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VOLUME 17, NUMBER 4

APRIL 2001

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Play Ball! STMA members attend a field maintenance demonstration. Photo courtesy STMA

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Calendar of Events 2001

July 20-22

Outdoor Power Equipment Institute's (OPEI) 18th annual International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo (EXPO 2001), Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville, KY. Contact: Sellers Expositions, 550 S. 4th Ave., Louisville, KY 40202-2504; (800) 558-8767 or (502) 562-1962; fax (502) 562-1970. Web site: <http://expo.mow.org>.

October 31-November 1

Southern California Landscape, Equipment and Turfgrass Expo, Pomona, CA. Contact: Southern California Turfgrass Council (SCTC), 7100 Sunnyslope Ave., Valley Glen, CA 91450; (818) 764-5016 or (800) 500-SCTC (7282); expo@turfccouncil.org. Web site: <http://www.turfccouncil.org>.

November 10-13

12th annual Green Industry Expo (GIE), Tampa, FL. Contact: Professional Lawn Care Association of America, 1000 Johnson Ferry Rd., NE, Suite C-135, Marietta, GA 30068-2112; (770) 973-2019; fax (770) 578-6071; info@gieonline.com. Web site: <http://www.gieonline.com>.

November 13-15

Turf and Grounds Exposition, Oncenter, Syracuse, NY. Contact: New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA), P.O. Box 612, Latham, NY 12110; (518) 783-1229/(800) 873-TURF (8873); fax (518) 783-1258; nysta@nysta.org. Web site: <http://www.nysta.org>.

December 4-6

Ohio Turfgrass Show, Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, OH. Contact: Ohio Turfgrass Foundation Satellite Office, 746 Morrison Rd., Columbus, OH 43230-6649; (614) 501-1100 or (877) 683-3445; fax (614) 501-1101. Web site: <http://www.ohioturfgrass.org>.

sportsTURF The Front Office



Get a new perspective

A Denver company is using advanced digital imaging and geographic information system (GIS) technologies to take sports site mapping to a new level.

IntraSearch Inc., an aerial mapping and digital imaging company located in Denver, has formed a special "Sports Mapping" division in response to its growing client base of professional sports venues. Two firms joined the new division as affiliate companies: GroundLinkx LLC of Littleton, Colo., and Mapping Events & Associates LLC of Bordentown, N.J..

The keystone of the new division is IntraSearch's three-dimensional topographic mapping and digital orthophoto services. The GroundLinkx programs produce a digital map that uses GIS technology to link database intelligence with map features together on a computer screen. "Our smart maps can eliminate inaccuracy, improve communication and help lower the expenses involved in site maintenance and event presentation," said David Mikes, GroundLinkx president.

So how can this be beneficial for turf managers? If your site is preparing for a large event, you could use this technology to create a digital map of your grounds, then lay out all the equipment, tents, port-a-pots, etc., digitally, instead of using an overlay. These logistical layouts, fitted specifically for the site, can help save a lot of time and headaches for any large-attendance event.

Managers can also access satellite images for nearly any plot of land, dating back to the early 20th century. This can be a useful feature for learning the history of the grounds you care for, and help track environmental and agricultural changes to your grounds. It can be a fascinating trip through time, while providing a unique perspective to the grounds you care for.

For more information on this mapping technology, visit IntraSearch's Web site at www.intrasearch.com; or for some mapping samples, check out www.mapmart.com.

Letter to the editor

I would like to comment on the cutting height table found on page 24 [March, "Sports Field Maintenance with Reels and Rotaries"]. I disagree that the cutting heights suggested for the warm season turfgrass represent their optimum heights. There are several different Bermudagrasses and the best cutting height may be different for each one. For example, common is different than 419 or 328, all of which may be used on an athletic field. I have never seen St. Augustine used on any kind of sports field, but I'm sure there always is an exception. It's not terribly wear tolerant. A cutting height of 3/4" is far too low unless it's a dwarf variety.

Thanks,

Dr. Bill Knoop

Professor and Turfgrass Specialist Emeritus
Texas A&M University

Michael SanFilippo
(847) 882-1942

STMA Message

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Questions and Answers

Spring is finally here officially and I know that many of you are very happy to welcome it. While working with the whims of Mother Nature is an ongoing part of sports turf management, most of you described your relationship with her this past winter as a stormy one. I've heard reports of record cold, snowfall, ice storms, rain-fall...sometimes all from the same region and even in the same day. So, here's wishing you all a better relationship with Mother Nature this spring, with temperatures, sunshine and rainfall that fit your needs and schedule.

