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401 N. MICHIGAN AVE., CHICAGO, IL 60611/312-644-6610

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68-860 PEREZ RD., SUITE J, CATHEDRAL CITY, CA 92234
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MARCH 1993

MAIN EVENTS

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Million dollar horses can blaze around the turf track at Santa Anita Park in record time. Yet for turf course superintendent Stephen Guise, keeping that turf, part of the 300 acres under his care, in top-shape is a long race—one that requires dedication and teamwork.

12 OVERSEEDING WARM-SEASON TURFGRASS

Turf managers throughout the warm-season zones turn to overseeding with cool-season grasses for providing winter color and playability. Yet opinions on overseeding practices are anything but uniform. Lake City College instructor John Wildmon explains the process, and offers suggestions for success.

16 PROFESSIONAL DIAMOND OF THE YEAR: MURRAY COOKS AT WEST PALM BEACH

What do you get when you combine a grueling baseball schedule, a multi-field facility and grounds management professionalism to spare? For Murray Cook, Budgie Clark and the rest of the dedicated crew at West Palm Beach Municipal Stadium, it adds up to consistent field excellence—and the 1992 Professional Diamond of the Year Award.

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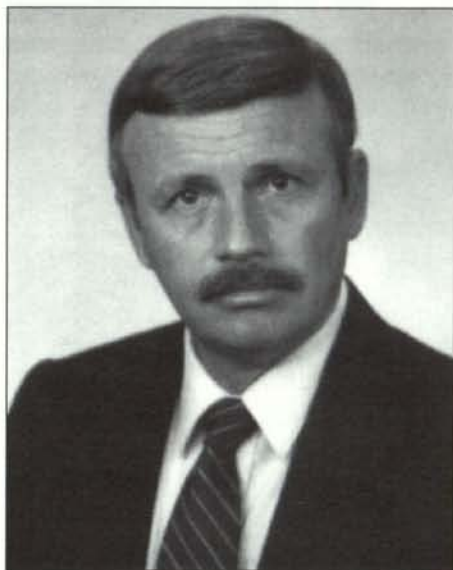
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ON THE COVER: Four-legged "athletes" pound the Santa Anita turf course. Photo courtesy Stephen Guise/Santa Anita Park.

CHESTNUT JOINS SMITHCO



William R. (Bill) Chestnut has been appointed Smithco's manager of engineer and product development. He will be responsible for the creation and development of new products and equipment and further engineering advancement of their present product line.

Prior to joining Smithco, Chestnut worked for John Deere for 20 years, helping to develop its golf and turf division. He shares patent rights with John Deere, and has been published in golf and turf business journals.

SHULDER STEPS DOWN AS PGMS DIRECTOR

The Professional Grounds Management Society has announced that Allan Shulder will not continue as executive director following conclusion of his present contract ending March 31. The PGMS board voted not to renew his contract at the Fall Board Meeting. There are no specific plans concerning a replacement. The position may or may not be redefined.

Shulder began as executive director in 1976 on a part-time basis. His position became full-time in 1985. Prior to becoming executive director, he had been in charge of grounds maintenance for the Greater Baltimore Medical Center.

RAIN BIRD HONORS EAGLE TEAM LEADERS

Jim Gable and Bill Ryan received the Rain Bird Outstanding Performance Award. They received the award for

their leadership of the Eagle Team (a group assembled to create the new Eagle series golf rotor). Gamble represented engineering and production, and Ryan represented marketing.

Under their direction, the product was developed in record time. During the project, they recruited and led a cross-functional team in a concurrent engineering effort.

CMAA REORGANIZES

The Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) has undergone organizational changes as a result of a

recent strategic planning process conducted by the association.

Changes include the separation of CMAA departments into two primary divisions. One division, headed by Bob Hassmiller, will oversee the areas of membership and chapter services, education and certification. The other, headed by Kathi Pernell Driggs, will oversee the new club services department, legislative and regulatory resources, executive career services, communications and marketing functions and allied association relations.

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This year's judges were (AL-East) Frank Albohn, New York Yankees; (AL-West) Wilbur Loo, Seattle Mariners; (NL-East) Steve Dinardo, Pittsburgh Pirates; and (NL-West) Albert Meyers, Los Angeles Dodgers.

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THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

Professional Recognition



This month, Dr. Gil Landry, president of the Sports Turf Managers Association, discusses professionalism in his monthly column. Among the issues he covers, Landry mentions the need to recognize professionalism and excellence through "success" stories. His timing couldn't be more perfect.

