

# JOHN DEERE SCOUTING REPORT FROM MILWAUKEE.

"We're a team," explains Gary Vandenberg, director of grounds for

the Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club, when speaking of assistant Dave Mellor.

"Dave and I get along very well and think a lot alike. Dave handles the day-to-day

scheduling of the crew while I handle the budgeting and management chores."

*Dave Mellor (left) and Gary Vandenberg*

One thing they both agree on is John Deere. "Our John Deere equipment allows us to do a better job," says Mellor. "For example, the 1200A is so fast and efficient that we can groom the entire infield in just five minutes. That means we can go out and smooth the skinned area between pregame batting and infield practices. Players appreciate that extra touch."

Vandenberg and Mellor's equipment fleet includes a John Deere 1200A Field

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"The 1800 is like a Cadillac," says Vandenberg. "You have all the controls at your fingertips and the wide boom allows you to make fewer passes. I've never seen anything better."

"If one thing stands out about the John Deere equipment, it's that we've had virtually no downtime," concludes Mellor.

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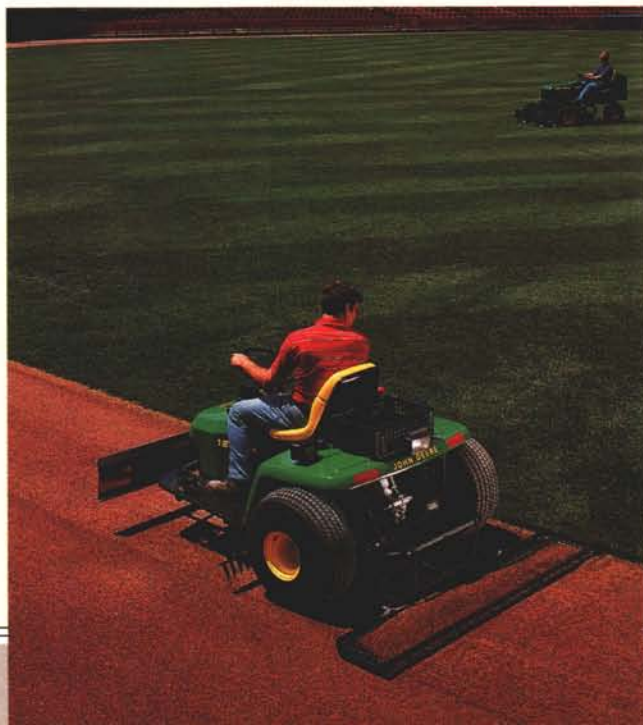
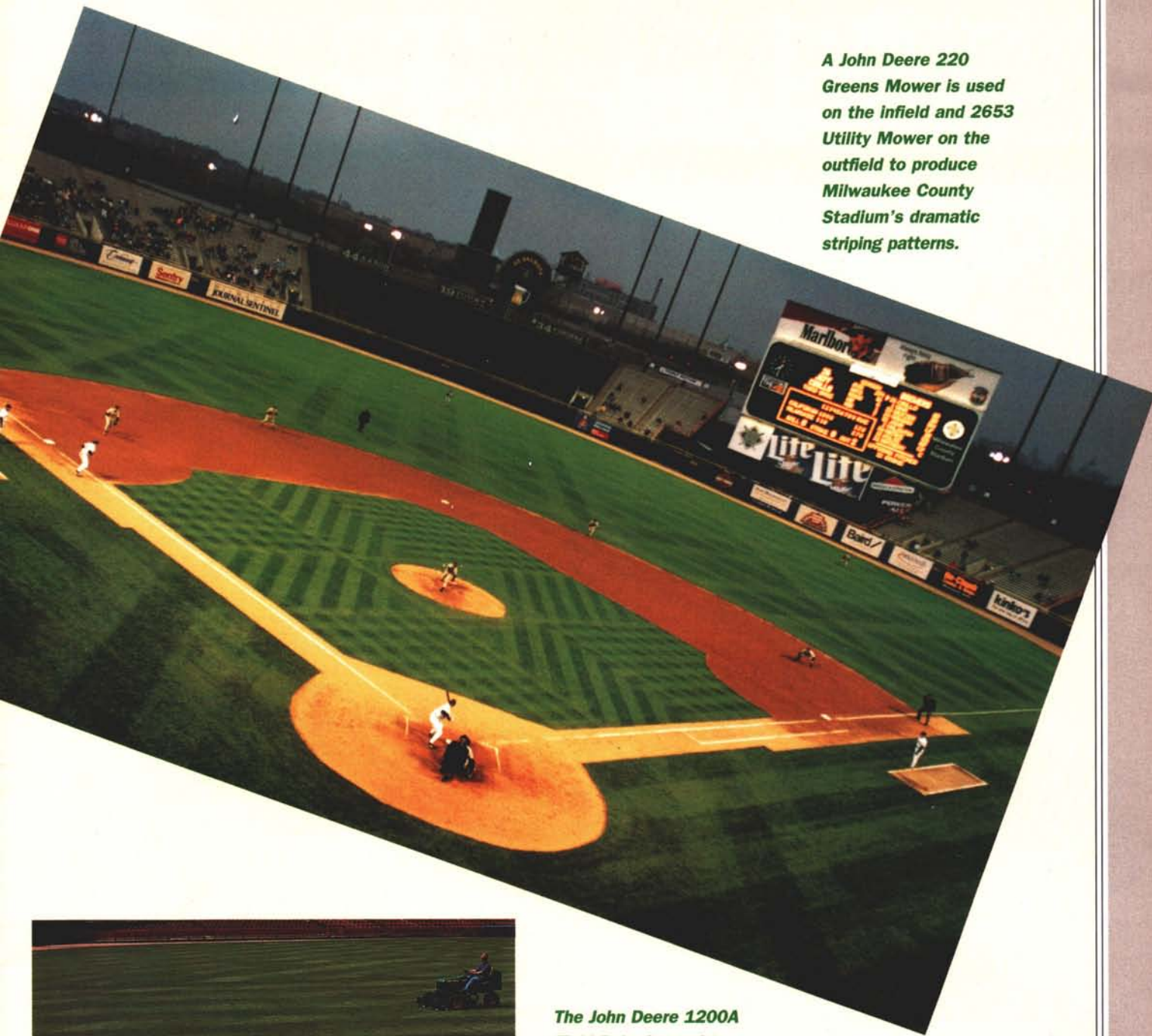
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*A John Deere 220 Greens Mower is used on the infield and 2653 Utility Mower on the outfield to produce Milwaukee County Stadium's dramatic striping patterns.*



