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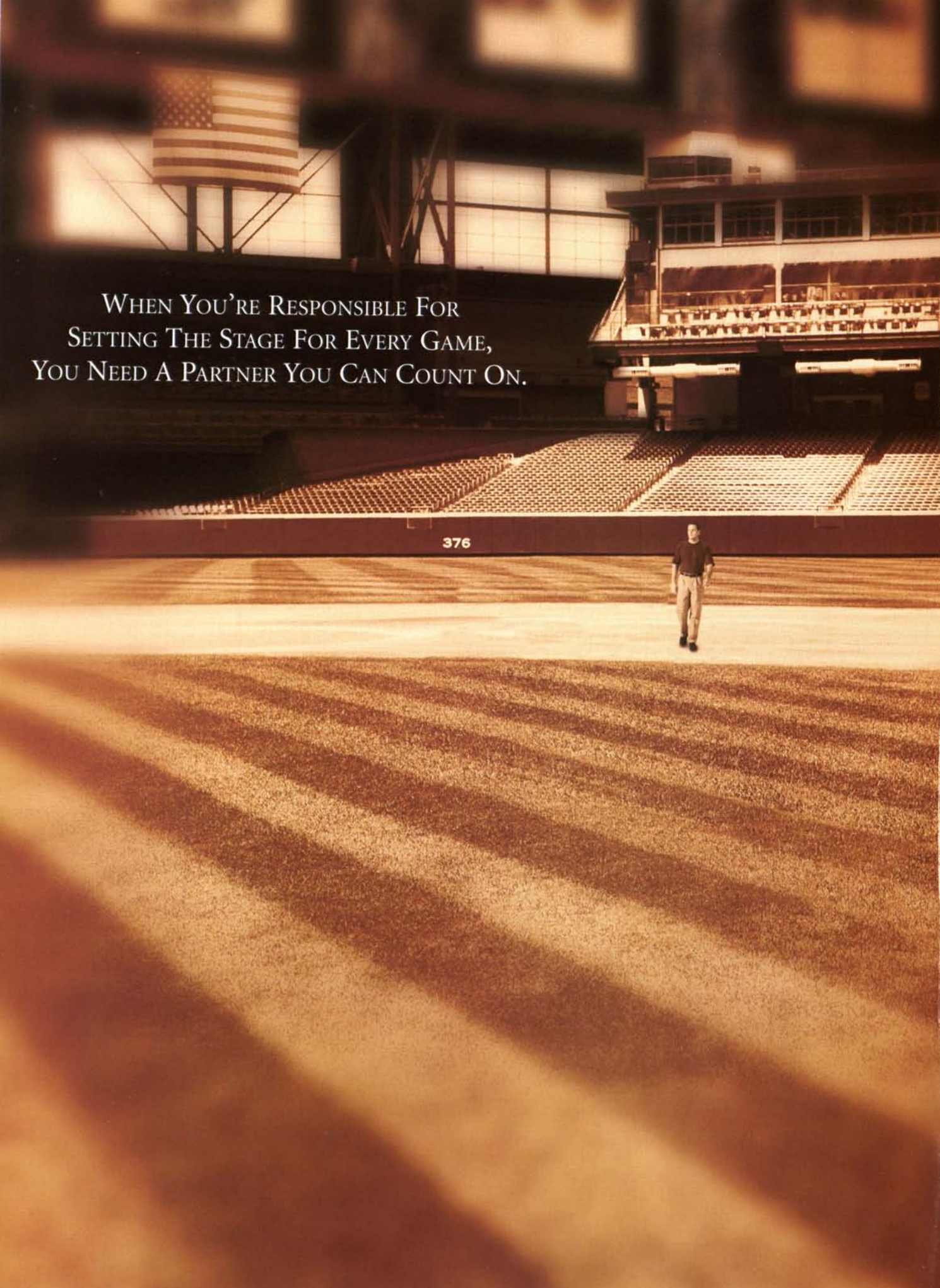


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A man in a dark shirt and light-colored pants is walking across the grass of a baseball field at night. The field is illuminated by stadium lights, creating long, diagonal shadows across the grass. In the background, the stadium seating is visible, and a large American flag is mounted on a structure. The number 376 is visible on the outfield fence.

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## PROGRAM

VOLUME 17, NUMBER 5

MAY 2001

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cover art by: Virgilio Cuasay

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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@turfgrass.org](mailto:expo@turfgrass.org). Web site: <http://www.turfgrass.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](mailto: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](mailto: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

### So long, everybody



For the past 18 months I've had the honor of speaking to you from this column on page six, recapping events, discussing trends and sharing information specific to the sports turf industry.