In this issue, we offer two such stories. The first chronicles the work of Murray Cook and his fine crew at West Palm Beach Municipal Stadium. The facility is the 1992 Professional Diamond of the Year Award winner.

Excellence seems to follow Cook, although he prefers to credit his crews for his success. But he has a sound track record of producing excellent fields, and, in 1990, he was named *sportsTURF* Man of the Year.

His secret is simple. He combines education, experience and a thoroughly professional, no-excuses attitude to get the job done. His crews either share that attitude or work elsewhere.

The second story is that of Stephen Guise, turf track superintendent at Santa Anita Park in Arcadia, CA. Guise is a long way from his native Rhode Island, but at Santa Anita he's right at home. Like Cook, he has combined education, experience and professionalism to make a good thing even better. Also like Cook, he prefers to credit his crew.

One of the most impressive elements of the Guise story are the measures he took to restore grounds crew moral and, in the process, professionalism. Guise recognized the problem. He knew he couldn't succeed on his own, and he *did something about it*. He gave his crews a "look." He relocated his office to their building. He led by example. Now *that's* professional.

In these days of staff and budget cuts, when everybody is being asked to do more—with less—we would do well to review and digest the examples set by Guise and Cook. They go out of their way to recognize work well done. That's not to say constructive criticism isn't vital to management—indeed, critical analysis of past problems keeps us from repeating mistakes. Most managers are decent critics. Yet how many fall short when it comes to praising and supporting employees, and promoting professionalism within their ranks?

Recognizing good work is simple, basic management—so simple and basic that many otherwise professional managers seem to forget it. Reprimands and discipline are key, if sometimes unpleasant, elements of professional management, but they alone do not a manager make.

Show me a manager who does nothing but set and enforce policy, while browbeating employees, and I'll show you an *amateur*. Show me a manager like Guise or Cook, who balances criticism with praise, and I'll show you a *professional*.

Matthew Trulio

EVENTS

CALENDAR

MARCH

23 Sports Turf Institute & Grounds Operations Conference. California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA. Contact: Dr. Kent Kurtz (909) 869-2219.

24 Automatic Rain Turf Day. Alameda County Fairground, Pleasanton, CA. Contact: Pam Grady (415) 323-5161

30-31 34th Annual Turfgrass And Landscape Institute. Buena Park, CA. Contact: KPR Associates (619) 723-0255.

APRIL

12-13 47th Annual Turfgrass Conference. Tifton, GA. Contact: (912) 386-3353.

MAY

10-12 Lecture, "Trees from the Inside Out," by Dr. Alex Shigo. Bellevue Conference Center, Bellevue, WA, (May 10) and Clackamas Community College, Portland, OR (May 12). Contact: John Kirkland (503) 254-0482.

11-13 Lecture, "Modern Arboriculture in Practice," by Dr. Alex Shigo. Bellevue Conference Center, Bellevue, WA, (May 11) and Clackamas Community College, Portland, OR, (May 13). Contact: John Kirkland (503) 254-0482.

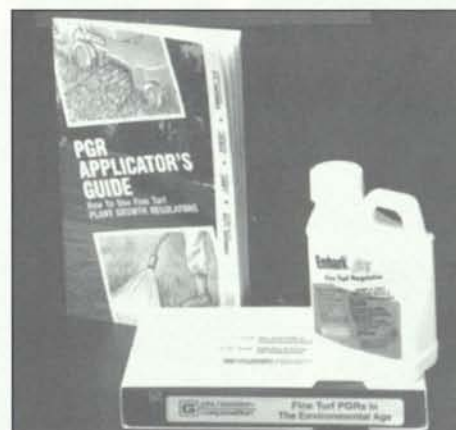
14 Workshop, "A Closer Look At Trees," by Dr. Alex Shigo. Clackamas Community College, Portland, OR. Contact: John Kirkland (503) 254-0482.

JULY

8 University of Georgia Turfgrass Field Day. Georgia Station, Griffin, GA. Contact: Georgia Turfgrass Association (404) 975-4123 or Extension Conference Office (912) 681-5189.

Send announcements on your events two months in advance to: editor, *sportsTURF* magazine, 68-860 Perez Road, Suite J, Cathedral City, CA, 92234. Fax (619) 770-8019.