As spring sports take over your fields, please take a few minutes to consider the STMA Field of the Year Awards program. Do you have a baseball, softball, soccer or football field that you feel would be a worthy contender for Field of the Year honors? If so, now is the time to start taking the photographs and gathering the data to put together your entry. For information on entering a field for consideration, please contact STMA Headquarters by phone at 800-323-3875 or by e-mail at SportsTMgr@aol.com.

Sports turf management is all about developing and maintaining the best possible athletic fields for all levels of play. The role of the STMA is to help you achieve that. Over the past year, the STMA Board and the Strategic Planning Committee have developed a Strategic Plan to carry out the STMA Mission Statement: To be the recognized leader in strengthening the sports turf industry and enhancing members' competence and the acknowledgement of their professionalism.

To help accomplish all this, STMA sought input through a survey issued to all of our members in January of this year. The questions were focused on finding out more about our members, their facilities, their programs and their needs. The answers to these questions will provide a good, overall picture of the industry as a whole. They also will help in finding out how the members rate the effectiveness and importance of current STMA programs and in discovering what additional types of programs and services STMA members would like to have the Association provide. In addition, the answers provided on the survey will help STMA do a better job of spreading the word to others that sports turf managers are professionals whose professionalism is to be recognized and affirmed.

We greatly appreciate the time so many of you have taken to fill out and return these surveys. We especially appreciate the comments so many of you have added in the comment sections of the survey. Thank you. Your input will be shared with the STMA Board and the pertinent information with the appropriate STMA Committees so that your concerns and suggestions can be incorporated into the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Together, we're reaching new heights as individual professionals, as a profession and as an association. And we're moving forward at this higher level, looking ahead and tackling the challenges of the new millennium.

Rich Moffitt
STMA President
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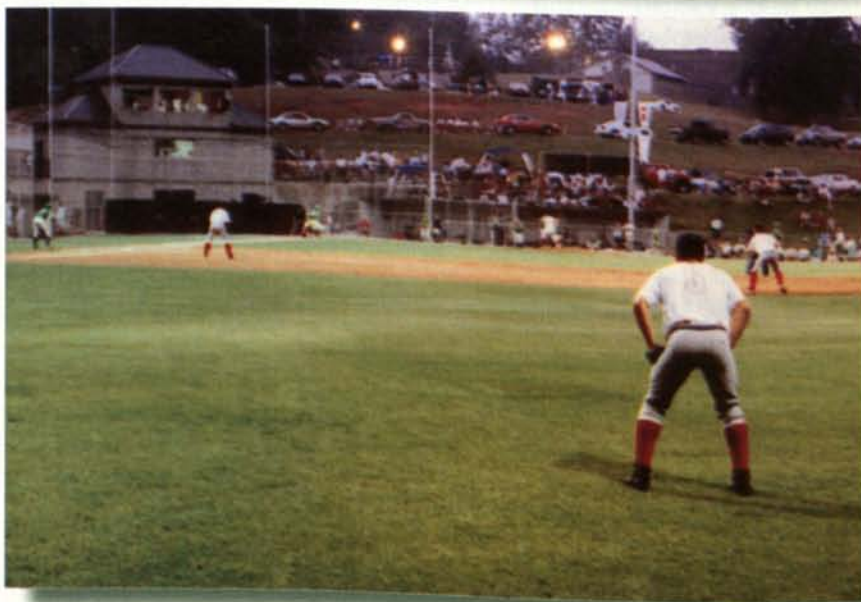
Steve and Suz Trusty

Toccoa Senior League Field earned the STMA 2000 Baseball Field of the Year honors in the Municipal division. It was constructed in 1954 as one of three fields in Doyle Street Park in Toccoa, Ga. It is owned by the City of Toccoa and maintained by the Toccoa Little League which uses the fields in exchange for the field maintenance done by its volunteers.

The program had always worked. The city's population is about 10,000; the county's approximately 25,000. Volunteer levels are high in this Northeast Georgia community that actively supports its youth.

In 1993, a new breed of volunteers came along, headed by Frank Worley. He wanted more than a good field; he wanted a great field—one that was safe for the teams to play on and looked beautiful, too. Worley, an insurance agent, had played Little League ball until he was 12. His son started playing at 5 and Worley coached him. In 1993, his son was 11. Worley attended a Little League meeting and volunteered to be groundskeeper based on this baseball background and his interest in maintaining his home lawn.