*The John Deere 1200A Field Rake is used to groom Milwaukee's infield and warning track. Hydraulic control of the rear field finisher allows an operator to adjust the down-pressure of the implement as needed.*



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# sportsTURF

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## MAIN EVENTS

### 8 Mike Schiller —

#### *sportsTURF's* Manager of the Year

Ask anyone about Mike Schiller, and before you get words, you get a smile. He is a genuinely nice guy, a standout, standup man of commitment. Mike not only lives up to his principles, he sweeps others along with him on the straight and narrow path of dedication. This magazine is honored to name him Manager of the Year for 1998.

### 12 Making the Most of Trade Shows and Seminars

Trade shows can be a welcome break from the daily grind — a chance to step away from the demands of the office, get new ideas, and think about the big picture. Sport turf contractor Jim Puhalla relies on them to stay current, and shares ways he's found to make attending trade shows and seminars an invigorating, useful enterprise.

### 16 Taking a Closer Look at Rootzones

Using the latest imaging technology, sports turf agronomist Michael DePew has been taking microscopic photographs of rootzones and soil profiles to see what makes them tick. He has reason to believe this will result in better field constructions for turf managers.

### 32 Milwaukee Brewers' Rainy Day Miracle

When the ordinary suddenly becomes extraordinary, well-defined procedures, teamwork, innovative planning and persistence can pull off victory. Imagine yourself in the trenches with the Milwaukee Brewers' grounds crew and slosh in their shoes through a devastating rain last summer.