PBI/GORDON OFFERS PGR PREVIEW KIT



PBI/Gordon Corporation is offering a turfgrass growth regulator kit containing a 124-page booklet, 14-minute video, and enough free product to treat up to 4,000 square feet of turf. The kit is available to turf managers and LCO's mowing contractors interested in Embark Lite Fine Turf Regulator.

The regulator suppresses seedheads generally within four to six weeks of initial greenup. It redirects the plant ener-

gy downward to benefit the roots and stamina of the grass. The sample can be used anytime grass is actively growing, but early treatment is recommended.

The preview kit can be obtained by writing to PBI/Gordon Corporation, P.O. Box 4090, Kansas City, MO 64101.

VALLEY TURF TO DISTRIBUTE JACOBSEN EQUIPMENT

Valley Turf Inc. of Grandville, MI, will distribute Jacobsen professional turf maintenance equipment in western and northern Michigan.

The company plans to represent Jacobsen with a grass roots organization. Product service seminars on Jacobsen equipment will be conducted for golf course maintenance personnel.


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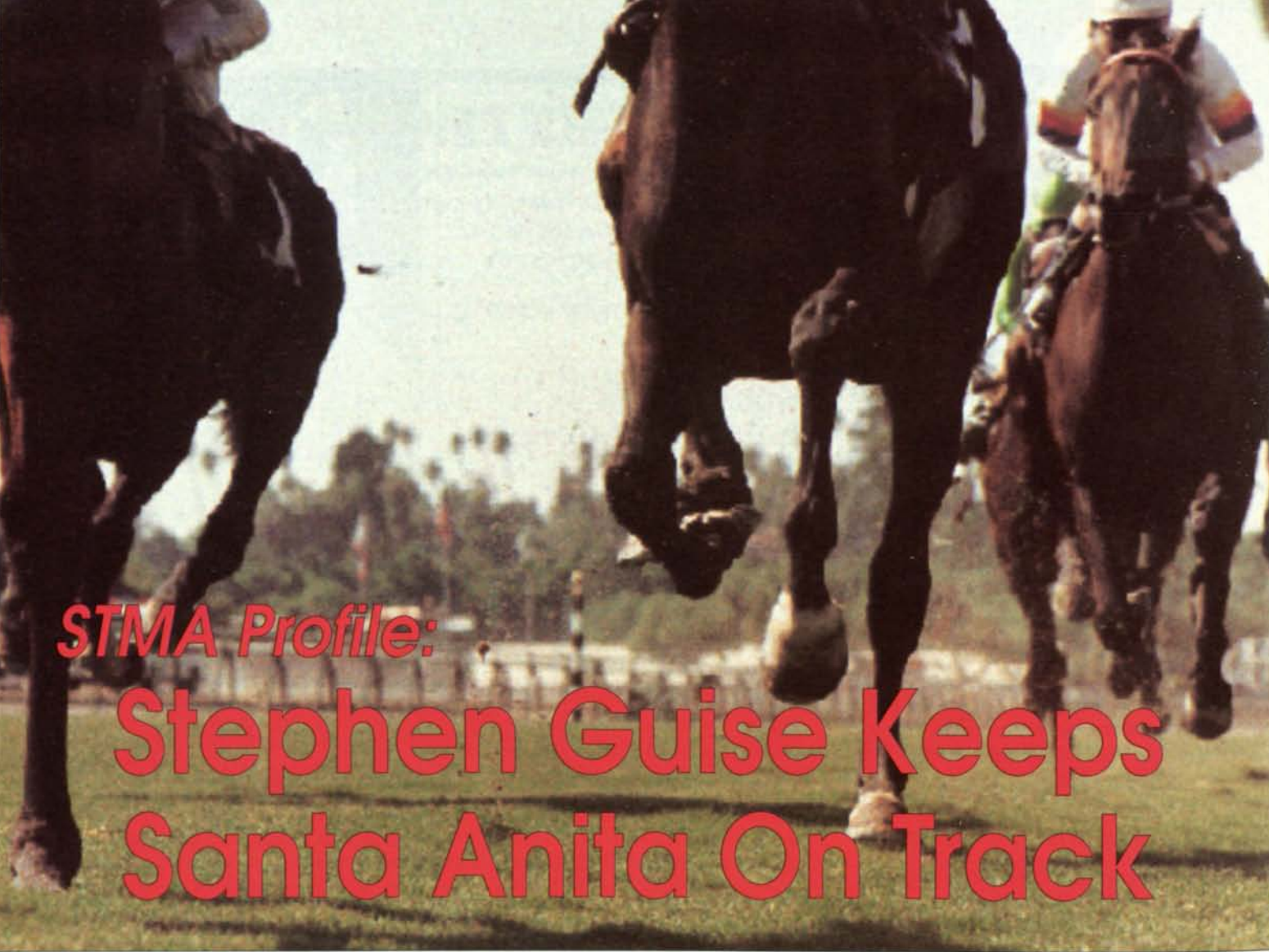


