

## John Mascaro's Photo Quiz

# A

**Answer:  
from page 17**



This low spot was void of grass and encircled a high school football field. At first glance it would appear to be a newly installed irrigation line; however it is actually a one personal running trail. This high school is in dense urban area of South Florida and nearby residents use the school facilities for various activities after normal school events have ended. This particular running trail was caused by an unusually dedicated runner who refused to run on the running track but instead opted for running directly on the turf. He always ran in the exact same place and eventually caused this "cow trail." The maintenance staff urged the school board to lock the facility during non-school events and the neighbors claimed they were taxpayers and had every right to it. I am not sure how much softer the ground was after this dedicated runner caused this path and continued to use it daily. ■

*Photo submitted by Ed Birch, retired Maintenance Supervisor for Broward County School Board, Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Story told by Lanny Dixon, CPO, Grounds Division, Broward County School Board.*

If you would like to submit a photograph for John Mascaro's Photo Quiz please send it to John Mascaro, 1471 Capital Circle NW, Ste # 13, Tallahassee, FL 32303 or email to [john@turf-tec.com](mailto:john@turf-tec.com). If your photograph is selected, you will receive full credit. All photos submitted will become property of SportsTurf magazine and the Sports Turf Managers Association.

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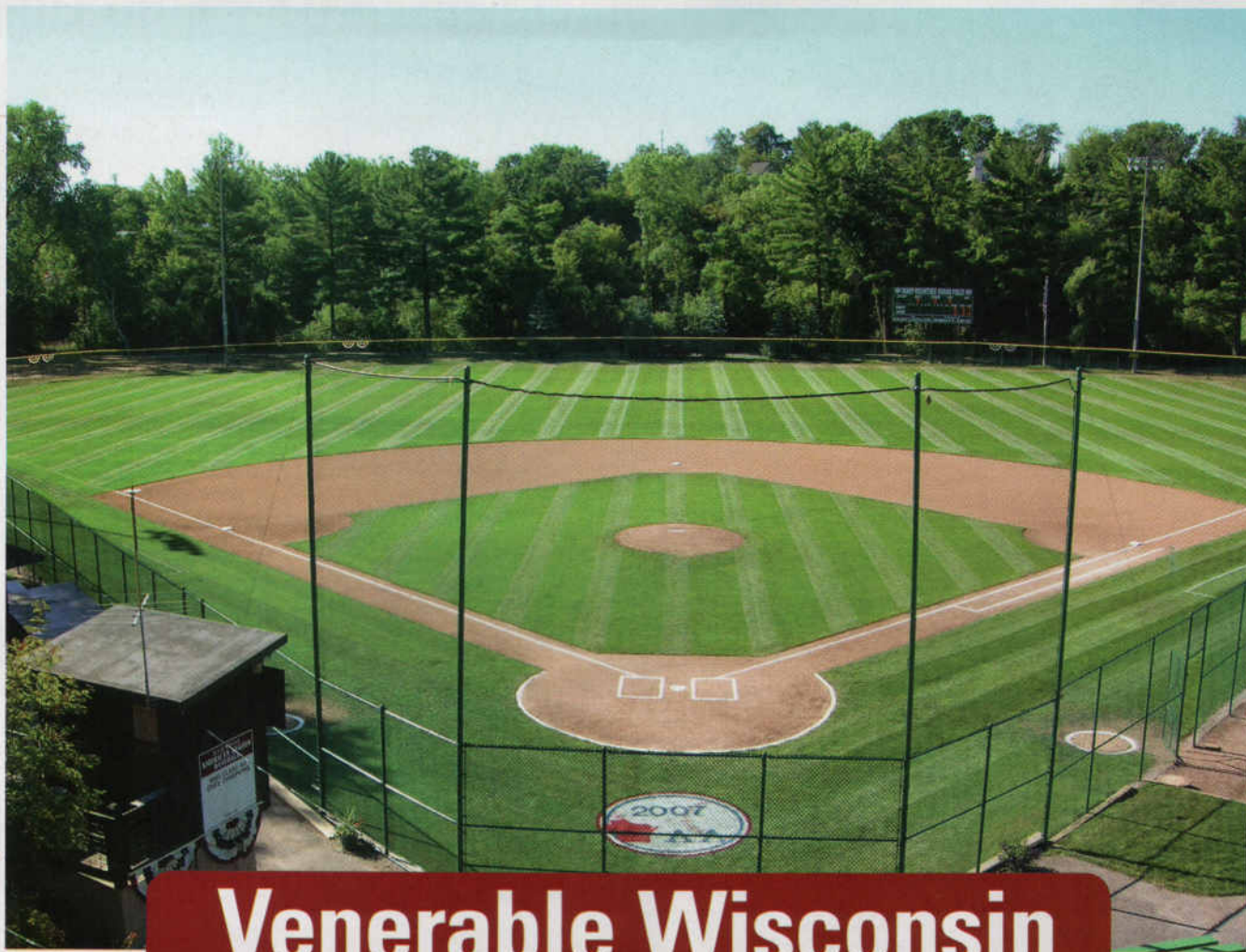
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## Venerable Wisconsin field named best