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#### On the Cover:

The Milwaukee Brewers' grounds crew "do the wave" — an emergency technique that helped save their field last summer.

Photo by: David Mellor.

Inset: Mike Schiller — *sportsTURF's* Manager of the Year. Photo courtesy: Trusty & Associates.

# EVENTS

## January 15-March 19

Principles of Plant Growth; Riverside, Calif. Thursdays, 6-9 p.m. Tuition: \$280. Contact: UCR Extension, Natural Sciences Department. Phone: (909) 787-5804. Fax: (909) 787-7374. E-mail: sciences@ucx.ucr.edu. Web site: <http://www.unex.ucr.edu>.

## January 16

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) education seminar: "The Microbiology of Turfgrass Soils;" Columbus, Ohio. Contact: GCSAA. Phone: (785) 841-2240 or (800) 472-7878. Web site: <http://www.gcsaa.org>.

## January 19

GCSAA seminar: "Design, Construction and Maintenance of Chemical Storage Facilities;" Indianapolis, Ind. Contact: see Jan. 16 entry above.

## January 19

GCSAA seminar: "The Superintendent As Grow-In Manager;" Richmond, Va. Contact: see Jan. 16 entry above.

## January 19-22

Professional Horticulture Conference of Virginia, Ltd., and Trade Show. Phone: (757) 523-4734. Fax: (757) 366-9604.

## January 19-22

Turf Equipment Mechanics Advanced Training School, sponsored by NYSTA, GCMA and SUNY; Delhi, N.Y. Cost: \$650. Contact: Dominic Morales at (607) 746-4413; or Steve Lucas at (508) 671-5477.

## January 19-22

68th Annual Michigan Turfgrass Conference; Lansing, Mich. Contact: Kay. Phone: (517) 321-1660.

## January 19-23

Cornell Turfgrass Management Short Course; Ithaca, N.Y. Contact: Cornell University. Phone: (607) 255-1792.

## January 20-21

GCSAA seminar: "Design, Construction and Renovation for IPM;" Colorado Springs, Colo. Contact: see Jan. 16 entry above.

Q: What do all of these teams have in common?

Oakland A's  
Arizona Diamondbacks  
University of Texas Longhorns  
San Diego Chargers  
University of Southern California Trojans  
California Angels  
Arizona State University Sun Devils  
San Francisco 49'ers  
San Diego State University Aztecs  
San Francisco Giants  
San Diego Padres  
Los Angeles Dodgers  
Oakland Raiders  
Arizona Cardinals

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# THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE



## Who's Got the Key?

With this issue we say "Fare well!" to Floyd Perry, *sportsTURF's* outstanding Manager of the Year for 1997, and welcome Mike Schiller, his very worthy successor.

In passing the mantle, Floyd proposes a New Year's resolution: take advantage of STMA's educational opportunities! They include more than this magazine and the annual national conference. The local chapters have equally helpful newsletters and meetings, and the STMA

has recently introduced its own certification program. Follow Floyd's advice and you will find keys to your success.

## New Year's Resolution

By Floyd Perry

At every turfgrass conference, trade show or field day, sports field managers look for "the one key" to creating better, safer, more efficiently maintained facilities.

Progressive groundskeepers talk in small groups, listen to college professors and discuss innovative ideas on how to unlock the sports-field-maintenance vault. Managers look at the latest equipment, try the newest snake-oil formulas and read fancy color advertising pieces, hoping to find the one key that will make their fields look and play better than their neighbors' at half the cost. That's everyone's goal: find the key!

At a recent Grounds Maintenance Services workshop, I asked the audience, "What is the underlying key to athletic field maintenance?" They supplied many answers: bigger budgets, more manpower, quality irrigation, better feeding and seeding schedules, sufficiently amended sub-soil, sub-surface drainage, more efficient aeration and other equipment, new parts for old equipment ... the list goes on and on.

One young female groundskeeper raised her hand late in the discussion and suggested that the number one key to success at her fields was education. All of the concerns above are useless without a basic understanding of certain fundamental cultural practices built on a strong educational foundation.