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STMA Profile:

Stephen Guise Keeps Santa Anita On Track

Top: Although horses' hooves strike the turf with incredible force, superior rooting and Netlon minimize divots. **Bottom:** Santa Anita Park overview. Photos courtesy: Stephen Guise.



By Bob Tracinski

Million-dollar animals move with grace and speed along the emerald green track. Their hooves pound the turf ferociously—the noise can be heard over the swelling grandstand din. At the finish, the winner is often decided by less than a stride.

As the victorious horse is led to the winner's circle, and the remaining horses are led to the paddock, Stephen Guise and his crew inspect the track for damage. Even the slightest blemish that could potentially cause a footing problem for these magnificent animals is repaired.

It's all in a day's work for Guise, turf course superintendent for the Los Angeles Turf Club and Santa Anita Park in Arcadia, CA.

Given the pounding dealt by the horses to the turf track, Guise faces tough odds. The racing schedule is grueling. Races are held six days a week during

the Oaktree Meeting, from October 7 through November 9, and the Santa Anita Meeting, from December 26 to end of April. Seven of every nine races are on the dirt tracks, which must also be kept in superb conditions. Horses are on the tracks from dawn to 10 a.m. Races start at noon. Even during the off season, 1,500 horses are in training at the park.

While the infield generally holds concessions and betting windows, special events are also common. A two-day beach volleyball tournament has been included, which required Guise's crew to cover a segment of the turf with geotextile fabric, tongue-and-groove plywood and two feet of sand. (After a lot of cleanup and a light application of liquid iron, the turf was back in top shape.)

During an annual car show, 100 Rolls Royce and Bentley vehicles are displayed on the turf. Fiesta Day, another annual happening, requires construction of a stage on the turf.

Yet Guise rises above these and other considerable challenges to beat the odds, making the track conditions at Santa Anita consistently among the finest in the country.

A Formidable Challenge

At the main Santa Anita course, a 10-acre oval of turf encircles a dirt training track and is surrounded by a dirt racing track. The turf track is separated from one dirt track by two and a half feet, the other by 10 feet. The 7/8 mile turf track is 80 feet wide at the stretch, 90 feet wide at the turns. Turns are crowned 15 feet off the outside wall. There is a two percent grade on the home stretch and a six percent grade on the turns.

The track is constructed much like a USGA golf green with 90 percent medium-to-coarse sand and 10 percent Dakota Peat. Netlon provides the soil profile with needed stability. The track's hybrid bermudagrass is overseeded with perennial ryegrass as weather dictates to provide year-long cushioning and color.

A second, six-acre Hillside turf course was renovated in 1990. Guise thoroughly researched the plan for the course. It was constructed under his supervision.

To maintain the sight line from the grandstand, so that every patron can see horses all the way around the track, construction in the 40-acre infield is below grade. For example, when the *Plaza de la Fiesta* was added to the infield, contractors dug down eight feet

and removed all the existing soil. The lowered section then was reconstructed with the same sand and mesh system that was used for the turf course.

An extensive irrigation system enables Guise to control water delivery to the turf track—meeting its need without unfavorably altering the surface for the horses. A daily computer readout, combined with temperature sensors sunk into the soil at a six-inch depth, provide detailed information. Guise can adjust watering precisely according to CIMIS (California Irrigation Management Information Service) feedback on evapotranspiration (ET) conditions.

As the victorious horse is led to the winner's circle, and the remaining horses are led to the paddock, Stephen Guise and his crew inspect the track for damage.

An injection system is used to supply general fertilizer and minor nutrients to the turf course and infield areas. Matt Matkin of Soil and Plant Labs monitors the turf course every two weeks with soil tests and plant tissue analysis. Dry fertilizer is applied to compensate for any deficiencies.

Because of the soil profile, aeration is needed on the infield only once or twice a year; once a year in the paddock area. The turf course was aerated for the first time last year, after clay had infiltrated the sand/peat profile. The cores were vacuumed immediately after aeration. Topdressing is performed when necessary in the once heavily contaminated area.

