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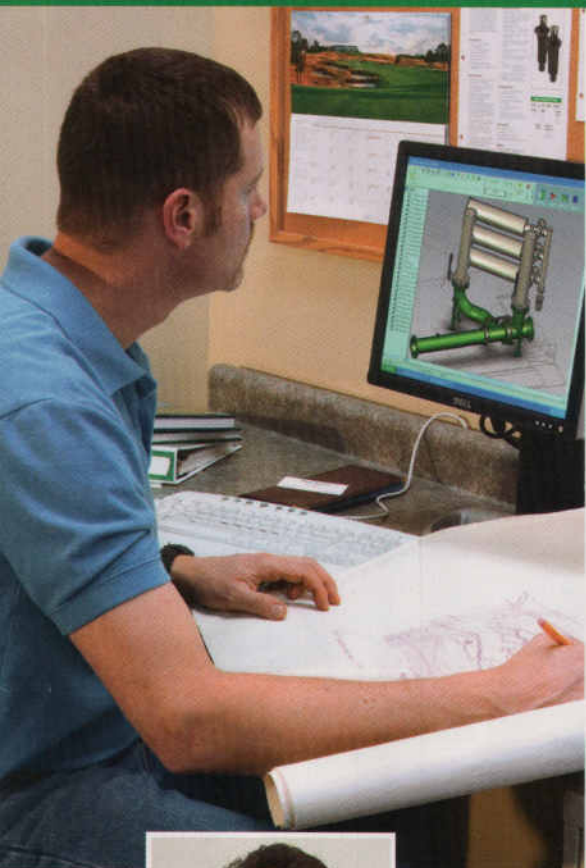
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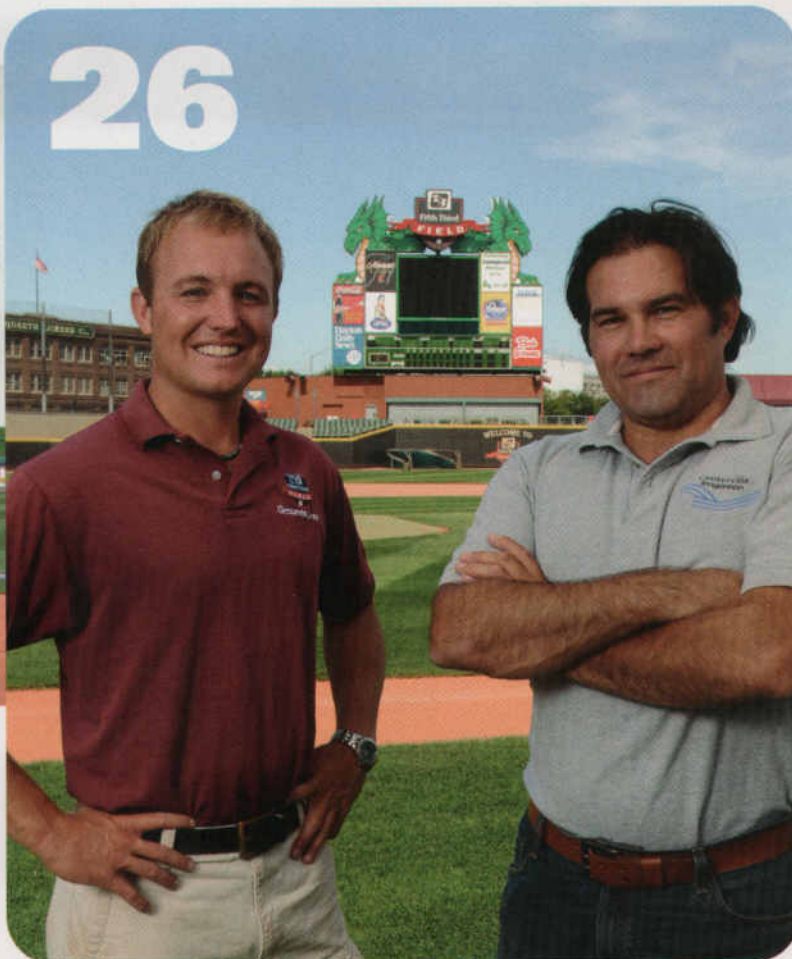
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On the cover: Bird's eye view of STMA 2007 College Baseball Field of the Year—Hawks Field at Haymarket Park, Lincoln, NE.



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JOHN DEERE

Reacting to Mother Nature

Obviously weather plays a big part in a turf manager's working life. Here's a report from some STMA members on what they're doing to combat what Mother Nature dealt them last summer:

Carey See, Emory University — [She] was more kind to Atlanta. We received much needed rain and less extreme temperatures. Although we still have watering restrictions, our bermudagrass fields have recovered and are doing well. We are continuing to monitor field moisture and will irrigate only if player safety becomes an issue.

