

## “A Sense of Belonging”

by George C. Trivett, Granite Falls (NC) Middle School

**W**e all belong to a lot of different clubs and organizations. As a teacher, I belong to a national teachers group. As a coach, I belong to my state coaching association. As a sport turf manager, I belong to the STMA, PGMS, and the N.C. Turfgrass Council. But, like myself, many of us are able to say that we just belong. How many of us are really active and have that “sense of belonging?”

I have been a member of Sport Turf Managers Association since 1987. I read the magazine and the newsletter. I occasionally called other members for advice, but I really wasn't involved. In January of 2000 I underwent a dramatic change. I was fortunate enough to be a Field of the Year winner and given the opportunity to attend the National Conference in St. Louis. Unknown to me, I was also to receive the Dick Ericson award. Both of these were great honors, which were certainly two of the highlights of my life.

After arriving in St. Louis I met Steve and Suz Trusty for the first time. They both made me feel very

welcome and a part of our wonderful organization. Steve Guise was very helpful, as were many other members. But, this being my first conference, I was maybe too shy or unwilling to meet other people. But I was to be surprised to learn that in the Sports Turf Managers Association we are all family. It was amazing to see the number of people who were so open, warm, and willing to talk. I met Kevin Meredith who oversees the maintenance at The National Soccer Hall of Fame. We developed a special bond and friendship. I can't help but think my winning Field of the Year and our friendship gave him the impetus to enter his soccer fields which were the 2000 Fields of the Year. I left that conference with a new sense of awareness that what I do is important and meaningful.

Unlike most of the members of STMA, sports turf is only a small part of my profession. I am a physical education teacher, football coach and Athletic Director at a middle school. Sometimes in the teaching profession the rewards are hard to see and appreciate. But in the preparation of sports turf the rewards are immediate and gratifying. That is one reason my love for that part of my job is so special. After returning from St. Louis with two awards in hand, there were a lot of pictures and articles in local newspapers. This brought a great deal of attention to the STMA and to our facility.

We then hosted the 2000 N.C. American Legion Championship, which drew over 26,000 in 6 days. Everyone who came knew this field was a winner and saw the STMA name in the stadium. All of this made me proud to be a member of our Association. At that point I thought it could not be any better. But the 2001 conference was yet to come.

From the moment I walked into the hotel in Tampa, I knew once again this was a special group. There were “family members” in abundance. I immediately volunteered to help in the STMA office. It was hard work, but it was also extremely gratifying to be around so many dedicated and hard working people. Starting with the tour on Wednesday, it was now my turn to make people feel special and part of the family. I found the more you can talk to members, the more we all learn to share not only knowledge of our fields, but knowledge of our family and friends. The people in this group make us all feel as if we are on the same level. Ross Kurcab with the Denver Broncos made a statement that was very real and meaningful. He said, that “We should not look at each other and think of different levels such as professional, college, or other levels, but that

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we are all turf managers". This is so true and is exactly why this organization is growing by leaps and bounds. Everyone I talked to was so glad to share information and willing to help in any way. It was especially nice to see the looks of happiness and pride on the faces of all the award winners at the banquet. It was just as wonderful to watch their expressions of surprise and accomplishment as it was to receive an award. From the tours to all the seminars and sessions, the networking and information that can be gained is immeasurable. I now take great pride in showing pictures and saying, "That is Rich Moffit, our President. That is Tim Moore, our Secretary and Awards chairman, and the list could go on. I am so proud to be a member of The Sports Turf Managers Association.

In conclusion, I encourage each member of STMA to make every effort to attend the National Conference. I promise it will have an impact not only on your job, but your life as well. Then you, also will have gained that "Sense of Belonging."



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"Members Only" Section of the website OR  
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## STMA 2000 Scholarship Recipients

Once again STMA received a record number of excellent and worthy scholarship applications. Once again, a record number of scholarships were awarded through the generosity of those participating in the 2000 Conference Silent Auction, Live Auction and Raffle, and through the designated funds of the Dr. Fred Grau memorial, and of The Toro Company on behalf of Dr. Jim Watson.

This funding provides not only for the actual scholarship awards as noted below, but also up to \$500 each to be applied toward the travel and lodging costs for the STMA Annual Conference. STMA provides complimentary Conference registration for each Scholarship recipient.

With the establishment of the SAFE Foundation, and beginning with the 2001 Scholarship program, the scholarship program will be administered through the Foundation, bringing tax benefits to those who make auction donations. Funds collected during the 2001 Silent Auction, Live Auction and Raffle, and the designated Grau and Watson funding will continue to support the scholarship program.

The presentation of the following Scholarships took place during the STMA Awards Banquet held on January 19, 2001, in Tampa, Florida.

**Dr. Fred Grau Two-Year Program Scholarship: \$500**  
Thomas Gmelch - Walla Walla Community College

**Undergraduate - Four-Year Program Scholarships**  
Dr. Jim Watson: \$1,000 - Matthew Money - Clemson University

STMA: \$750 - Jason Smith - Mississippi State University

Dusty Robinson - Texas A & M  
Andrew Hollman - University of Wisconsin - Madison

Garlon Rainey - Auburn University

**Graduate Scholarships**

Dr. Jim Watson: \$1,500 - John Sorochan - Michigan State University

STMA: \$1,000

Deying Li - Iowa State University  
Chad Follis - University of Missouri - Columbia