The 16 acres of turf course are mowed twice a week. The procedure takes about three and a half hours. Sixteen acres may seem like a substantial area, but for Guise they're a drop in the 300-acre "bucket" under his care.

Detours To The Sport Of Kings

Santa Anita is a Southern California institution. The original Santa Anita dates back to 1934. Guise doesn't go

back quite so far. He was hired in November 1989 following a \$3 million renovation of the turf oval in June of that year. He was brought on, primarily, to keep the turf alive and he came prepared.

Guise graduated from the University of Rhode Island in 1980 with a degree in soils and turf management. Originally a sociology major, he found a soils course intriguing.

"Soils was the first class I could see, smell and feel," he recalls. "It was something I could really dig into and understand. When I did my first soil profile, with dirt on my boots and under my fingernails, I knew I had to switch majors."

Following graduation, Guise took the government exam and became a licensed soil scientist. His goal was to perform soil profiles for the U.S. soil service. However, President Reagan's 1980 hiring freeze put a kink in his plans.

Guise headed to North Carolina to be closer to his girlfriend, where he found a position with Lawn Medic. After seven months with the company, he was sent to northern New York to train personnel at other branches to use liquid fertilizer programs. Guise returned to North Carolina, only to head back north to Rhode Island, where he accepted a position with ChemLawn. Four months later he was working in Southern California, in Rancho Cucamonga, as the first ChemLawn specialist in the area. There, Guise developed a strong commercial and residential market. He steadily advanced within the company, moving from branch manager, to commercial regional manager, to opening a branch office in San Diego by 1985.

Changes within the company and rapidly escalating environmental concerns prompted another detour. While considering his options, Guise applied for the opening at Santa Anita. After "four weeks of interviews and eight hours with a psychiatrist," he was hired.

His predecessor had been a mechanical engineer. "He had done a good job of holding things together, but soils, turf and plants weren't his major interest," says Guise.

Morale was not particularly high at the time Guise came on board. Thirty gardeners on his new crew had seen their jobs "enriched" with tasks no else would tackle, such as litter collection and cleaning kitchen grease traps. The "spirit of

continued on page 10

Santa Anita

continued from page 9

professionalism," Guise recalls, had been allowed to slide.

"The thing is, this crew is filled with great workers," he asserts. "Nobody had taken the time to acknowledge that and set up systems to put it to good use."

An immediate upgrade of the gardeners' work, locker and lunchroom areas was made. Guise also moved the superintendent's office—his office—from the front office complex to the gardeners' headquarters. He had the equipment room inventoried and set up an organized, locked tool room. The gardeners were issued uniforms and a dress code was established.

"With our new image, our gardeners began to be acknowledged for the level of work they were accomplishing," he says. "We still tackled many cleanup tasks, including trash and sink traps, but someone has to do them, and our crews do them *right*."

The number of gardeners now stands at 25. In September 1992, Guise also took over the management of laborers, bringing his current crew to 48, including five foremen.

Million-dollar animals move with grace and speed along the emerald green track. Their hooves pound the turf ferociously—the noise can be heard over the swelling grandstand din.

He emphasizes that the competence and cooperation of his crew make it possible to handle the extensive workload on the 300-acre facility, including the 24-hour-a-day watering regime using a system that has been upgraded, bit by bit, since 1934. Although Guise is quick to credit his entire crew, he singles out

Leif Dickinson, his assistant who came with him from ChemLawn, and Joe Martinez, for special praise.

Beyond The Track

Santa Anita is billed as "the park with a million flowers, and racing, too." Part of Guise's job is making Santa Anita live up to its flowery reputation. That's been a learning experience, he admits.

"I had a strong background in soils and turf and a pretty good understand of shrubs and trees," he says. "And no experience with flowers."

That didn't stop him from learning. Guise knows that beauty sells. Aesthetics—the psychological responses to beauty—are not only based on the look of the turf, but of the surrounding features and the overall "statement" made by the facility as well. A facility's aesthetics not only increase on-site attendance, but they also involve television viewers in the action, which is crucial. In addition to on-site wagering, a significant portion of horse racing revenue is raised through "simulcasting," projecting racing action as it happens, via satellite to legal, off-track betting venues.

Guise is well-aware of the role land-

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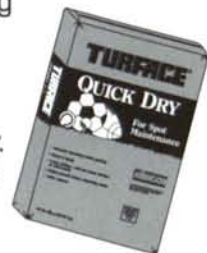
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