For example, suppose your department just purchased and installed the latest and greatest irrigation system with all the bells and whistles. If your staff doesn't have a solid understanding of the sub-soil composition, the local evapotranspiration and other climatic variables in your area, and the seasonal playing schedule, your sports turf can suffer from over/under watering or incorrect clock schedules.

Each of us constantly reads about innovative methods from researchers and more efficient equipment from manufacturers that may help our fields. As sports field personnel, we need a certain amount of background knowledge to link the written word with the real world, our situations.

Taking the leading role in creating a solid educational platform — especially with its new Certified Sports Manager program — is your own STMA. If you wish to find the "key" to your own small part of the athletic field puzzle, the STMA can help with its leadership and membership advantages.

Keys — we all have them — car keys, house keys, office keys, safety deposit box keys, but if you're looking for *one specific key* to unlock the mysteries surrounding your athletic fields, look no further than the STMA.

Remember, turf grows by the inch and is killed by the foot. That's a good key to start with.

# TIP O' THE MONTH



## Keep Your Top On!

By Al Hollinger

If you maintain trees, do yourself a favor: don't top them, ever.

In some areas, topping is a common practice perpetuated by "professionals" who don't know their jobs. The evidence for *never* topping trees is overwhelming:

**1. Rotting.** Rot-causing pathogens enter the tree through large open wounds left by topping.

**2. Sunburn.** Topping damages lower branches that are normally shaded and protected from the harmful effects of intense sunlight.

**3. Wind Resistance.** Topping *increases* the chance of wind damaging a tree. Topping removes a tree's food source. The tree responds by quickly replacing the lost foliage with limbs weakly attached to the main trunk and massive suckers that don't allow the wind to pass through the tree.

**4. Cost.** Because of the effects of topping (poor structure, suckering, rapid growth), topped trees require more maintenance: more money.

**5. Increased Liability.** Ironically trees are topped to "decrease" liability. The opposite is true. It is well established that topping is an improper practice causing unhealthy, unsafe trees by increasing the chance of branch or tree failure.

**6. Aesthetically Offensive.** Topping destroys the natural symmetry of a tree. Topped trees are appraised at lower values than properly maintained trees.

If a tree overgrows its place, don't top; it is safer and more economical to remove the tree and plant a smaller variety that will not outgrow the space.

*Al Hollinger is an ISA certified arborist for Tree Rite, Palm Desert, Calif. The above is reprinted by permission from the October 1997 issue of Southwest Trees & Turf, Las Vegas, Nev.*

*If you have a tip to share, send it to sportsTURF, 68860 Perez Rd., Cathedral City, CA 92234.*

# STMA MESSAGE



By  
Mike Schiller

Two years ago, I was handed the reins of STMA as your president. I've been fortunate to be a part of STMA's growth — not only in numbers, but in the services we provide our members. This growth is the by-product of the hard work of some very special people. As I hand over the reins of the presidency, I take this opportunity to thank them.

First, thanks to Steve Guise, president-elect; Henry Indyk, commercial vice president; Eugene Mayer, secretary; Rich Moffitt, treasurer; L. Murray Cook, Bucky Trotter, Mary Owen, Bob Patt and Bob Curry, our board members; and Greg Petry, immediate past president. They have given their time and talents to help make this one of the hardest working boards STMA has ever had and are key to our success.

To Mike Trigg (chair), Troy Smith,

## Thanks for a Great Run!

Ken Norkosky and all the people who have worked on the raffle/silent auction committee, thank you. Thank you, too, to all of you who have contributed items and joined in the bidding and raffle processes. They have generated funds for our scholarships and provided some fun in the process.

To all of you who have volunteered to work on a committee, thanks! I'm grateful for your dedication and service. A special thanks to those who have worked on the education and conference committees. Our annual program has grown each year, and is an even better event because of you.

I thank every member of STMA for your support. You have helped STMA grow and become a leader in the turf industry. I challenge each of you to take an active part in the organization. There's lots to do — and you'll gain more than you'll ever give.

