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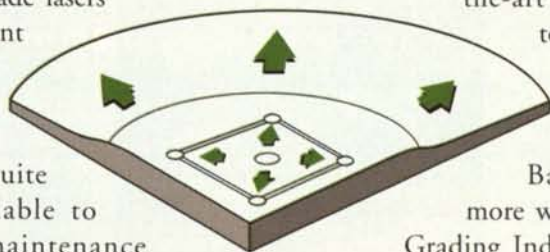
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VOLUME 17, NUMBER 1

JANUARY 2001

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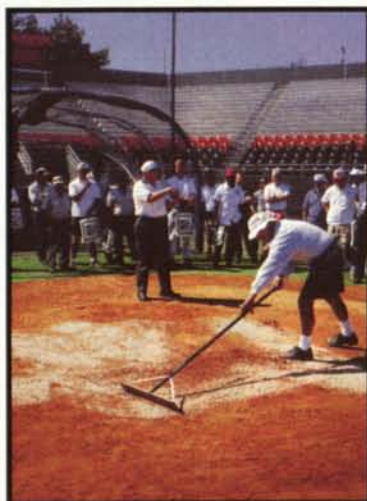
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STMA members watch an infield maintenance demonstration at a recent workshop in Florida. Photo courtesy: STMA

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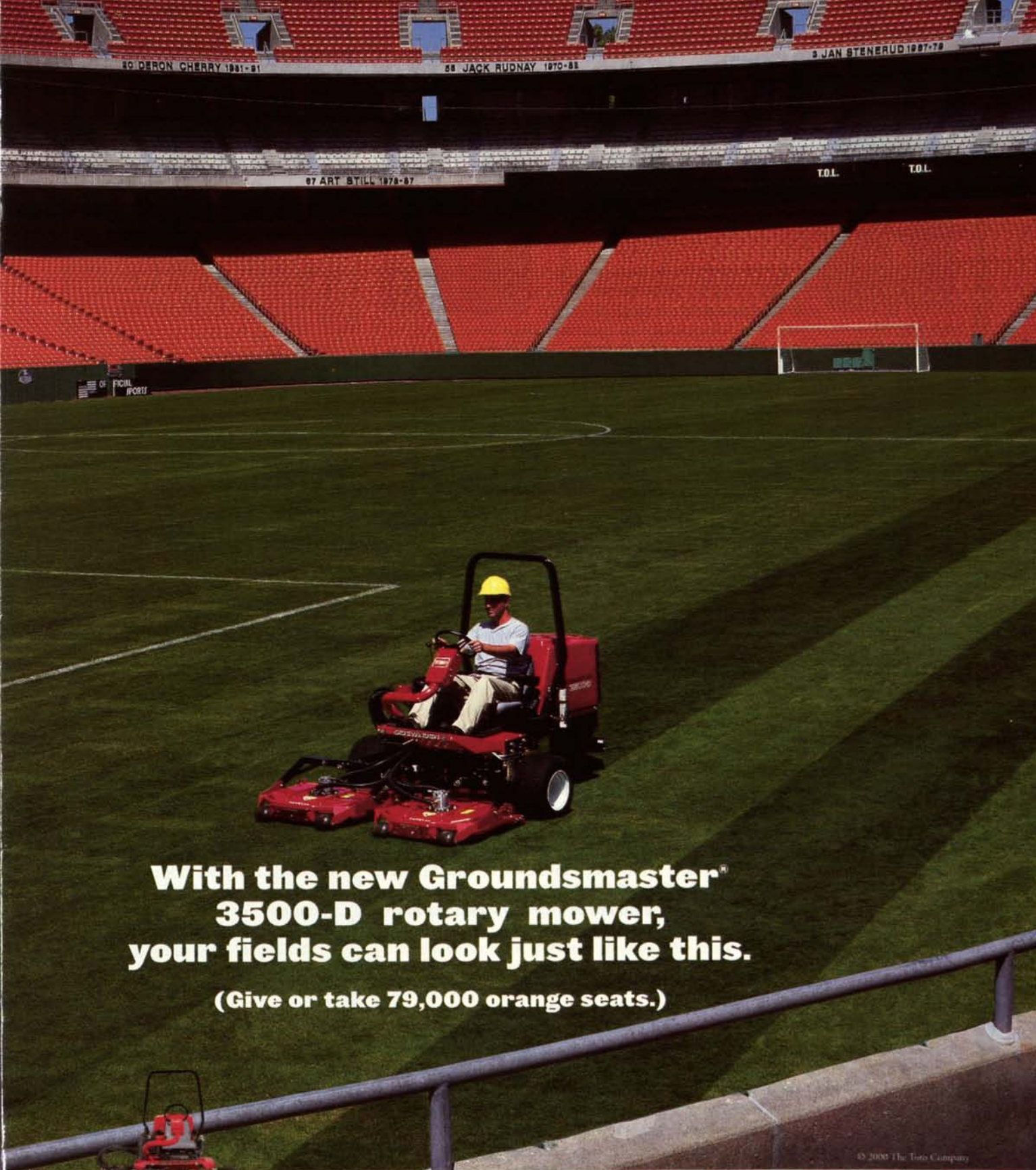
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Looking back, looking ahead

