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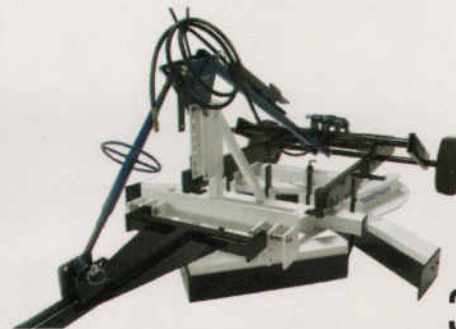
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from the sidelines

# Airplanes landing safely

**Every day of the year**, all around the country, athletic contests are played out on natural turf, whether it's the Super Bowl in Jacksonville or an amateur soccer match in Joyce, WA. And, like airplanes that land safely, you never hear anything about the turf supporting those athletes. Unless there's a "crash."

Last December I was watching the NCAA Division I-AA championship football game between Montana and James Madison (maybe I need a hobby) on TV. If you saw any of it, you saw what appeared to be a turf crash at Max Finley Stadium in Chattanooga.

This 20,668-seat facility opened in 1997 as the city's proverbial "crown jewel" in neighborhood revitalization and is run by a non-profit stadium corporation. It has hosted the I-AA championship game since that first year and also is home to soccer, high school football, lacrosse tournaments, concerts and other community events, as well as being home of University of Tennessee-Chattanooga Moc football.

Here's some excerpts from a column after the game by sports editor George Geise of the Great Falls (MT) Tribune:

*"... for at least one night, Max Finley Stadium in Chattanooga earned the dubious honor as the World's Worst Field... the turf was so fragile that it could be kicked apart by a 180-pound sportswriter in street shoes... at least five or six 'phantom' tackles were recorded by the turf... that was no way to decide a national football championship."*

"We're disappointed in the condition of the field," Dennis Poppe, director of championships for I-AA football, told Geise. "We hoped the sod would have taken and rooted; we wouldn't be facing this problem now if we had artificial turf."

I called STMA member Tim Gambrell, director of operations at Finley Stadium, to find out what happened. "It's part of the NCAA contract that we have to put new turf in between the hashes before the game. We could have re-grown our ryegrass, even though we had 35 events on the field from September through November," he said. "The sod, which

was grown on a sand cap, was laid and put under blankets but it was too wet. There wasn't enough root development on about 10-15% of the turf though it was cut thin to try and help rooting. We did all we could with the sod not being as thick as it could have been."

"I heard, unofficially, that the NCAA has said 'go artificial or lose the game,'" Tim said. "And rumor is the UTC AD is determined to get the money for artificial. The city and the county want out [of the situation]."

The unfortunate moral of this tale is to expect to hear nothing about your field from "civilians" unless there's a crash.



**ERIC SCHRODER, EDITOR**

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## president's message

# Thank you

**This is my first column** as President of the Sports Turf Managers Association. Over the years I've learned the importance of giving team members praise when they deserve it just by complimenting or voicing appreciation with a simple "thank you."

I wish to extend a simple thank you to all of you involved in STMA.

First, to all of the participants in our 2005 Conference and Exhibition in Phoenix, I thank you for your involvement with and support of the STMA. I am sure that you will agree it was a successful and exciting conference for members and exhibitors. A special thanks goes out to Dr. Dave Minner, Conference Education chairman, and to all of the speakers for their informative educational sessions. We truly appreciate their efforts in preparing their presentations.

Another group that that I would like to thank is the Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona for their assistance throughout 2004 in preparation for the conference. In particular, a special "hats off" to Chris Calcaterra, CSFM, Darin Budak, CSFM, and Bill Murphy for their legwork in organizing the sites for the Seminar-On-Wheels tours and the MLB/NFL Workshop.

Thank you to Bob Christofferson of the Seattle Mariners for all his efforts in coordinating the MLB/NFL Workshop and also to all of the professional members who assisted Bob with the Saturday workshop. These include, from MLB: Roger Baird, Chicago Cubs; Tom Burns, Texas Rangers; Larry DiVito, Los Angeles Dodgers; Leo Liebert, Seattle Mariners; Dave Nehila, Baltimore Orioles; Grant Trenbeath, Arizona Diamondbacks; John Turnour, Baltimore Orioles; Tim Wilson, Seattle Mariners; and Luke Yoder, San Diego Padres.

From the NFL: Darian Daily, Cincinnati Bengals; Ross Kurcab, CSFM, Denver Broncos; Abby McNeal, CSFM, Denver Broncos; and Steve Wightman, San Diego Chargers.