I thank Fred and Rosalie Stice, whose encouragement early in my career helped steer me into the turf industry. I also thank my employers over the past 15 years for allowing me to become so actively involved in STMA. I owe special thanks to the Schaumburg and Rolling Meadows



Park Districts for allowing me to serve as president-elect and president these past four years.

Last and most importantly, I thank the most important people in my life: my children — Elizabeth, Jennifer, Matt and John — and my lovely wife of 26 years, Charlotte. Your patience, understanding and loving support have helped make these last few years speed by.

Our future is strong. STMA has grown and continues to grow. We have a record number of student members, all with much to offer the sports turf industry and our association. At the same time, we are drawing on the experience of the past through our Past Presidents Council, and through the input of other long-term STMA members.

I'm pleased to say we're keeping alive the dream of my dear friend Harry "Pops" Gill. I know he'd be proud of us. I ask you to continue to support STMA as your new president and board take over. I'm sure they'll continue to lead us forward.

Thanks for a great run!

## Get Serious With STMA

### Application for Membership

The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) is an organization of professionals representing all segments of the sports turf industry. Our members work to combine the science of growing grass and the art of maintaining sports turf to produce playing fields that are both safe and aesthetically pleasing.

STMA provides members with a variety of benefits, including: education through regional institutes and conferences; support for sports turf research; facilities tours; a national awards program; access to the STMA National Conference and Exhibition; complimentary subscriptions to Sports Turf Manager and sportsTURF Magazine; and much more.

If you're serious about the sports turf industry, then it's time to become a member of STMA. Join today!

#### Member Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Business \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Referred by \_\_\_\_\_  
(ST8)

#### Membership Category (please check one)

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|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional sports turf facility manager                        | \$85  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Four-year colleges and universities sports turf facility manager | \$85  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other schools, research, ext. agents, teaching                   | \$85  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parks and recreational sports turf facilities                    | \$85  |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> International (other than commercial)                            | \$85  |
- (must be in US dollars)

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"Promoting Better and Safer Sports Turf Areas"



**Manager of the Year Schiller (right) receives an award from Dr. Bill Daniel.**  
Photo courtesy: Mike Trigg.

## Mike Schiller — sportsTURF's Manager of the Year

Ask anyone about Mike Schiller, and before you get the words, you get the smile. This is a genuinely nice guy, a stand-out, startup, man of commitment. Mike not only lives up to his principles, he sweeps others along with him on the straight and narrow path of dedication.

We'll recount his work history, his record of service to the industry, his list of accomplishments and well-deserved awards. But you've really "gotta" talk to his vast network of friends and colleagues and hear the heartfelt way he talks about them to get the true measure of this man.

His excitement about the future of the sports turf industry and for the Sports Turf Managers Association is so great his enthusiasm is contagious.

### Developing a Pattern

What led Mike to this profession? Maybe it was his love of the Cubs and fascination with Wrigley Field; maybe the example of Fred Stice, his mentor in that first golf course job; or of Master Sergeant Floyd Hughes during his Air Force days. Maybe it was the encouragement of Ed Metcalf and Randy Illg of the parks-and-rec pro-

gram at Harper College. Maybe it was the connection with Harry Gill, or the influence of Dr. Bill Daniel, Dick Ericson, George Toma, David Frey, Dr. Kent Kurtz, Steve Wightman, Greg Petry, ... the list goes on and on.

### sportsTURF's

#### Managers of the Year

- 1st (1989) — Dr. Fred Grau
- 2nd (1990) — Harry Gill
- 3rd (1991) — Murray Cook
- 4th (1992) — George Toma
- 5th (1993) — Roger Bossard
- 6th (1994) — Dr. Kent Kurtz
- 7th (1995) — Ed Birch
- 8th (1996) — Steve Wightman
- 9th (1997) — Floyd Perry
- 10th (1998) — Mike Schiller

Maybe it was the steadfast support and encouragement of his wife, Charlotte, and their four children, of his mom, his brothers, ... maybe it was this whole combination of people, events and circumstances *and then some* that shaped the package that is Mike Schiller.

Mike worked on the golf course for

Stice while studying for an associate of arts degree. He graduated from Harper College in August of 1969.