Another new year is upon us. Some might even tell you that this is the beginning of a new Millennium, as well, but after all the hoopla from last year's celebrations, no one is really interested in that theory. I haven't heard any talk about a Y2K+1 bug, and I'm grateful for that.

With a new year come resolutions. It's almost a sport among ideal-minded men and women, taking stock of one's life at the beginning of the year and deciding on certain lifestyle changes to improve one's health or well being. Gym membership and attendance rise; cigarette sales dip; pounds are lost. And every year, across the world, two or three of these resolutions actually stick, and come July, someone who vowed to hit the gym three times a week after work, kick smoking or fit into those jeans from college actually succeed. But for the rest of us, things are pretty much back to normal by the time the STMA National Conference rolls around.

Besides looking ahead, the new year is a good time to look back at the year that was just completed. When I look back at 2000, there are two major personal events that took place that I will always remember as I look back to that year. The first is my June wedding to my beautiful college sweetheart, Rachel. Our union, as well as the chance to spend time with family and friends who celebrated with us from all across the country, was easily the highlight of my life.

Another major event for me, on a professional level, was my hiring as editor for sportsTURF magazine. January 2000 was my first month working on sportsTURF and with the STMA. I was unsure of what to expect back then, and a little intimidated at being the new kid on the field. But I have to say that every member of the STMA that I have spoken with has made me feel right at home, from my first show in St. Louis, through all the phone calls, conversations and meetings that have led up to the present day.

I would like to thank all of you whom I have been so fortunate to meet over the past 12 months, for your assistance, support and friendliness. While there are too many folks to thank individually, I have to give a special thanks to Suz Trusty, possibly the most helpful, friendly and hardworking woman I've ever had the chance to work with. Thanks to Suz and Steve Trusty and all the active members of the STMA, the association is strong and growing stronger, as seen by the growing number of chapters, the growing roster of members and the record number of attendees and exhibitors at this year's National Conference.

It's an exciting time to be a part of the STMA. I'm honored and thrilled to be the editor for your magazine, and look forward to seeing and speaking with you all in 2001. Have a great year.

