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SportsTurf Contents

FEBRUARY 2012 | VOLUME 28 | NUMBER 2

Features

STMA President

8 Meet Dr. Mike Goatley, STMA President

STMA Conference Highlights

14 News from Sports Turf Managers Association annual meeting

Field Science

16 New herbicides for 2012

18 Laser grading: setting your sights on quality

22 Building two fields in 3 years

28 Sports turf management sustainability in the transition zone

32 Transitioning infield skin from turf to dirt and back

Facilities & Operations

36 Commonly asked 401(k) plan questions

37 Tips for recruiting top talent

Irrigation & Drainage

38 Effective irrigation scheduling

Tools & Equipment

40 Re-using synthetic turf infill

41 STMA's latest Innovative Award product

Departments

6 From the Sidelines

7 STMA President's Message

17 John Mascaro's Photo Quiz

42 STMA Chapter Contacts

44 Marketplace

45 Advertisers' Index

46 Q&A



On the cover: Kentucky-grown Mike Goatley Jr. brings mix of academia and farm upbringing to the presidency of the Sports Turf Managers Association. Mike is professor of crop and soil environmental sciences and extension turfgrass specialist at Virginia Tech University.

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From the Sidelines



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Scenes from STMA Conference

LONG BEACH is a convenient venue for a conference and trade show so a pat on the back to STMA Board for selecting it.

Some folks who normally golf in the SAFE Foundation fundraiser missed a beautiful and challenging course at Industry Hills, built on a landfill up in the hills 40 minutes west of Los Angeles. But they had a good excuse: the Seminar on Wheels tour that day included the Rose Bowl and Dodger Stadium. Tough call.

Mike McDonald, CSFM, from the University of Minnesota didn't miss at Industry Hills, canning his tee shot on the par 3, 130-yard 9th hole and winning a vacation for two while he was at it. Rick Peruzzi, CSFM, Mike DiDonato, CSFM, Kevin Meredith, CSFM, and Matt Tobin won the net-scrabble format tournament. Special shout out to my partners Dale Getz, CSFM, Brant Williams, and Mike Jefferson for carrying me to our 2nd place low-net finish.

What is it with Certified Sports Field Managers' golf games? Lots of letters in that last paragraph. Maybe Leah Craig from STMA HQ should begin marketing certification as a way to improve your golf game.

"For the first time in 25 years people are willing to sacrifice environmental quality for economic reasons."-Frank Rossi, PhD, during his keynote address.

"You only get better when you take chances."-Eric Boles, keynote speaker.

Dr. Mike Goatley's address upon becoming STMA President included video and was well-received. Interesting how the teacher is often motivated by, of course, his teachers. Mike has always gone out of his way to be gracious to me when our paths cross.

I spotted Nicole Sherry of the Baltimore Orioles, asking questions in an educational session. The second woman head groundskeeper in MLB following Heather Nabozny in Detroit. Sherry also was featured on a videoboard promo in the lobby.

Happy to report Debra Kneeshaw of Portland (OR) Parks & Rec was elected to the STMA Board of Directors. She is a friend of the magazine and dedicated to her craft and our industry. Congratulations, Debra, and the other new Board members, James Graff and Jay Warnick, CSFM.

Love the continental breakfast spread STMA provides, one of many elements of the Conference made possible through the conference sponsors: Barenbrug USA, Carolina Green, Covermaster, Diamond Pro, DuPont, GreenONE, Hunter Industries, Rain Bird, Toro and World Class Athletic Surfaces.

Great scene at Student Challenge winner announcements. Lynda Wightman from Hunter named the 3rd place winner for 2-year colleges, Mt. San Antonio College Team #211, and tears were flowing among the all-woman team as they stepped up for their ribbons. You know Lynda was digging it! Kirkwood CC was first for the 2-years, and Purdue Team #402 made sure Boilermakers went back-to-back in the 4-year competition.

I was gratified to hear Mike Andresen, CSFM, had been named Harry C. Gill Memorial Award winner at the Friday night festivities. Another great friend of the magazine, Mike continues to set the standard for professionalism in his current role at Iowa State. Congratulations, Mike!

SportsTurf

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President's Message

Dr. Mike Goatley Jr.

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Educator takes the helm of STMA

I AM HONORED to have the privilege of serving as STMA President in 2012. I hope your year is off to a great start professionally and personally. Thanks to our attendees, vendors, speakers, and headquarters staff who again made our 2012 Conference and Trade Show in Long Beach a huge success. I hope that those of you able to attend this year's meeting left California recharged in spirit and purpose as you tackle another busy year.

