installation/building of landscaping and irrigation.

He's quick to cite the Irrigation Association (IA) and its certification programs as instrumental influences in his educational process. He's an IA Certified Irrigation Auditor (CLIA), Contractor (CIC), and Designer (CID), and is certified with Rain Bird for Maxicom systems.

Bodi put this background to work by developing a master irrigation system for the main campus. The system incorporates a 1,200-gallon per minute, variable-frequency drive pump station, and a 6,800-foot long, 8-inch main-line loop of piping, all controlled by a computerized Maxicom system.

All buildings use potable, county-supplied water, but landscape and field irrigation water is drawn out of the main lake. Bodi asserts, "In four to six years, the water savings alone will cover the cost of the system components and the labor costs."

Bodi also developed the field, landscape, and irrigation system designs. Grounds department personnel handled the irrigation installation, sodding, sprigging, and finishing of the playing surface. Contractors installed the Musco lighting system, most of the hard-scape features, and the fencing.

Each of the three new fields is 285 feet deep in every position and has a turfgrass infield, a warning track, lighting, and bleacher seating for approximately 100 spectators. During construction, workers skimmed the area soil and filled it to develop a level surface. They augmented the native clay-based soil with composted chicken manure and a white-washed sand. The fields have no underlying drainage systems. A crown of approximately one foot per 100 feet provides surface drainage.
The Joy Christian Complex stands adjacent to another of the Church's excellent facilities. Grace Family Life Center houses four basketball courts and a running track. Courtesy: Robert Bodi

Workers cultivated the skinned surface with four tons of Pro's-Choice soil amendments per field, and topped each with a crushed-brick Crimson stone. They topped the warning track with Crimson stone as well.

"The fields have a high-performance Rain Bird irrigation system consisting of R-70, Falcon, and T-Bird heads controlled by the Maxicom Central irrigation system," says Bodi. "The separate skinned or turf area zones also can be cycled in the field from hand-held digital phones. Hose outlets are strategically placed for quick water access."

In late August 1996, the grounds crew sprigged the fields with Mississippi Choice, a new hybrid bermudagrass that features thick, vigorous growth characteristics. Supervisor Smith says, "We fine-tuned the fertilization and irrigation to get good sprig establishment. We then overseeded with perennial ryegrass at two to three times the normal rate to prevent winter kill. The fields looked great in early spring of 1997, but cool weather kept the perennial ryegrass active through summer and fall. We didn't need to overseed.

"Following the cool, wet spring of 1998, the bermudagrass finally kicked in well. Because the fields are in play by April, we want the extra top growth, and will overseed again this fall."

The crew sodded areas surrounding the new fields in early April 1997. They topped the warning track and skinned areas with red stone at the start of the 1997 season, but the skinned surface was softer than desired during wet periods. Smith says, "This spring we worked in some Pro's Choice, but didn't remove the old material. We're fine-tuning the mix there and on the mounds to find the right combination to withstand our level of play."

Fertilization is based on soil tests, and granular applications are made at three- to four-week intervals. Smith explains, "We spike aerate at a four- to six-inch depth, covering the field twice. Our first aerator occurs about mid-May. This year we plan on monthly aeration during the playing season. We're topdressing following aeration with approximately a 1/4-inch layer of the same sand used in the field construction."

The 10 older fields have skinned infields and common bermudagrass turf. Maintenance is less intensive, and includes twice-a-week mowing and game-day grooming with the field rake. The outfield lines are painted and the batter's box chalked.

"We control field use in bad weather, which helps keep the low-maintenance fields in safe, playable condition," says Smith. "We meet with our activities director at around 2:00 pm, make the decision, and put the play or no play message on a team hotline."

Though maintenance schedules incorporate IPM practices, both pre- and post-emergence herbicide applications may be needed on the new fields. Non-selective controls are used around the warning tracks and fence lines. In 1997, the grounds crew applied Primo to control growth on the new field turf and the surrounding turf areas.