Michael SanFilippo
(847) 882-1942

Tip of the Month

10 Steps to Safe Sports Turf

*by Frank S. Rossi, Cornell
University Turfgrass Team*

1. Attention to detail: Poor infield lips, depressed areas and exposed rocks negate commitment to safety.

2. Trained and dedicated staff: Invest in hiring and educating sports turf managers.

3. The right tool for the right job: Invest in accessing equipment to maximize efficiency, performance and safety.

4. Build Partnerships: Field staff, coaches, players, administration and community invested in field safety.

5. Maintain reasonable care: Implement nonnegotiable management plan to maximize turf and soil health.

6. Raise awareness of supplementary facilities: Be aware of lighting, fencing, signage, bleachers, etc.

7. Just say no: Maintain and enforce appropriate field closure regulations.

8. Engage players and coaches: Small tasks (seeding divots, etc.) provide players with perspective on field safety.

9. Player equipment standards: Insure appropriate safety equipment is used during play.

10. "Dear Diary": Accurate record keeping for consistency and historical management systems.

Calendar of Events 2001

January 25

Northeastern PA Turf School & Trade Show, The Woodlands Inn & Resort, Wilkes-Barre, PA. Contact: Andrew McNitt, Department of Agronomy, 116 ASI Building, University Park, PA 16802, (814) 863-1368, asm4@psu.edu; or Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council, PO Box 1078, Lemont, PA 16851-1078, (814) 863-3475, fax (814) 863-3479, sah15@psu.edu.

February 5-9

The Ohio State University Golf Course Maintenance Short Course, Holiday Inn on the Lane, Columbus, OH. Register at (614) 292-4230. E-mail: bloetscher.1@osu.edu.

February 6

Turfgrass Advocacy 2001, Lobby Day, Legislative Office Building et al, Albany, NY. Contact: New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA), PO 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>.

February 20-21

Southern Illinois Grounds Maintenance School, Gateway Convention Center, One Gateway Dr., Collinsville, IL. Contact: Ron Cornwell, 200 University Park Dr., Edwardsville, IL 62025; (618) 692-9434.

February 22-23

The Ohio State University Professional Lawn Care Short Course, Holiday Inn on the Lane, Columbus, OH. Register at (614) 292-4230. E-mail: bloetscher.1@osu.edu.

STMA Message

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New Years Resolutions

It's traditional to start the New Year with resolutions, and I have an even stronger urge to do so now, in 2001. Maybe that's because I've taken time to assess my goals this past year and make changes in my life to focus more on what's really important to me. Maybe it's because I've spent the last few months watching our nation and our world struggle with legal issues and technology issues while too often ignoring basic issues of character, morality, faith, love and charity.

So, here are a few New Years Resolutions I'd like to share with you.

I resolve to use more empathy when dealing with others. I'm going to take into consideration the health, family status and financial pressures of others as they face their daily responsibilities.

I'll try to see the world through the eyes of children and through the eyes of seniors when I'm sharing their company or talking with them.

I resolve to hold my tongue when I'm angry, but to be quick to speak up with praise.

I resolve to stand up for my principles, knowing there will be issues on which I can not compromise, even though others around me are doing so.

I resolve to do a better job of instructing those who need to follow my direction, whether they are employees, fellow workers, other volunteers, family or friends. And, I resolve to do a better job of accepting and adhering to instructions when I'm the one who is being directed by others.

I resolve to take responsibility for my actions and for the actions of those I supervise no matter how tough it may be when the results of those actions fail to match my plans or meet my expectations.

I resolve to set my sights on my goals and dreams and never let a day go by without moving closer to them.

I resolve to take the time to smell the fresh mown grass, to bask in the warmth of the sunlight, to enjoy the gentle breeze and soft spring rain, and to admire the moon and stars at night.

I resolve to spend time with friends and concentrate on their company without thinking about all the other things I should be doing.

Most of all, I resolve to spend more time with the people I love and to be sure I let them know how much I love them and how important they are to me.

I wish you all a wonderful 2001!

Rich Moffitt
STMA President
(314) 977-2956



Groundskeeper in Paradise

Building New Sports Fields in Hawaii (Or Moving Mountains, Re-Plumbing Artesian Springs and Then Some. . .Like NOT Using the Local Sand!) Part I

by George P. Toma

I have made countless trips to Hawaii to prepare fields for the NFL Pro Bowl, the all-star game held in Honolulu each year since 1979. Getting the Pro Bowl fields in shape, including natural grass practice fields, requires advance work, of course. So more than one trip to Hawaii is involved. But it's sun and fun duty and I regard the main event as a privilege—like attending a reunion of the stars of the game.