My background in academia makes me a bit different in leadership perspective from my predecessors, outside of Dr. Gil Landry. I don't know the industry in the same way that the majority of our membership does. Most of you are the "doers," and as one of my students told me, I am a "teller"! As academicians will tell you, our learning primarily comes from watching and listening to the doers. Teachers at all levels spend a great deal of time sharing the building blocks of sports turf management. Then we have the pleasure of watching you add multiple levels to that foundation by applying innovative thinking and technology. The balance of academics and practitioners is a major reason STMA is so successful in its education and outreach.

I thank all who answered the call to run for office this year, and I encourage anyone asked to run to give it careful consideration. Anyone who has run for office will tell you it is difficult to "oppose" colleagues in an election. Having such highly qualified members agreeing to run means we always have an outstanding Board of Directors. That is clearly the case again in 2012.

My goal is to ensure that our Board progresses on implementing the new Strategic Plan. The planning process completed in 2011 presented an exciting opportunity to review how far STMA has come over the past 5 years and to plot our direction for the next 3 years. It was rewarding to see how many of the initiatives of previous Boards were successfully completed. With the guidance and support of CEO Kim Heck and our headquarters staff, our new strategic plan features a blend of foundational and growth directives.

I consider the foundational directives as those that continue to build upon planning directives, such as increasing membership and member services. How about doing those and other planning initiatives in a completely new manner? Let's put to work some of our financial resources that are now available for use due to a conservative, yet successful approach in financial management by previous Boards. This and future Boards have the opportunity to use some of these financial resources for growth directives that allow us to pursue previously unavailable (and/or unaffordable) resources to expand our membership, membership services, and industry visibility.

Please don't hesitate to let me or any Board member know how we can assist you. I thank all of you who volunteered to serve on committees—YOU are a major part of our success. Take care, everyone, and all the best for 2012!

Mike Goatley

Kentucky-grown Mike Goatley brings mix of academia and farm upbringing to STMA



GROWING UP ON A CATTLE AND TOBACCO FARM IN CENTRAL KENTUCKY in the 1960s, a young Michael Goatley Jr. was sure of two things: He wasn't interested in becoming a farmer, and he thought golf was the "silliest sport on the planet."

Fast forward several years and these certainties sure seem foretelling, considering that he would go on to help broaden the field of sports turf management as a potential career for his youngsters at Mississippi State University (MSU), Starkville, while he worked as a professor of plant and soil sciences there from 1988 to 2004.

Fast forward even further to present day, and Goatley, 50, professor of crop and soil environmental sciences and extension turfgrass specialist at Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, is now president of the association dedicated to sports turf managers. Last month he moved into the top leadership position of the Lawrence, KS-based Sports Turf Managers Association.

LIFE ON THE HOMESTEAD

Silly or not, golf is the sport that gave Goatley his first real paying gig in high school, at the course where Abraham Lincoln's parents wed—Lincoln Homestead State Park Golf Course, near his small home-

town of Springfield, KY. Having first hopped onto a tractor to load tobacco around age 6 or 7, he had all the necessary job requirements.

"I was hired because I knew how to drive tractors and operate mowers in a reasonably responsible and safe manner," Goatley said. "I had no idea about turf management. It was just what you did as a farm kid. You couldn't wait to drive tractors."

Golf didn't strike Goatley as anything more than a summer job, but he hadn't a clue what to do next. Still, he knew he would attend college because his parents insisted, having never had the opportunity themselves.

So to get his feet on the ground, he enrolled for one year at St. Catherine Junior College in his hometown. After getting some elective coursework out of the way, he transferred to the University of Kentucky with the intent of going into computer science.

"That was when we used punch cards to write programs," Goatley said. "A single mis-

Three (potentially) little-known Goatley facts:

➤ It'd be hard to know Goatley and not know of his undying love for all things Kentucky basketball. In addition to UK hoops, he was known to dole out brownie points to students who knew about his other favorite "sport," professional wrestling.

➤ Goatley has been married for 22 years to his wife, Lisa, a licensed professional counselor who's taught some programs for STMA. The couple has two children: Rachel, a freshman at Virginia Tech; and Adam, a sophomore at Blacksburg High School. "Neither one wants to have anything to do with turfgrass management," Goatley said.

➤ In the late 1990s, Goatley wrote a book (with co-authors Jim Puhalla and Jeff Krans) called "Sports Fields: Design, Construction & Maintenance." It's exactly what it sounds like, said Goatley: A "user-friendly, easy-to-read sports turf book that covers the design and goes up all the way to installation and maintenance." The experience gave him the confidence to volunteer for leadership positions through STMA.

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