**M**ary Rountree Evans Field in Baraboo, WI, hosted its first game in 1924, featuring future major leaguers Buck Weaver and Happy Felsch, who unfortunately are best known as members of the infamous Chicago Black Sox. The field is set along the Baraboo River with majestic pine and willow trees serving as a backdrop for hitters and fans alike.

Maintenance of the facility depends on a network of volunteers, who have taken the field from an all-skin infield and cinder warning track to winning the 2007 STMA Schools/Parks Baseball Field of the Year. Manager Craig Schlender, a city parks employee, specializes in setting up the mound and batter's boxes, and has learned his trade from joining

the Wisconsin and national STMA organizations. "I was fortunate enough to be a part of some great training sessions put on by the Milwaukee Brewers," Schlender says. "The late Harry Gill set up the maintenance plan."

Schlender's on-field experience includes more than 600 tournament games, five State Legion tournaments, three WIAC tournaments, and two NCAA Division III Midwest Regional tournaments.

**SportsTurf:** How did you get started in turf management? What was your first sports turf job?

**Schlender:** I got started in turf management working for the Baraboo Parks Department when I was promoted from a construction position to the operations super-

visor of Baraboo's 100-acre park system. Working on Mary Rountree was actually my first turf management job.

Having no turf management background, I needed to find out how to improve the fields. I turned to the people who do it best, the Milwaukee Brewers groundskeepers. I owe a lot to the people I met there, the late Harry Gill, Gary Vandenberg, David Mellor of the Boston Red Sox, Troy Smith of the Denver Broncos, and Rachel Volkening. They were all willing to share information with a person who had no real background in turf management. I took their advice and joined the WSTMA and STMA. Over the years I have taken advantage of all of the meetings, seminars, and trainings put on by the WSTMA and STMA. Most of my turf management

knowledge has come from these meetings, asking the right questions to the right people, and most importantly experiencing the trial and errors of working on ball diamonds.

**ST:** How do you balance your family life with work demands?

**Schlender:** I have been able to do all of these things because I have a very understanding family, and most importantly an understanding wife. My wife has claimed to have seen more than 1,500 baseball games. She does not like to admit it, but deep down she has loved every one. My whole family has been very involved in Baraboo

Baseball, from working in the concession stand, working on the field, coaching, and even having a daughter be bat girl.

I lead a very busy life that is all connected to turf management. In the summer I find myself spread very thin, but because of my loving wife she allows me to follow my passion. I oversee the turf management on Mary Rountree, I am the head of grounds at Great Wolf Lodge (a vacation resort in Wisconsin Dells), and I own and operate a baseball diamond consulting company (Ball Diamond Fine Sports Turf LLC) and coach Legion baseball with my son.

**ST:** How do you see your job changing in the next 10 years?

**Schlender:** In the future I see myself slowing down a bit. I have been mentoring Randy Seymour, the current Baraboo parks operations supervisor. It is easy for me to mentor him because he has the same values, goals, and work ethic that are needed to maintain the sports facilities. My consulting business has been growing in the past 5 years and I see that growth trend continuing as facilities strive to have the best complexes they can have.

As I get closer to "retirement," if you want to call it that, my wife and I want to go south for the winters and maybe there will be a baseball field that I can help out with.

**ST:** Did you make any adjustments, large or small, to your maintenance plan in 2008? Did you purchase any new equipment or products for this year?

**Schlender:** Over the years we have fine tuned our maintenance plan. We are still working out the kinks on an irrigation system we installed a few years ago. As the field has improved through the years so has the equipment to maintain it. We are very lucky the city of Baraboo has been purchasing and maintaining top of the line equipment for Mary Rountree. There are plans for a warning track and we recently completed building two state-of-the-art batting cages.

**ST:** What's the greatest pleasure you derive from your job? What's the biggest headache?



**Schlender:** The most pleasurable thing for me is watching excited ballplayers playing on one of the best if not the best baseball field they have played on. Also, knowing that a town with only 10,000 people, a small budget, minimum staff, and lots of volunteers could lead to a national field of the year award!