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Regular maintenance

The in-house crew mows the playing surfaces approximately every other day using a ride-on reel mower. Turf is maintained at a one-inch height from March through May and in October and November, and at a 3/4-inch height June through September.

The grounds crew works from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm, so no crew member is on hand for post-game maintenance. This presents a maintenance challenge, especially during rainy conditions.

Smith says, “Another major challenge is the constant changing of the pitching rubber and base pads to accommodate the wide range of leagues that play on a single field. With softball and baseball pitchers and coach-pitch ball, we have a throwing distance variance from 30 feet to 54 feet. We reset the mound according to who is playing that day.

“To counteract 1997 turf damage at the front of the traditional mound, we borrowed a tip from BOB (Bank One Ballpark in Phoenix, AZ) and cut out a strip of turf from the mound to home plate, converting it to skinned area material on two of the three fields.”

Standard excellence

Bodi and Smith have found that the high standards set for the complex have helped raise the level of field care. “Parents see the conditions here and ask for the same kinds of fields at home. Earning the award increased that exposure,” says Bodi.

Each spring, the Church rededicates the playing fields in prayer. All the teams’ members turn out in uniform, along with coaches, supporters, youth band, banner carriers, and parents. They all march from the church to the fields for prayers of dedication, and then each team plays an inning of ball.

Bodi says, “Seeing those 4,000 people coming in joy to our ball fields made all the work worthwhile. I just started to cry—for these kids, these families, and most of all, for the Lord.”

Game Day Preparations

- Trash patrol and clean restrooms at fields
- Spruce up flower beds
- Repair mound and home plate area by hand
- Mow (every other day or as conditions warrant)
- Use sprinkler system to lightly irrigate skinned area
- Use field rake to groom skinned area
- Hand rake skinned surface in two-foot border around turf
- Sweep off turf edges with broom
- Use irrigation system again to lightly irrigate skinned area
- Smooth out warning tracks
- Paint foul lines; chalk batter’s box
- Clean up and prepare dugouts

Category Blast Service

Use this new Category Blast Service to get FREE information on the products or service categories listed below which you are planning to purchase within the coming nine months. You will receive information, and possibly other follow up contact, from appropriate companies advertised not just in this issue, but throughout the year in sportsTURF. Just circle the number(s) on the reader service card (opposite) corresponding to the product or service categories below and drop the card in the mail!

9001 Aeration equipment
9002 Baseball Field grooming equipment
9003 Drainage
9004 Fertilizer / soil amendments
9005 Field covers
9006 Field marking paint / equipment
9007 Infield mixes
9008 Irrigation supplies
9009 Mowers
9010 Seed
9011 Site amenities
9012 Sod
9013 Turf equipment

Bob Tracinski is manager of public relations for the John Deere Company in Raleigh, NC, and is public relations co-chair for the national Sports Turf Managers Association.
Teamwork does make a difference. This definitely turned out to be the case when the Minnesota Sports Turf Managers Association joined forces with the Minnesota Athletic Directors Association for a spring workshop May 6. The joint meeting was billed as “Turf Day.”

Seventy-five attendees gathered at 9:00 am at the high school campus in Farmington, MN, eager to cash in on the promise of quality field-care information. That promise was fulfilled in presentations based on practical, down-to-earth information, and in demonstrations packed with ideas to take home and put to use.

John Hopko of Professional Turf & Renovation opened the program by discussing how to get the most out of fields on a tight budget. He focused on the practical aspects of preparing and maintaining native-soil fields to withstand today’s typical heavy-use schedules. Hopko combined examples from his company’s renovation experience with questions from attendees.

Next, Mike Kelly of the Glenn Rehbein Company covered examples of field renovation projects. He included information on the costs of building different types of fields.

Dr. Don White from the University of Minnesota closed the classroom portion of the workshop. He used slides to illustrate different types of fields, soil-related problems and developing strategies to combat them.