Reluctant to borrow more funds for college, Schiller joined the Air Force in November of 1969. Soon he was on base and on the field in Mississippi, dragging and lining fields and cutting grass as an "athletic and recreation specialist."

Mike and Charlotte were married in 1971, just 10 days after Mike's orders for reassignment to Alaska came through. Soon "Char" was teaching elementary music while Mike was discovering indoor-athletic-facility maintenance and learning how to fit baseball and football into a 90-day growing season. To supplement their income, he became a certified athletic official in baseball, softball, basketball, volleyball, football and wrestling — which gave him a chance to see sports from the other side.

Next came Shepherd Air Force Base in Texas, where Mike became a physical-training instructor for German and Iranian student pilots.

Desire to be closer to family took Mike out of the service and back to Chicago in the fall of 1976. True to form, the Schillers arrived on a Friday night, Mike read the want ads on

Saturday morning and he applied for and got a parks maintenance staff position at the Mt. Prospect Park District the following Monday. Six months later, Mike was hired as foreman in the Village of Libertyville, and before long he became superintendent of parks, overseeing 400 acres of parks-and-rec property with a \$200,000 budget.

He went back to Harper College in Palatine, Ill., and earned his associate degree in park and grounds operations management in 1980.

Then, in 1981, the position of director of landscape and facilities maintenance opened up in Northbrook. Mike moved up to 450 acres of property, a 27-hole golf course and driving range with miniature golf course and a quarter-mile velodrome. He assisted in managing a \$900,000-plus budget. A life-long pattern was developing.

An offer he couldn't refuse took Mike to a sales position with Arthur Clesen Inc. from February 1985 to July 1987, and again from August 1989 to December 1992. In between he held the director of parks position with Glenview Park District, where he oversaw the \$900,000-plus budget and the planning and operations of over 350 acres of parks and leased recreational properties.

Mike missed the parks, so in December of 1992 he left his second stint at Arthur Clesen Inc. He became assistant superintendent of parks and planning for the Schaumburg Park District and worked with another mentor, Dan Otto. Besides assisting with the budgeting and operations of over 800 acres of parks-and-rec property, Mike selected and maintained the computer program for tracking employee hours.

In April of 1996, he moved up to his present position, Superintendent of Parks for the Rolling Meadows Park District, where he oversees the budget, planning and maintenance of all buildings and grounds. He's also working toward a degree in recreation management at Aurora University, with completion scheduled for 1998.

### Carrying on the Dream

Mike became involved in STMA even before it was STMA. Soccer was blossoming — as were players' demands for on-field time — so Mike sought to upgrade his skills. He



Schiller (sitting) meets with the STMA board. Standing (left to right) are Rich Moffitt, Bob Curry, Henry Indyk, Steve Guise, Bucky Trotter, Mary Owen, Eugene Mayer and Greg Petry. Photo courtesy: Trusty & Associates.



Taking a break from an STMA board meeting in Phoenix, Schiller visits with Grant Trenbeath, head groundskeeper for the Arizona Diamondbacks, at the team's new stadium. Photo courtesy: Trusty & Associates.