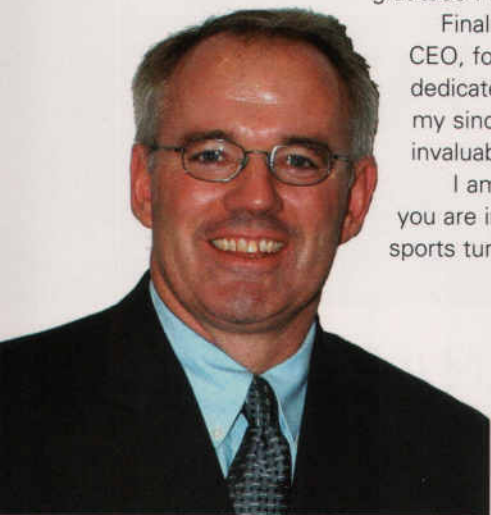
I would also like to thank the team of Brad Jakubowski, Chad Follis, and Steve Cockerham who created and coordinated STMA's first Student Challenge event. I look forward to watching this competition grow each year as more and more student teams challenge each other for first place honors.

Thank you as well to our exhibitors who showcased cutting edge technology and information, which helps to make our profession stronger. And, to our sponsors, thank you for helping us to enrich our entire event. Through your generous support our attendees receive a strong educational, informational, and enjoyable experience. Sponsors included Beacon Athletics, Covermaster, Cygnet Turf, Ewing Irrigation Products, Hunter Industries, Midwest Rake, Pro's Choice/Oil-Dri, Sports Turf Company, Profile LLC/Turface, The Toro Company, and West Coast Turf.

In addition, no conference would be as successful as ours without the remarkable contributions made by many. I wish I had room to name all of you, and I hope that you know and understand the gratitude I feel for all that you have done for this association.

Finally, I want to thank all STMA Board Members and Kim Heck, CEO, for their support. I am honored to serve with these individuals so dedicated to the development of this organization. I also wish to extend my sincere thanks to Past President Bob Campbell, CSFM, for all of his invaluable service these past two years as President.

I am honored to serve as President, and I am committed, as all of you are in the sharing of information to promote the advancement of the sports turf management profession.



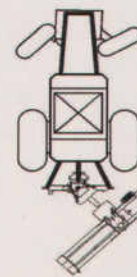
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# Mike Trigg leads the STMA team

**M**ike Trigg, CSFM, is Superintendent of Parks with the Waukegan (IL) Park District, and the new president of the Sports Turf Managers Association. He is a Certified Sports Field Manager through STMA and a Park and Recreation Professional through the Illinois Park & Recreation Association. Trigg has a Bachelor of Science, Urban Forestry, from Michigan Technological University, and is a graduate of the Park & Recreation Maintenance Management School conducted by North Carolina State University, co-sponsoring NRPA.

As superintendent, Trigg's responsibilities include administration of the Parks Department with maintenance of all grounds and properties of the District's 46 neighborhood and community park sites, as well as athletic field maintenance of Park District and School District ball diamonds and soccer fields.

Trigg's first exposure to turf came in high school when he worked summers at the golf course of a private country club near his home in northern Kentucky, just across the Ohio river from Cincinnati.

While attending college in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, he fell in love with the upper Michigan area known as the "Copper Country" so much that he stayed there year-round and worked summers with a landscape company in Houghton, MI, doing landscape installation and maintenance, school athletic field renovations, and irrigation installations.

After graduating in December 1979, he landed a job with a firm in the Chicago area responsible for Marriott Hotel landscape maintenance. After six months he joined Marriott as a maintenance supervisor on the hotel grounds and golf course of the Marriott Lincolnshire Resort, Lincolnshire, IL. He was there 6 years before accepting a parks supervisor position in Waukegan in 1986. His first year of field maintenance included Grosche Field's hosting the CABA national tournament.

In December 2005, Trigg and his wife Paula will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary with their sons, Christopher, 18, and Patrick, 15. Trigg says his sons are pursuing interests in arts and music rather than turf. Chris says playing cello "pays better than mowing grass" he relates.