The workshop proceeded with demonstrations of field-care equipment. Attendees saw groomers, mowers, and aerators in action on the Farmington High School baseball field.

The groups were buzzing as the networking and idea exchange continued during a great lunch.

This joint event grew from our chapter’s annual spring membership drive. Shannon Hendrickson, our immediate past president, had suggested that we contact Pete Veldman, executive secretary of MADA, about the possibility of including an advertisement or a flyer promoting our spring workshop in the organization’s newsletter. Once Hendrickson explained the type of event we were planning, he and Veldman began discussing common problems, and Veldman suggested bringing the two groups together in a joint workshop.

Hendrickson had already offered his school’s facilities for the spring workshop. The MSTMA Board agreed to come up with the speakers, recruit companies for the demonstra-
groundskeeper for Midway Valley Park Sports Complex follows.

The chapter is also planning a workshop in September. For information on the "Workshop on Wheels", the September event, the Minnesota Chapter, or other pending activities, contact Connie Rudolph: (612) 646-1679.

KAFMO Chapter: Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization joins PGMS, the Penn-Del Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture, Westtown School, and Penn State Cooperative Extension in sponsoring "Grounds

MADA covered the costs of copies and the mailing costs of including the flyer in its newsletter. MSTMA handled the registration duties, and the chapter retained the profits generated by the workshop.

This successful outreach to one of our targeted groups was far easier and more successful than we'd anticipated. The enthusiasm was so great that plans were already brewing for the 1999 joint workshop before the end of the session.

Connie Rudolph is groundskeeper for Midway Stadium, St. Paul, MN.

Chapter news

Colorado Chapter: The Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association will hold its "Mountain Seminar" July 17, at Steamboat Springs. CSTMA's annual golf tournament, "Lawnmower Man Open," will be held Monday, July 13, at West Woods Golf Course in Arvada.

For more information on these events, the Colorado Chapter, or other upcoming activities, call the 24-hour CSTMA chapter hotline/fax: (303) 438-9645.

Minnesota Chapter: The Minnesota Sports Turf Managers Association will hold its "Workshop on Wheels" July 15, starting at Midway Stadium in St. Paul. Events begin with groomer demonstrations. The tour then moves to Canterbury Park, a horse racing facility. Following lunch at Canterbury Park, the group heads to Lakeville for a tour of the high school athletic fields, including the new football field. A tour of the Apple Valley Park Sports Complex follows. The group then heads to Turf Supply for the last tour of the day. The workshop wraps up back at Midway Stadium for tailgating, networking, and a St. Paul Saints game.

Attendees take advantage of field demonstrations at MSTMA's joint workshop.

For more information on this event, the Midwest Chapter, or other pending activities, contact Chip Hounes: (901) 377-5081, or Jim Calhoun: (901) 755-1305.
Nor-Cal Chapter: For general information about the Northern California Chapter STMA, contact Sal Genito, UC Davis: (530) 752-1691.

Florida Chapter #1: For information on the Florida Chapter or pending activities, contact John Mascaro: (954) 938-7477.

MAFMO Chapter: For information on the MAFMO Chapter or upcoming activities, contact the hotline: (410) 290-5652.

Chapters on the grow

Wisconsin Chapter: The newly forming Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association will meet July 22, from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Registration opens at 8:30 am.


For information on this meeting, contact the O.J. Noer Turf Grass Facility: (608) 845-6536.

For more information on the forming chapter, contact Rich Riggs, R. H. Rettler & Associates, Inc.: (715) 341-2633.

Arizona Chapter: STMAAZ is planning a July meeting in Show Low. For information on this meeting, the Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona, or upcoming events, contact Bill Murphy, City of Scottsdale Parks and Recreation Department: (602) 994-7954, or Kris Kircher, City of Chandler Parks & Recreation Department: (602) 786-2728.

Great Plains Chapter: Plans are moving forward for a fall workshop and for a workshop with Floyd Perry of Grounds Maintenance Services. More details will be announced soon.