I am very proud to be one of the leaders making the field what it is today and what it will be in the future. It would be impossible to do this without the Baraboo Legion baseball program, the Baraboo Dugout Club, and a strong

city parks department. The Legion baseball program and the Dugout Club have raised more than \$250,000 in the past 15 years for field and



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# FIELD OF THE YEAR



playing improvements. This money has been matched by the city and so has been a win-win for everyone.

We have been very fortunate in the past 15 years to have a solid volunteer grounds crew. With the volunteer crew we have we prep the field no different than a major league ballpark every single day. In the summer we have a full time employee who takes care of the day to day tasks. The combination of volunteers and city employees we have has made the playing surface, amenities, and atmosphere to rival any big league ballpark. The coaches, players, fans, and people from the community take pride in knowing that our park is good enough to be the national Field of the Year.

One of the biggest headaches of the manager's job is getting people to understand

that a field of this quality does not just "happen." It is the little things that make a park like this a step above the rest. If these things are not done on a day to day basis it does not take very long for a park to degrade and go the other way. With cutting of budgets and the looming economic depression this country is in, it is becoming harder and harder to secure funding for future improvements as well as continuing education for managers and staff positions.

**ST:** How do you see the sports turf manager's job changing in the future?

**Schlender:** I see the sports turf manager's job having to change and be more focused in the future due to more specialized equipment, practices, and materials. This industry is dynamic and as new tech-

nology comes out managers will have to adapt and educate themselves to keep up with the industry standards.

In the parks and schools sports turf settings, there are a few fields that set the standards for the area. Many managers improve their fields trying to get to the same standards. This is great for the areas sport complexes as a friendly competition striving to make the areas fields the best they can be. In order for this to happen, managers need to keep up on continuing education and sharing of knowledge with fellow managers.

One of the greatest assets of the STMA is that all levels of sports turf managers are willing to share information. In the long run this benefits everyone. ■

The STMA Field of the Year Awards Program has been made possible through the generous support of its sponsors: Carolina Green; Covermaster; Hunter Industries; Turface Athletics/Profile Products; Scotts Turf Seed; and World Class Athletic Surfaces.

## New certification brochure available

**S**TMA has a new brochure that outlines the personal and professional benefits you'll realize by becoming a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM). It outlines the education and experience requirements, explains the testing process and describes the on-going requirements. After reviewing the brochure, you'll know exactly what to expect when seeking and pursuing the CSFM credential. To request a copy of the new brochure, call 1-800-323-3875, or e-mail [STMAinfo@STMA.org](mailto:STMAinfo@STMA.org). The brochure also can be found on line at [www.STMA.org](http://www.STMA.org) on the home page. STMA has also placed the entire certification packet, which includes the application and study references on its website, under the Professionalism Tab.



## Legends of the game

**T**he history of STMA is not only about equipment; it's also about the people who first conceived this organization. This photo is taken from one of STMA's early meetings in the early 1980's when those gatherings were with The Park and Grounds Maintenance group operated by Eric Madison.

This was a panel discussion by professional stadium managers featured the legendary Harry "Pops" Gill (first on left), from Milwaukee's County Stadium who was one of the founding members of STMA. Next to him is Steve Wightman, who at the time was in charge of Mile High Stadium in Denver, where the Broncos played as well as a minor league baseball team. Steve is now with Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego. To Steve's left is the late Don Marshall, who had a quick wit and wicked sense of humor. Don was with the Los Angeles Angels at the time, and was a personal friend of legendary Angels owner and actor Gene Autry. Barney Barron, far right, was the Superintendent of Parks and Properties for the City and the County of San Francisco. Candlestick Park was one of the properties he most enjoyed being responsible for. He had a tremendous sense of humor and was generous with



both his time and his stories. These men shared their stories and passed along tricks of the trade, starting a tradition of openness that continues in STMA today.

A time-lapse video made by Don Marshall that showed the 24-hour changeover from baseball to football at Angels Stadium from a roof camera was shown at this seminar. STMA's numbers were small then but friendships were developed that have lasted through lifetimes.