Worley knew what he wanted to achieve, but not how to get there. So he went to a pro, Matt Taylor, Head Groundskeeper for the Greenville Braves in Greenville, S.C. Worley says, "When I called with questions, Matt invited me there and spent about three hours with me. He showed me his tools, explained his maintenance methods and even had his grounds crew demonstrate some things for me. He also gave me some issues of sportsTURF, which I later



Lighting was installed in 1998, allowing the field to be used after the sun goes down.

read completely. I came back from that trip and had a carpenter build a nail drag like Matt's. That was the first step in moving our program to

the next level. The principles and goals are the same at the pro and Little League levels, but when you're dealing with a native soil field and a

limited budget, you need to be patient."

Initial Field Renovation

The clay/loam soil native to the red hills of Georgia was the base of the field formed with the large earth moving machines of R. G. LeTourneau during the original construction. They did a good job of sloping so the field surface drainage was still very good in 1993. The infield had been built up over the years, however, so Worley arranged for the county road department to come in with a grader and scrape off the excess infield soil. Volunteers tackled the surface preparation and seeded the infield with Cheyenne bermudagrass. At the same time, the common bermudagrass outfield was overseeded with Cheyenne.

The original infield dirt contained too much silt resulting in a surface that was too soft and took a long time to dry out. Red Georgia clay was trucked in and tilled into the silt to a depth of 5 to 6 inches. Then about 9 tons of calcined clay was tilled in to 3 or 4 inches. The area was leveled, top dressed with another 2 tons of calcined clay, which was scarified, leveled and rolled. The diamond was measured out and the mound, batters box area and bases were all reset.

Adding the Equipment

In 1993, the Little League didn't have a lawn mower so each team was responsible for mowing the grass once or twice a week on designated weeks. A local store then contributed a small residential mower and the League was able to purchase a used rotary diesel mower from a local housing authority to mow the outfield. Two years ago they purchased a used reel triplex mower from the high school for \$300. They're currently negotiating the purchase of a newer reel triplex mower.

In 1994, a quick coupler system was installed behind the mound for hose hook up for watering the infield or to attach an impact sprinkler. That step enabled them to wet down the infield dirt before each game.

Worley says, "In 1994 the Little League Board approved the purchase of a John Deere 1200 field rake and that has allowed us to maintain the infields to the extent we do. The decision took a lot of courage. A purchase of that size was another major step forward for our program."

Another purchase, an edger, has led to the ongoing and perpetual process of edging the fields.

Establishing the Volunteer Team

Little League grounds crew volunteers now cut all grass, edge the diamonds, fertilize, aerate, topdress,



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Maintenance Practices

Mowing: Outfield twice per week to 7/8-inch height with triplex reel mower. Infield every other day to 3/4-inch (three-quarter inch) height with walk behind reel mower.

Fertilization: Program based on annual soil test results. Generally 15-0-15 in April at 7 pounds of material per thousand square feet; 34-0-0 monthly May through August at 3 pounds of material per thousand square feet; and 15-0-15 in September at 7 pounds of material per thousand square feet. Liquid iron is applied to the infield prior to tournaments. Lime was applied annually for 4 or 5 years, has not been needed the last few years.

Control Products: Pre-emergent weed controls has been applied spring and fall from 1999 on. Other weeds spot treated

as necessary. No insect or disease control applications have been needed.

Aerification: Infield is deep-drilled once a year. Field is core aerated up to three times per year, when timing and labor availability allow.

Topdressing: Infield is topdressed once per year with sand. Outfield has been topdressed once with 80 tons of river sand.

Irrigation: On Oct. 15, 1999, complete field irrigation was installed. Irrigation cycles are based on turf needs.

Edging: Field is edged as needed,

approximately once a week during the growing season.

Skinned area: Pitchers plate set with transit for correct height above home plate. Mound/homeplate repair daily. Skinned area conditioned daily. Infield skinned area leveled annually then rolled with 1-1/2-ton roller. Push brooms used to brush infield material from turf edges.

Game Prep: Foul lines on turf are painted with spray can applicator. Chalk lines applied with chalk.

Field Design: Emblems, logos, etc. painted by local artists assisting grounds crew.

maintenance

prepare mounds and batters box areas, drag skinned areas, handle pregame, in-game and post-game maintenance and join with other Little League and community volunteers to tackle most capital improvements.

Worley says, "Our league is totally self-supporting. We receive no designated annual funds from the city or county. We raise money from concession stand sales and players selling candy. Area businesses sponsor teams with the funding administered equally among the teams by the League. The business community supports us financially and will donate materials or give us good prices. The city and county governments and the county



Red Georgia clay was trucked in and tilled into the original silt, along with about nine tons of calcined clay.