I've also been able to meet hundreds of you at trade shows, STMA Chapter events and the past two STMA Conferences. My entire tenure spent as the editor for sportsTURF has been a fantastic experience, and I'm very thankful to all of you who helped make it so.

It is because this experience has been so wonderful that it's hard to say goodbye. This issue of sportsTURF will be my last. Don't worry, I'm not dying or about to be unemployed; on the contrary, I am staying at Adams Business Media, and will be editing and writing for another magazine in our Horticulture Group. I'm sure I'll see many of you at the larger trade shows later this year.

Things won't be that different around here—you'll still have a Mike as editor. Michael Oswald, pictured here, will take over editorial duties starting in June.

Last year, Mike became an editor for Arbor Age magazine, another magazine published by Adams, after spending six years editing two truck magazines. In addition to editing, he has experience taking photos and aiding in production, and has also spent two years working as a marketing coordinator for a computer company, where he wrote and designed ads, direct mail pieces and tradeshow collateral material.

I've gotten to know Mike over the past two months, and I know he'll be a great fit for sportsTURF. He's well acquainted with the horticulture industry, he's a great writer and he's a great guy to talk with. Here is his contact information:



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Tel: 203-882-9485  
Fax: 203-882-9486

I encourage you to write or call Mike to introduce yourselves and offer any opinions you have about the magazine and what types of articles, columns or products you'd like to see in the future.

Again, I'd like to thank all of you whom I've had the chance to talk to and work with over the past year and a half. To all the writers who have contributed articles and columns (always by deadline, too. Well, close enough)—thanks so much. To all the turf managers who have opened up your fields, parks and stadiums for me to visit—thanks so much. And above all, to Steve and Suz Trusty, my good friends at STMA Headquarters, who never failed to amaze me in their energy, talent, dedication and kindness—thanks so much.

Thank you all so much.

*Michael SanFilippo*

Michael SanFilippo  
(847) 882-1942



## STMA Message

**Sports  
Turf Managers  
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### Exciting Times— Now and In the Future

**T**hese are exciting times for the profession of sports turf management. Sports participation is growing within all age groups. To accommodate the increased demand for playing time, new athletic fields are being constructed and existing fields are being renovated and upgraded.

This presents an even greater challenge for the sports turf manager. In many cases, the individual and his or her staff must balance the maintenance programs for the majority of the existing athletic fields with the demands of the renovation and/or construction projects occurring at the same time.

It also presents great opportunities. Field construction, renovation and upgrades are news items and, as such, are covered by print and broadcast media. This opens the door for the sports turf manager to communicate with the media personnel and, through the media, with the general public.

It's an opportunity to tell the story of the important aspects of field design, the need for proper attention to all those aspects during field construction, renovation and upgrades, and the importance of the sports turf manager's role in developing and maintaining the field. It's an opportunity for educating the media and the public on the profession of sports turf management and on the importance of the professional sports turf manager. It's an opportunity to point out the importance of good playing surfaces to the game and to the athletes that participate in the game.

This is great! Media coverage helps alert the public to the importance of good field conditions to the game. It also points out some of the problems that sports turf managers encounter in attempting to maintain optimum field conditions. The media comments on such weather-related problems as excessive rain, snow, heat or cold and on field usage problems such as play during poor weather conditions or excessive field use over a short period of time. The public is tapping into the message that professional and college athletes need good field conditions to protect their safety and to play to the best of their ability. But we need to take our message to a broader audience. Some young athletes end their careers at the youth league, junior high or high school level. Some adults compete well into their senior years. These players deserve good playing conditions, too.

The Sports Turf Managers Association wants to help you get these messages across. A major focus of the STMA Strategic Plan is to educate the public on the need for the best possible playing surfaces for all levels of play and to assist in promoting the positive, professional image of the profession and its professional practitioners. Exciting things are taking place at the Committee levels to make this happen. Stay tuned for details.

**Rich Moffitt**  
STMA President  
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# FIELD OF THE YEAR



## Apopka High School Softball Earns STMA 2000 Field of the Year Award

Steve and Suz Trusty



**T**he softball complex at Apopka (Florida) High School has been a work in progress since 1998, according to Mike MacWithey, head coach, head groundskeeper, and all around everything else.