## How Others See Schiller

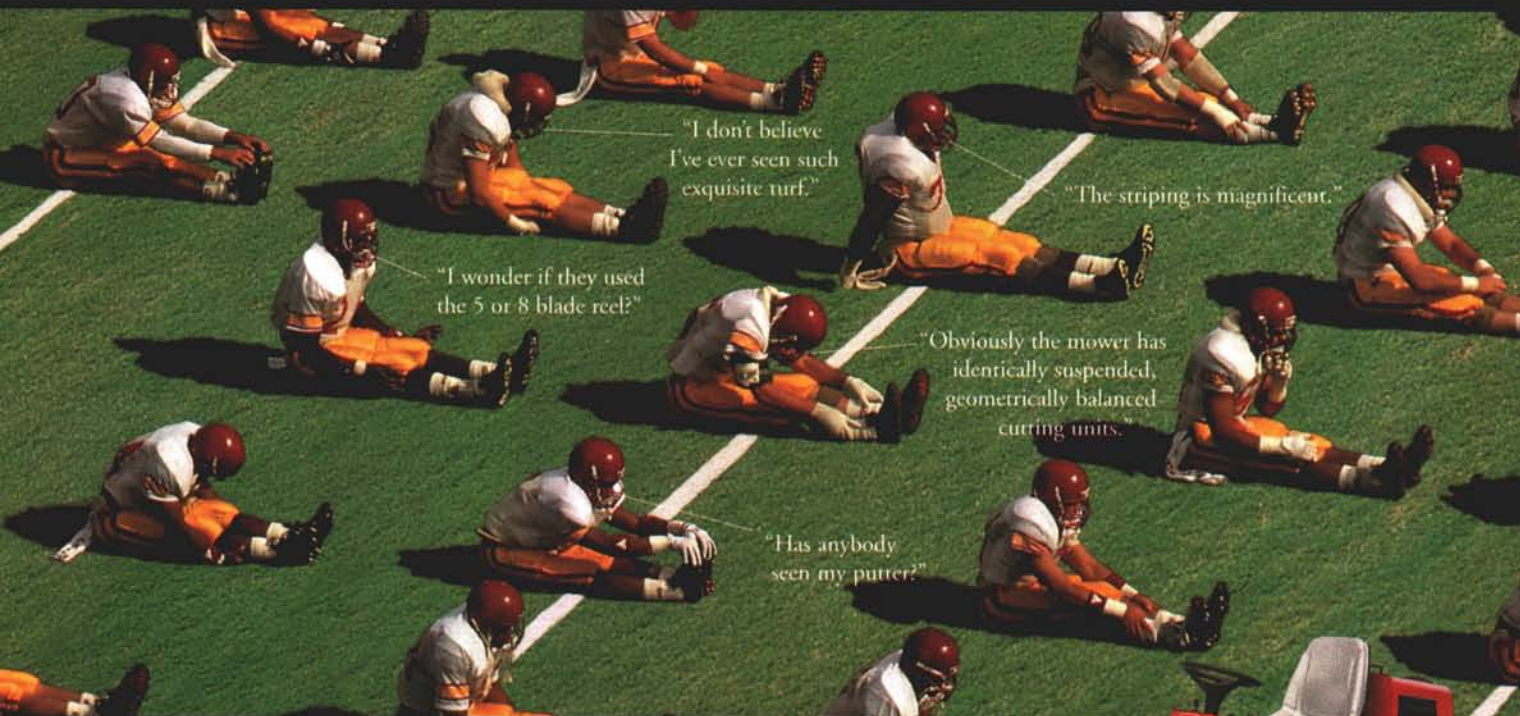
*Floyd Perry*, last year's Manager of the Year: "Mike is one of the greats in our industry, and I'm personally happy that our industry magazine recognizes his talents and abilities. My groundskeeper's hat goes off to Mike."

*Eugene Mayer*, STMA board member: "Mike is devoted to the industry and works hard for it. And when it comes to supporting STMA, he's so enthusiastic it's like baseball fever. A lot of us talk about STMA; he preaches it."

*Mary Owen*, STMA board member: "I don't know anybody who cares more about people in the industry than Mike."



# SUDDENLY THE 50 YARD LINE FEELS A LOT MORE LIKE A FAIRWAY



"I don't believe I've ever seen such exquisite turf."

"The striping is magnificent."

"I wonder if they used the 5 or 8 blade reel?"

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"Has anybody seen my putter?"

## INTRODUCING THE NEW TORO GROUNDS PRO GOLF COURSE QUALITY WITHOUT THE GREENS FEES

The new Grounds Pro™ 2000 is the first reel mower designed for sports fields. It features a reel blade design that gives you a smoother, more professional cut than a rotary. Yet, unlike reel mowers made for the golf course, the Grounds Pro is designed to fit the budget constraints most sports field managers face. And its value grows when you add any of its productive attachments. Ask your Toro distributor about the Grounds Pro or check it out at [www.toro.com/grounds/sports](http://www.toro.com/grounds/sports).



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