This Hawaiian sports classic has always been played on artificial turf. But this is about to change. After 2001 all Pro Bowl matches will be played on

natural grass fields. The word is that Aloha Stadium will have real grass for next year's game, even if it's sod installed just for that day.

The grounds program and crews for all 21 events have been directed by me or my son, Chip. Since he



An ideal backdrop for a worksite. Photos courtesy Hal Dickey

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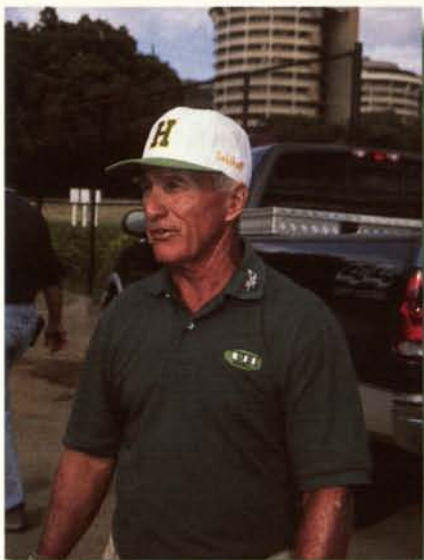
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Toma prepares for another day at the "office."

was named head groundskeeper for the NFL four years ago, Chip Toma has been in charge. So now I work for him, at least on certain projects.

It's become a January ritual for us: Get the Super Bowl ready, then we're Honolulu bound. Chip usually is in flight during the Super Bowl and I leave the next day. The big difference in 2000 was that I stayed in Hawaii until November.

I signed on as sports field consultant with the University of Hawaii, staying on the island until November. My assignment: Upgrading the turf and maintenance of the stadium field for girl's softball, and getting a new soccer field and football practice field up from scratch.

These three fields are at the university's Manoa campus. This is about halfway between Diamond Head volcano and the Waikiki resort district, only 10 minutes from either by car. At the university all the athletic facilities and parking use up every square foot of an area known as the Lower Campus or Quarry area, which is where the new football and soccer fields are. They replace two old football fields built nearly 20 years ago in a two-tier arrangement on old quarry ledges. I saw them when they were new. We were looking for Pro Bowl practice fields, but they were rejected by the league even back then.

Renovate or Start Over?

We didn't try to renovate these old fields. It wouldn't have been worth the effort—their design, drainage and compaction problems were that bad. Everyone involved agreed that starting over was our only option. On Nov. 19, 1999, the excavators moved in and the old fields were torn out.

Building new fields at this site wasn't easy. It practically required moving a mountain and re-plumbing an artesian spring. Not to mention getting grass up and playable for football in three months using a root-zone mix that contained no sand.

The cost of building a sports field, like almost everything else in



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Hawaii, is a lot higher than on the mainland. Nearly everything, except maybe fruits and flowers, has to be shipped in—including suitable sand! The sand around Honolulu or anywhere on Oahu is way too fine for our soil mix needs. This probably explains why the old fields had so many problems. They were built with hauled-in clay silt and no sand. We had the soil tested and it had a pH of 7.9 and the infiltration capacity was zilch—would you believe only 0.3 inches per hour!

Water also had been a serious problem with the old fields and it was a major fact in the site prep done for the new ones. There is a large underground spring in the hillside just above the upper field. A drainage system had been installed alongside and under the old fields. Actually, it did a fair job of collecting the spring water but the field's surface was poorly drained.

The architects and engineers, Belt Collins Hawaii, had a water study done. Monitoring the flow rate of the old drainage system they

estimated that it discharged between 85 to 100 GPM. This would have been more than enough to irrigate the new fields. But using this



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