After serving as the school's assistant softball coach for 12 years, MacWithey accepted the head coaching position in 1996. He says, "When I took over, we had no girl's softball field. We practiced and played our home games at a

nearby city field. Winning the District Championship that first year brought credibility to our program and helped us focus school and community attention on the lack of facilities. The school's very successful boys baseball program provided an example of what is required to build, maintain and operate a beautiful complex. This served as a motivation and an example for our girl's program.

"A concentrated lobbying effort by all

involved earned a commitment for use of the school property between the existing baseball and football fields. With a rallying slogan of 'The Tradition Begins' we set out to build the finest softball facility in the state."

A parent of one of the players surveyed the parcel. The bases and fence lines were marked. The Orange County School Board supplied the infield material. MacWithey selected



a local source with a small amount of sand in the clay to provide a relatively hard infield surface for his power-hitting team.

Then the outfield area was sprayed with glyphosate and tilled. Players were assigned to remove debris and hand rake the area. The area's native soil is high in "sugar" sand, fine in texture, but angular, so infiltration and percolation rates for the outfield area are good.

County personnel and equipment supplied the laser grading for the field. Once the infield material was put in place, they established a one percent slope toward the foul lines and toward the backstop, rather than toward the outfield. Rectangular drains were installed approximately every 6 feet around the side walls in the concrete behind the backstop. The excess surface water is channeled to the backstop and then on to the drains and, even with a typical Florida hard rain, quickly clears from the field.

MacWithey's brother, manager for Century Rain Aid, a local irrigation supply company, assisted with the design the irrigation system and helped with the initial contact with the local Rain Bird supplier who donated Falcon rotors and the system's controller. A large construction company donated the necessary PVC pipe and supplies.

"Next up was an education lesson for our high school girls which we call 'career path elimination.' It's an incentive to stay in school," says MacWithey. "We scheduled a work day and the girls on the team, along with some much appreciated parental assistance, helped dig the trenches and lay the irrigation pipe."

After another round of debris removal and more raking, the outfield was ready for sod. A local sod company, Duda and Sons, was part of a Lake Apopka area environmentally-related land buyout aimed at reclaiming a section of property and turning it into wetlands. They agreed to supply Tifway 419 bermudagrass sod from that property for the softball field at approximately

one third of the regular cost. MacWithey tapped another donor to provide the use of a semi-truck to deliver the sod.

MacWithey says, "This led to another scheduled work day to eliminate one more career path for our players—sod laying. The sod had been stacked

around the infield. The players, some of their friends, and another group of parent volunteers, placed and fitted the sod. We borrowed a roller to finish the job. Now the field was taking shape and excitement was building. More donations flowed in as the community as a whole joined the bandwagon. This added



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Mike MacWithey (right), head groundskeeper and softball coach at Apopka High School, accepts the Field of the Year Award from STMA President Rich Moffitt.

windscreen for the outfield fence, welders for an old set of bleachers, a PA system, the scoreboard and trees for the landscape.”

Dugouts were next on the project

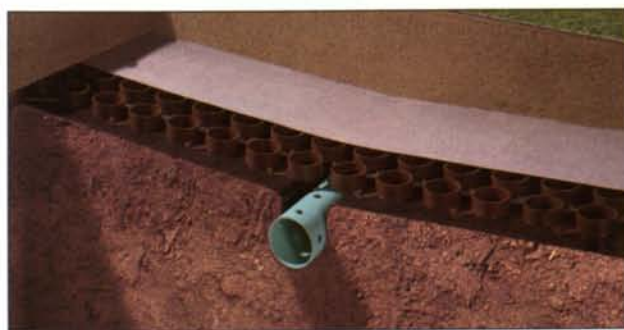
list. MacWithey developed a design for a 20-foot by 50-foot concrete structure on the home team side that would include that dugout, an area for storage, a locker room, an office

and a concession stand. He says, “This became reality with donated concrete blocks, a volunteer block mason, the supervision of a parent who held a contractors license, and, of course, the help of our players who decided to eliminate the concrete and masonry career path.

“At that point, a local Junior College was eliminating their athletic programs and soliciting bids for their field items and used equipment. We didn’t get the bid on the large aluminum bleachers I had wanted. But, with our \$250 bid for miscellaneous sports equipment the only bid received, we got two more sets of wood/steel bleachers, lockers, electric water coolers for the dugouts, flag-pole and flag, batting cage nets, protective net stands, a picnic table, lighting fixtures, and even a 2-foot by 4-foot granite rock to mark the entrance to our complex.”

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