for the 2015 STMA Conference in Denver. I also got to compose tweets recognizing donors who graciously gave to the SAFE Foundation. Twitter is a great way for the STMA and SAFE twitters to correspond and promote each other. Testimonials, pictures of raffle auction items and links to SAFE's website are all things you could find on SAFE's Twitter. On SAFE's website, I added a Testimonials page. This page is full of scholarship advice straight from the source of those who have already received the scholarship. I also added an option on the contact page where previous scholarship recipients could also share their story with us. Since we would not have the time to interview all recipients,

this gives anyone an opportunity to share their story and have their advice on the testimonials page.

Over the course of the summer, I have learned so much about this industry and researching for a new advertisement for SAFE helped me learn even more. I had the opportunity to gather some statistics for a new advertisement. This advertisement will be used to show numbers of how sports turf managers impact their community and how crucial it is to have safe fields to prevent injuries.

I am very grateful to any and all who have corresponded with me and helped me gather information this summer. I truly understand that the sports turf community is one of the nicest and most helpful, and I look forward to seeing how sports turf managers, STMA and the SAFE Foundation progress in the future. ■