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On the cover: The Sports Turf Managers Association’s 2011 College Baseball Field of the Year Award went to the University of Missouri’s Simmons Field, managed by Josh McPherson, CSFM, with crew members Jerry Cummings and Brandon Coleman.
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Tooting our own horn

I HAVE WRITTEN more than 120 of these columns since being named editor of SportsTurf in 2001 and have never covered a very important topic—the magazine itself.

Let’s start with our editorial philosophy: Ultimately our editorial goal is found in the stadiums, on the ball fields and around athletic facilities as we strive to assist our readers in producing safe and aesthetically pleasing playing surfaces for athletes of all ages and skill levels. As the single national voice of the Sports Turf Managers Association, we represent and strengthen the recognized leaders in the sports turf industry. By featuring the best on-the-field turf managers, university turfgrass researchers, and other experts in the sports turf industry as our editorial contributors, SportsTurf presents the latest information available to help our readers complete their responsibilities and improve their fields. Knowing our audience and the issues that affect their business lives, on and off the field, means we publish information useful to both management as well as field crews.

Our content is driven by several forces, most notably the contributions of the STMA’s Editorial Committee and Board of Directors. We also rely on the expertise of STMA Commercial members who in the course of doing business often encounter interesting circumstances, and often are the first to spot trends or new ways of tackling problems because they know and visit so many sports turf managers.

But often the best ideas for articles come from you, the reader. No one understands better the challenges you face daily, of course, so I invite you to call or email me any time there’s a topic you would like us to address or perhaps write about yourself. No author gets more respect from our readers than one of their peers.

Also we are blessed to have two of the most renowned sports turfgrass educators in the country writing the “Q&A” column that appears opposite the back inside cover each issue, Dr. Dave Minner of Iowa State and Dr. Grady Miller of North Carolina State. And let’s not forget the highly popular feature, “Photo Quiz by John Mascaro,” that I’m told often is the first page folks turn to when a new issue arrives (I’m sure they all just forget to mention this page).

We pride ourselves on the look of this magazine as well as its content. Credit for this professional presentation goes to our art director, Brian Snook.

I would be remiss if I didn’t give a shout out as well to our digital products, including the news and features available on www.sportsturfonline.com, our electronic newsletter, SportsTurf Insider, which you can receive weekly for free by signing up on our website, and our mobile access product (see www.sportsturfonline.com/mobile4).

Finally, I would like to introduce our new advertising sales representative, Leslie Palmer, who began working with us at the end of last year. Leslie lives in the Detroit area and can be reached at 248-530-0300 ex. 1402 or l.palmer@jamesgelliott.com.
Handing over the gavel

As I END MY PRESIDENCY of the STMA, there are many people I would like to thank in helping me during the year. First, thank you to the STMA Board of Directors. This group of professionals works diligently and focused throughout the year to govern the association as well as represent each of our categories. Second, I have relied on the guidance and enlightenment of the Past President, Chris Calcaterra, CSFM. Thank you, Chris. Third, a very sincere ‘thank you’ to our committee volunteers. Their work has been instrumental in creating and advancing the programs of STMA.

A huge ‘thank you’ goes to you, the members, for allowing me the opportunity to lead this association. This year will be something that I will never forget. I realize that I have received so much more than I have given. Being President has made me a better manager of people and time. More importantly, I have met so many wonderful, passionate members from all over the world who care deeply about the STMA’s success. It is these connections, old and new, that I truly value, and I equate this profession to a family. We rely on each other’s experience and advice. We learn from each other. When I became a member of STMA in 1994, I remember feeling a sense of belonging. I hope that our newer members feel the same way. Back then, networking and learning from educators and other professionals was the big selling point to me and hooked me. As our organization has matured and grown, these original ideals are still in place and will always be the foundation of STMA. Just as technology has certainly changed our profession and improved our daily jobs, networking and education remain core to our individual and collective success.

I encourage all of you to continue to support the STMA, both locally and nationally by renewing your membership. I know that my involvement in our Colorado Chapter has made me a better sports turf manager. Supporting your local chapter improves the entire profession. Also, I hope that you will make it a priority to financially support our SAFE Foundation in its endeavors to improve fields for all of our end-users through education, scholarship and research.