The STMA Historical Committee met in late November for the first time to log and develop the acquired collection of Dr. Kent Kurtz, STMA's first executive director. "Doc", as he was admirably referred to, also served as the association's first Historian, and amassed an amazing collection of document and photographs of the sports turf profession and STMA. Doc's collection included a kind donation from the estate of turf industry pioneer Dr. Fred Grau. In appreciation of Doc's contribution and the generous donation of the Kurtz family to STMA we will be running a monthly account of the people, places, stories, equipment, and photographs that are important to the profession and association. ■

Sports turf managers have also been very creative and innovative in irrigation. According to STMA Past President Steve Wightman, when he was at Mile High Stadium in Denver from the mid-1970's until the mid-1980's, a homemade semi-portable irrigation system was used to supplement the lack of coverage provided by the perimeter irrigation one of the original PAT Systems.

## SAFE Foundation hires grant writer

**T**he Foundation for Safer Athletic Field Environments (SAFE) has hired a grant writer to assist with funding procurement. In 2007, SAFE engaged a consultant to conduct a funding search for potential opportunities. The results from the search indicate that funds are available from sports entities, foundations, environmental groups and others that value safe athletic fields for all levels of play. Subsequently, SAFE has hired a grant writer who will be actively engaged in pursuing this funding.



SAFE is a 501(c)(3) organization and is the charitable arm of the STMA. It was formed in 2000 to provide funds for research, scholarship and education to help sports turf managers with the challenges of providing safe field conditions for outdoor sports.

SAFE will be funding a three-year traffic tolerance study of grasses for athletic fields through the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP), which will begin in 2009. SAFE also has been funding scholarships in the amount of \$12,500 annually and funding two \$4,000 awards for the winning teams of the STMA Student Challenge. SAFE is an active partner in helping to underwrite STMA's educational resources, such the DVD on mound-building and home plate maintenance. To find out more about SAFE and how you can help further its efforts, contact Kim Heck, at 1-800-323-3875, or at kheck@STMA.org. ■

## Chapter News

### STMA Chapter Contacts

**Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona:**  
www.azstma.com.

**Chesapeake Chapter STMA (formerly Mid-Atlantic Athletic Field Managers Organization – MAFMO Chapter STMA):** www.ccstma.org.

**Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
www.cstma.org.

**Florida #1 Chapter:** 954/782-2748

**Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association:** www.gatewaystma.org.

**Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
www.gstma.org.

**The Greater L.A. Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
www.stmalabasin.com.

**Illinois Chapter STMA:** 847/263-7603.

**Intermountain Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:** www.imstma.org.

**Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association:** www.iowaturfgrass.org.

**Keystone Athletic Field Managers Org. (KAFMO/STMA):** www.KAFMO.org.

**Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
www.kystma.org.

**Michigan Sports Turf Managers Association (MiSTMA):** www.mistma.org.

**Minnesota Chapter STMA:** www.mstma.org.

**MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
www.mokanstma.com.

**New England STMA (NESTMA):**  
www.nestma.org.

**Nebraska Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
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**NEW - North Carolina Chapter of STMA:** www.ncsportsturf.org.

**North Florida STMA Chapter:** 850/580-4026.

**Northern California STMA:**  
www.norcalstma.org.

**Ozarks STMA:** www.ozarksstma.org.

**Sports Turf Managers of New York:**  
www.stmny.org.

**Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey:** www.sfmanj.org.

**Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association**

**(OSTMA):** www.ostma.org.

**Pacific Northwest Sports Turf Managers Association:** www.pnwstma.org.

**Southern California Chapter:**  
www.socalstma.com.

**South Carolina Chapter of STMA:**  
www.scstma.org.

**Texas Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
866/897-8621.

**Tennessee Valley Sports Turf Managers Association (TVSTMA):** www.tvstma.org.

**Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
www.vstma.org.

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www.wstma.org.