Rick Newville, Oklahoma City — The weather was pretty cooperative until late summer. Our transition months (mid-April through mid-July) went very smoothly, but August was a different story. Mother Nature dropped just under 10 inches of rain on us that month, the most in more than 100 years. Consequently we had to adjust our herbicide program to control the weed populations; this involved post emergent as well as pre-emergent applications. A contact fungicide was applied to one of our fields due to the appearance of leaf spot. We have also had to be very diligent in getting the height of cut back down to our desired height.

Thom White, Bozeman (MT) Parks — Mother Nature was good to us this summer in that we had a higher than average rainfall consistently throughout the playing seasons. The flip-side though was some overly wet playing areas that were susceptible to compaction. This fall we will pull cores in the trouble spots with a deep tine aerator and use an Aerway on the other fields.

Deanna McAtamney, Ft. Lauderdale Parks & Rec — Our Tifway 419 fields held up well in the sub-tropics this year! We aerified once a month through the summer. We spot sprayed for goosegrass and crabgrass when necessary, and applied Top Choice for mole crickets and ants. We were able to close a field and rotate every 6-8 weeks with the cooperation of the rec programmers.

John Fik, Springwater, NY — Generally areas above the Mass Pike and NYS Thruway received ample amounts of rain this summer and it was tough NOT to be able to grow grass. However, most areas south of that took another beating with extreme heat and drought, though there were no watering restrictions. There were definitely two germinations of crabgrass again this year as I suspect the barriers broke down again with the drought. Poa was a bit of an issue to the north with all the wet weather. We have had one situation where a field was sprayed for nut sedge and someone from the school turned the irrigation off and the fields were smoked to the point a complete renovation was required. All in all, Mother Nature was a blessing or a problem depending on where in the country you were, but is that unusual?



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President's Message

Proposed Bylaws changes should be passed

I encourage you to read the STMA Annual Report (p. 38-39) in this issue and really digest the information. You'll find that this association is healthy, the strategic plan is being carried out and goals are being met. Kim Heck, STMA CEO, has also written a great article detailing the proposed bylaws revisions. If approved by you, these governance changes will dramatically change board service.

With more than 200 members volunteering for committee work, it is time to allow more opportunities for members to participate on the Board of Directors. The Governance Task Group and the Bylaws Committee spent months crafting revisions. The Board of Directors unanimously endorsed the changes. Now it's your turn to determine if the changes are positive for STMA. Please look for your ballot to come this month and be sure to vote.

With these potential Bylaws revisions on the horizon, I want to recognize some folks instrumental in getting STMA to where we are today. Being on the STMA Board of Directors can be perceived as an overwhelming challenge for a new board member. In my first couple meetings I sat back and listened to the veterans talk about issues that weren't on my radar screen. It took me a while to even partially understand how the association functioned.

The Founders had a vision of what this association should represent and how it should serve. Each Board works hard to take one more step toward that vision. Developing goals, implementing change and managing the association is difficult and complex. Each Board member brings special interests and talents to the Board room. Spirited discussion takes place and compromises are made to push STMA forward. Each past and present Board member made contributions to get STMA another step closer to becoming a truly great association.

My second thanks go to Past Presidents. I saw great leadership in the Presidents I served under. Since I've been a member I have marveled at the ability of the sitting President to lead through challenges. In almost every case, when STMA was faced with a fork in the road, the leadership team led by the President chose a path that led to bright sunshine on the other side.

This association is not as great as it will be 20 years from now. These are very fortunate times to serve on the board. The list of Past Presidents is made up of truly great people who helped STMA become a model association with high values. Tremendous leaders make up our membership and many will work their way through leadership positions with STMA in years to come.

It's important for us to keep a proper historical perspective. Our goals today were visions of past Boards and Presidents. It's a privilege to take up the work of those before us. Thank you for seeing the vision, for building the road and for providing the tools for us to continue the work. It's an honor to serve this membership, this Board and this great legacy of past leaders.



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Sports turf managers going “green”

By Kevin Meredith, CSFM

The “green movement” describes an awakening of consciousness in regard to how we view, use and conserve the earth’s resources and our environment. Its basis is sustainability, safety and ecological awareness.

We are all involved with the green movement in some way and probably have been unknowing participants for years. If you are pumping 10% ethanol into your gas tank, use more energy efficient fluorescent bulbs, recycle your plastic bottles or your aluminum cans you are part of it. We do things every day that have a positive impact on our quality of life and never give them a thought.

As sports turf managers we have the added responsibility of providing safe playing surfaces while operating under increasingly restrictive regulations. Federal, state and local laws are continuously changing and political pressure from parents and user groups are constantly forcing us to reevaluate how we can do our jobs effectively while still conforming to these regulations and demands.

Over the years I have figured out there are two ways to approach this kind of change: *reactive*, which plays out exactly like it sounds. As situations change and impact how you do things your responses and solutions are the result of having to react to and mitigate a crisis.

But being *proactive* allows you the most control of a situation, where you can anticipate changes and prepare for alternatives. This can take away the surprise factor and avoid crises.