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Meeting the late STMA founding father, Harry Gill, in 1990, made a big impact. "I had the privilege of having Harry come down to Waukegan for the STMA Midwest Chapter's first sports turf workshop. What a thrill. Harry gave a short talk on 'Being a Professional in the 1990s' and demonstrated pitching mound preparation and maintenance," Trigg says. "I remember in talking with Harry how interested he was when I talked of my responsibilities of athletic field maintenance at the Park District. Harry was very complimentary of Grosche Field and its condition. In our conversation, he asked me how many other ball diamonds do we maintain, and do they all look as good as Grosche Field.

"I replied that no, we had more than 30 fields but Grosche was our premier field. Harry's reply was, 'I challenge you to maintain all your diamonds like this, because all teams, whether youth or adult, deserve to play on field conditions just like Grosche. Your sports turf management practices should be the same for all your diamonds, not just one or two premier fields,'" Trigg recalls.

Later that summer Trigg and Waukegan PD's executive director, Greg Petry, visited Gill at Milwaukee County Stadium and were invited to join the crew in pre-game activities.

Trigg says he was also influenced by opportunities to personally meet other key leaders in STMA, including Dr. William Daniels, Dick Ericson, and George Toma, during educational programs. "That's exactly why STMA was formed, because these guys all believed that sports turf could be improved through the sharing of knowledge and exchange of ideas," says Trigg.

"I also consider Greg Petry as a true mentor not only in sports turf, but also parks and recreation. I attribute my success as a supervisor and now superintendent



through his guidance and mentorship," he says. "He has allowed me opportunities to pursue my interest in STMA.

"There are so many other professional and commercial members of STMA who have over the years shared their knowledge and expertise with me. The networking that takes place within this association is to me its greatest asset," Trigg says.

### Strong vision leads to strong future

"I'm excited about the hiring of Kim Heck as our new Chief Executive Officer," Trigg says. "When the Board conducted interviews with the top candidates, I was most impressed with Kim's comments when asked about priorities. She commented on three items: to hear from the Board and conduct frank discussions about STMA's future, success and failures; to make the change from a management firm a smooth transition as the day-to-day business of the organization continues; and to spend time with members because with change comes uncertainty, so listen and communicate to chapters and industry partners that

great things are going to happen.

"I must continue to remind myself that it has been only five months for Kim as our CEO and yet in this short period, she has displayed her passion on association management."

Trigg says Heck and the Board have determined that in 2005 their focus will be to reestablish a strong committee system and a membership drive. "We not only want to retain current members, but seek new members in all categories and share with them the benefits the association can offer to help them develop into the best professionals they can be," says Trigg. "In addition, we want to create relationships and reach out to other associations (see page XX for an example).

"In the five years I've been on the Board we have undertaken great initiatives. It is important that we refocus the Board's responsibility to be the visionary body of the association, thinking strategically about issues facing the industry and membership, and provide direction and leadership for the association to achieve its mission," adds Trigg. "I will continue to work closely with Kim Heck to evaluate how all aspects of the association can be more efficient and effective to the membership and external audiences.

"Kim spoke at our Fall Board Meeting about how the association's growth and vitality can be measured by a good educational and certification program. This will be our charge as we move toward STMA's 25th anniversary in 2006."

Athletic field maintenance is only one aspect of Trigg's responsibilities as superintendent. With a full-time staff of 21 and an average of 25 seasonal staff throughout the summer, he is very busy year-round with all aspects of park and facilities maintenance in 46 park sites.

"I have a terrific staff who share with me the passion to want to make the Waukegan parks the best they can be. I am greatly assisted by Scott MacLean, manager of park maintenance and Bill Walker, manager of construction & building maintenance.

"Our operations are broken down into maintenance crews: Athletic Fields, Park Mowing, Park Cleanup, Playgrounds, Horticulture, Custodial, Parks Construction and Improvements, and Building Maintenance. Many of the full-time staff act as crew leaders with seasonal staff assigned to these specific crews," Trigg says. "In addition, I oversee the Parks & Planning Division, assisted by Steve Wikner, landscape architect, Mike Pavelich, graphics specialist, and Nancy Vaseloff, our secretary. Together we implement park site developments and design, capital improvement projects, paving and lighting improvements, grants, and the park use permit program that administers over 280 park permits annually."

"I am very excited about our plans to develop a community sports complex. The Park District approached Johns Manville Corporation to express an interest in purchasing 100 acres of the inactive Johns Manville property in Waukegan to build a sports complex. The challenge the District faces is that the community desires expansion of services as it grows and develops, and this site is large enough to accommodate a much needed expansion of sports activities and programs," says Trigg.

"We selected this site after extensive search of open space through the Waukegan community and surrounding area. Most importantly this will be a trans-



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