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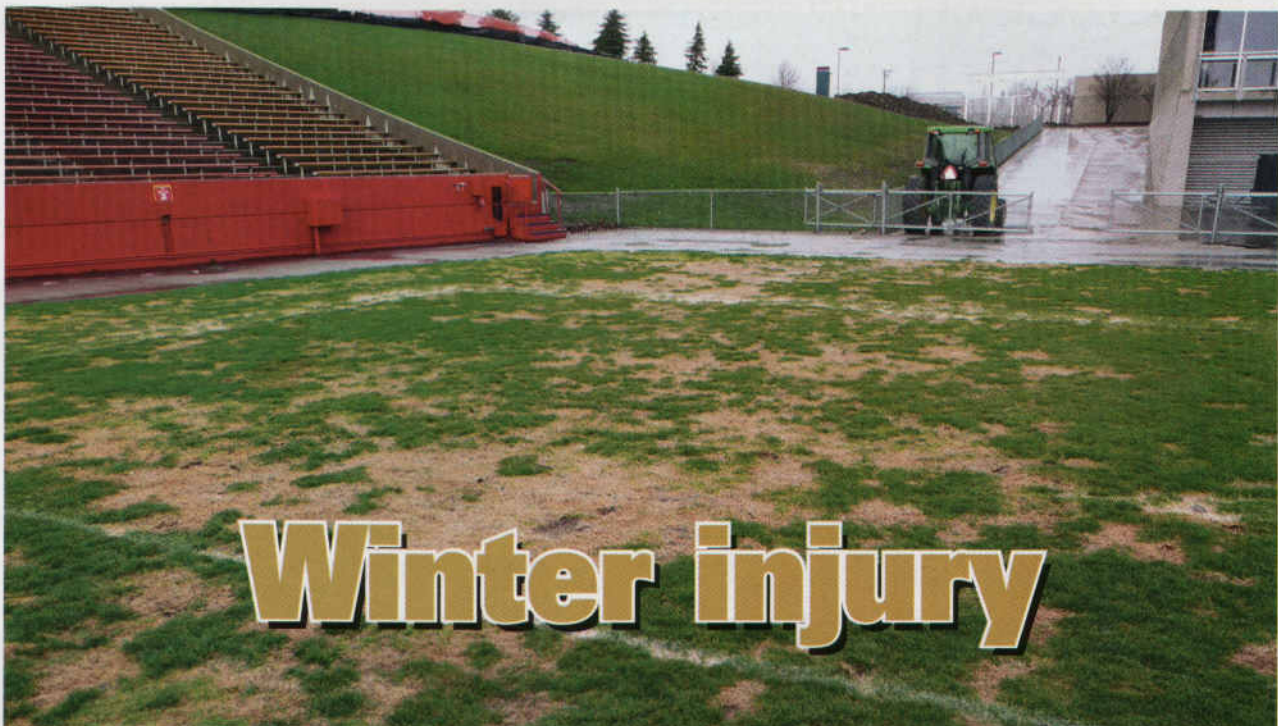
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**W**e had extensive snow and ice cover this winter in Iowa and by the time spring green-up occurred we realized that 50% of the turf was dead on some fields. Why did the grass die? What advice can you give to help us be prepared for next winter?

Joe Wagner, Iowa City Parks and Recreation

It was an unusual and record-setting winter in parts of the Midwest. Iowa experienced 100 days of continuous ice and snow cover. Golf courses seemed to have more injury than athletic fields. In general annual bluegrass and perennial ryegrass were injured more than Kentucky bluegrass so I would expect that any injury to your fields occurred on the perennial ryegrass. Sections of cool-season grass fields are often dominated by perennial ryegrass because it is routinely overseeded to repair worn areas.

Perennial ryegrass is more susceptible to low temperature injury than Kentucky bluegrass but we have had colder winters than this year with no loss of perennial ryegrass. The difference was in the hardening off process that occurred during November. Turf needs several cycles of freezing to allow the plants to acclimate to winter and store plant food.

If the ground freezes several inches deep before snow fall then plants generally have had sufficiently low temperature cycles for hardening. That did not happen this year in much of Iowa. Instead, we had high soil moisture and unfrozen ground when the first ice storm hit in early December. The ice and snow over the non-frozen soils kept the grass growing very slow and prevented it from hardening off.

As the winter progressed the frost eventually entered the ground and killed the unhardened turf. The frost depth was only about 12 inches this year and it is normally about 3 feet deep. Perennial ryegrass on poorly drained soils was especially damaged this year. We are always trying to force growth to fill in worn turf so nitrogen fertilizer applied in late fall has been a standard recommendation, however, this year late applications of nitrogen probably kept the turf a little lush going into the winter and added to winter kill on perennial ryegrass.

When the snow and ice finally came off in March there were large sections of fields that looked brown or light tan and recovery of the turf was uncertain. To predict potential turf recovery I often take samples and put them in the greenhouse. In about a week you will have your answer and this will help you develop a plan as the season unfolds or to give some prior warning to user groups about what to expect for the spring season.

If you don't have a greenhouse just cut a 2 liter bottle in half, put some water in the bottom, place your grass sample with about 2 inches of attached soil in the bottom half of the bottle, and then replace the upper half of the bottle to make a miniature greenhouse. Leave the lid off for ventilation and place in a warm location such as the window sill or near a heater vent. If it grows like a Chia Pet, you win. If not then you can start getting your sob story together.

About 50% of the perennial ryegrass that appeared brown and dead at the end of the winter actually recovered. A look into the future allowed some sports turf managers the advantage of early seeding and faster recovery. ■