Being aware of your own management style will be a key component in understanding and responding to the ever increasing challenges associated

with environmental stewardship. To find out how turf managers around the country were dealing with going green, I called a few friends along with some randomly selected names from the STMA Membership Directory. I asked them to identify areas in their operation that have changed as a result of an increased awareness of environmental concerns.

It was no surprise to find out that the vast majority of changes have come about because of budgetary pressure and not the result of altruism. One thing that I found to be very interesting was the elevated level of awareness shown by those individuals who have come over to sports turf after being associated with GCSAA. There is something to be said for the quality and quantity of environmental education offered to golf course superintendents.

My first call was to Carol Baker, CSFM at Mt. San Antonio College, Walnut, CA. I knew from previous conversations with her at STMA Conferences that she had been involved in the golf industry and that she is environmentally aware. Her greatest challenge is the efficient use of water resources. Using technology developed by the irrigation industry she has been able to greatly improve the efficiency of her water system.



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Carol Baker
CSFM at Mt. San
Antonio College,
Walnut, CA

She has a weather station tied to a Rain Bird Maxicom central control system and uses it to regulate the irrigation on her athletic fields and her landscapes. Carol notes that being an ET based system she is able to feel confident and comfortable with the amount of water being applied.

Carol feels like she is proactive in regard to her green challenges and credits much of that to the time she spent as a golf course superintendent.

I got lucky on my next call by finding a gentleman who has more than 30 years of school district and parks and rec experience. Douglas Johnsen, now with the Valley Center Parks and Rec Department in Encinitas, CA is a man on a mission!



Douglas Johnsen
Valley Center Parks
and Rec Dept.,
Encinitas, CA

When I first spoke with him he was feeling very fortunate about his water situation because growers in the southern California had been forced to reduce their water consumption by 30%. He is under a voluntary stage of water restrictions and is using non-potable water. He constantly monitors his water use to maximize the efficiency of his irrigation system.

Like many other parks and rec managers Doug is also responsible for buildings and parking areas. To help with cooling his building he obtained a grant from his Gas and Electric Company through the Cool Communities Shade Tree Program. This program uses the strategic placement of trees to create shade on buildings to aid in cooling.

He has addressed energy conservation issues by changing light bulbs and reducing the number of lights being used. Thermostats in the buildings have been upgraded to the energy efficient programmable type. Doug also noted that the shift is being made to have all of the new parking lots be made of decomposed granite (DG). DG is permeable, allows runoff to be absorbed and absorbs far less heat than traditional paving surfaces.

He is also being proactive when it comes to his grounds care equipment, shopping a lot harder to find more fuel efficient equipment that will still get the job done. He has changed over to electric hedge trimmers to save fuel and reduce pollution. On other power equipment he is in the process of eliminating 2 stroke engines and replacing them with 4 stroke, enabling the district to meet emission rules.

Finally, Doug reports that one of his biggest challenges has been routing and scheduling of vehicles and maintenance personnel to conserve gas and time. Doug will be happy to answer your questions at dougjohnsen@sbcglobal.net.

Next stop: Phoenix, where David Shilling, a 10-year member of STMA, maintains 45 acres by himself for the Paradise Valley School District at the Shadow Mountain High School. He has no water restrictions at this time but does his best to conserve by monitoring and maintaining the irrigation system. He feels that in the future water issues are going to have to be addressed, for now he is just going to see how it plays out.

The school system has a recycling program in place and has instituted a major cutback in energy usage, in the past they were subsidized but are now footing the entire bill. Part of David's contribution was to go to florescent lighting in his



David Shilling
Paradise Valley
School District,
Shadow Mountain
High School
Phoenix, AZ

shop and try to be more efficient operating his equipment. The IPM program he uses has been in place for years and he is pleased that he isn't playing catch up trying to implement it.

I crossed the country to find Kevin Johnson, turf manager for the City of Deltona, FL. Kevin has always believed in IPM and has always tried to be a good environmental steward, which he credits to his time as a superintendent. This retired US Army drill sergeant tells it like it is. He doesn't believe we could ever go completely organic and still have our fields perform at the



Kevin Johnson
Turf manager
Deltona, FL

levels need to maintain safe fields. He feels that quick recovery is probably the most important factor we need to manage for, without it our fields will take a nose dive and never take the traffic pushed on them.

I have been to his fields and they reflect the passion Kevin has for sports turf management. Ron Randall started at SUNY Oswego in upstate New York 2 years ago. Here are a few of the many changes he has implemented in the grounds department:

- Stopped weekly mowing of a non use turf area that was mowed just for aesthetics. Instead we will bush hog or flail mow it 2X yearly saving fuel and time.
- Shuts vehicles off when possible, no leaving the A/C on in the truck when you stop to use the bathroom. Vehicles are shut off during break and lunch as well, unless they are fighting snow and need to keep defrosters running, etc. In winter they still do what is necessary to safely maintain campus. Started a few test areas where they planted fine fescues in areas that they hope



Ron Randall
SUNY Oswego,
New York