For information on these events, the Great Plains Chapter, or other upcoming activities, contact Mark Schimming, City of Wichita: (316) 337-9123.

Indiana Chapter: Plans are moving forward on the formation of a new chapter in Indiana. For information on this developing chapter, contact Terry Updike, B & B Fertilizer: (219) 356-8424, or Pat Hickner: (800) 672-4273.

Michigan Chapter: The newly forming chapter is planning a July event at Michigan State University. It will include a presentation on field marking, and a tour of the athletic facilities. An August event with presentations on football field compaction is also in the planning stages. More details will be announced soon.

For information on these events, the developing chapter, or other pending activities, contact Rick Jurries, West Ottawa Public Schools: (616) 395-2364.

Great Lakes Chapter: Great Lakes Sports Turf Managers Association is planning an August golf outing at Carlton Glen Golf Club, and a November meeting in Toledo, OH. Executive board meetings are scheduled for July 28, August 25, September 29, and October 27.

A call for 1998 GLSTMA Sports Facility Awards entries has been issued by direct mail and in the GLSTMA Newsletter. The deadline is September 1.

For information on these events, the awards program, or the newly forming chapter, contact Joe Zelinko: (800) 897-9714, or Boyd Montgomery: (419) 885-1982.

Nevada Chapter: For information on the forming Nevada Chapter STMA or upcoming events, contact Ibsen Dow: (702) 649-1551, or Alan Paulson, Clark County School District: (702) 799-8724.

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!

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Please enclose payment (check, money order, Master Card, Visa, Discover or American Express) and send to: Sports Turf Managers Association, PO Box 3480, Omaha, NE 68103-0480

For more information, contact STMA Headquarters at 800/323-3875

“Promoting Better and Safer Sports Turf Areas”
Turf managers from across the nation recently gathered at Disney's Wide World of Sports in Orlando, FL, for the first-ever Sports Turf Professionals Club. The three-day conference, sponsored by the Toro Company, allowed sports turf managers to learn and share the latest techniques in the industry.

Steve Cockerham, superintendent of agricultural operations at the University of California-Riverside, acted as the keynote speaker for the event. He's chiefly responsible for developing and growing turf for Bank One Ballpark, the new retractable-done stadium in Phoenix. His presentation discussed the work that went into researching and designing the project, and the installation itself.

The Sports Turf Managers Association sent several members to Orlando to participate in the event. Executive Director Steve Trusty explained, “Events like Toro's Sports Turf Pro Club help bring the industry together and raise awareness of how professional the industry and the STMA have become, and create opportunities for our members' future growth.”

According to STMA officials, that growth has been extraordinary of late. Membership has doubled over the past two years, and there's no sign that that trend will slow down anytime soon. The demand for professional sports turf managers has never been higher.

Sports turf contractors launch new association

At the recent Sports Turf Managers Association Conference in Orlando, FL, a group of 12 people representing eight sports field contractors met to discuss the feasibility of establishing a new association specifically directed to sports turf contractors. Discussions went well, and the Sports Turf Contractors Association (STCA) was born.

The group determined that it would continue to take an active role in the STMA, and that it would complement rather than compete with its parent organization. STMA Board members threw their support behind the initiative, and the new STCA appointed a committee to act as a liaison between the organizations.

The following will serve as the STCA's initial board of officers:
• Aaron McWhorter, Sports Turf Company, Inc. President
• Paul Franks, S.W. Franks Construction Co. Vice President
• Charlie Hendricks, Woerner Sports Turf Secretary/Treasurer

The STCA will work to promote sports field construction standards, and to improve the overall construction quality and safety of fields at all levels. A mission statement is currently in the works, and the organization is actively seeking prospective members.

Initial annual membership dues have been set at $500, and the STCA will most likely hold its annual meeting in conjunction with the STMA Conference.

For more information, call Aaron McWhorter or Dan Wright: (800) 273-8608.

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