I’d like to recognize our CEO, Kim Heck, and her staff who keep our association running smoothly on a day-to-day basis from our headquarters. All of our members should feel reassured in knowing that our association is in good hands with our staff.

And finally, I would like to offer my best wishes to incoming STMA President, Dr. Mike Goatley. I am certain that with our newly updated strategic plan in place and newly elected board of directors that Dr. Goatley will do a great job on your behalf.

Thank you all again and best wishes for the upcoming year.


www.stma.org
LYNDA WIGHTMAN, Hunter Industries

Lynda Wightman, a strong proponent of education and supporter of STMA, is one of the most trusted and influential leaders in the sports turf industry. Her nomination read, in part, “Lynda is very deserving of this distinction. She has served on numerous turf and irrigation boards. She devotes countless hours towards training and education the turf professionals of the future. For the STMA she has been the driving force behind the student challenge development and has assisted with other green industry student challenges.”

SportsTurf: You were nominated by your peers as one of the most influential people in the green industry. How do you feel you that you influence other industry professionals?

Wightman: I am honored and humbled to receive this recognition. I have never really thought of myself as an “influencer,” but have always strived to help others make good decisions and feel good about their failures and accomplishments. A favorite quote of mine is by Maya Angelou, “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel”. I try to remind myself of this on a daily basis.

ST: What do you feel has been your biggest contribution to the green industry so far? And what do you see as your role in the future of the industry?

Wightman: By working for such a fantastic company, Hunter Industries, I have been able to develop a network of friends who reach out to me for education, training, industry knowledge and reliable collaboration. Water conservation/management (irrigation) is such an important topic, and it’s not going away, so we have to learn every technique, program and process occurring today and in the future in order to be stewards of this valuable resource. I hope to continue representing Hunter, and our industry, in every effort to support our entire customer base in any way possible; especially when it comes to efficient and knowledgeable irrigation practices.

ST: Who has influenced you both personally and professionally?

Wightman: My mother, of course. She taught me to believe in myself and to always...
give to others no matter what the situation might be. Chuck Huston hired me 27 years ago, to work for Hunter and was my mentor for many years to follow. Even after he retired, he gave me advice and helped me develop my personal and professional skills. Richard Hunter has allowed me to work with great people; make mistakes and learn from them; mentor others in our company, and be a part of the most fantastic team in the world.

ST: Tell us something about yourself outside of work (hobby, sport or other personal interest) that influences your approach in your professional career.

Wightman: Ha! Anyone who knows me, would say that I don’t have much of a life outside of irrigation and Hunter, but I am a very lucky woman to live in Missoula, MT (eat your heart out!) and be close to family. I love to fly fish, garden, preserve and cook the goods I grow, and share everything with everybody I can! I invite industry friends to join me in the relaxation of being on the water, tossing a line, and not talking about sprinklers, water conservation and jobs!! By doing this, we all go away with a refreshed mind and soul, ready to tackle our daily challenges once again.

Wightman: I realize that many things are changing, especially with the way we do business, but we have to remember the importance of relationships and partnerships with the people we work with. At Hunter, our Mission and Values are based upon customer satisfaction, innovation, family and citizenship (communities, sustainability, and environmental footprint)

I would like to think that other companies would look to model their own core values along these same lines; for the betterment of their employees and customers.

ST: What advice do you have for green industry professionals who want to become influential leaders themselves?

Wightman: Strive for the best in all that is tried. Don’t be afraid to fail; get up and try it again until it is right! Share your failures and successes with others; maybe they are in the same shoes as you. Be happy with yourself and your job; if you’re not, then find out why and try to make the appropriate changes. Another quote that I like is (anonymous), “The happiest of people don’t necessarily have the best of everything, they just make the most of everything that comes their way.”

ST: If you could nominate another person as the green industry’s most influential, who would that be, and why?

Wightman: Michael Andresen, CSFM. Mike is Past President of STMA and has influenced every sports turf manager I know, in some way or another. His job at ISU has given him the opportunity to implement a student working program, which has always turned into a true mentor process for these young people. He is understanding, caring, and supportive to anyone he comes in contact with. If he is not knowledgeable about something, he dives in to learn about it and comes out on top. Oh yeah, and he loves to fly fish and be in the mountains!
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