COMING EVENTS

Pesticide Safety Training 1997
Toronto: March 13, 14
Guelph: March 29, 30
London: April 12, 13

Turfgrass & Pest Identification
London: March 26
Toronto: April 12
Call: Turfecs 1-800-TURFECS or 519-757-1611

Prairie Turfgrass Conference
March 23, 24, 25
Centennial Auditorium, Saskatoon, SK,
for Information: Joe Bloski, Conference Chairman,
Tel. 306-931-1982, Fax 306-931-7110

OPA Annual Education Conference
Toronto Congress Centre
March 25, 26

Green Industry Expo
Charlotte, NC
November 15-18

Ontario Amateur Softball Association
April 4-6, 1997
Annual Convention, Kingston, ON
Contacts: Ms. Bea Weber, OSA
12 Kenwood Cres., Guelph, ON
N1H 0E5
Mr. R. Whitfield, 3rd VP, Convention Chair, RR #1 Bath, ON K0H 1GO
Home: 613-352-3605
Bus. 613-548-5743
Fax: 613-548-6096

Baseball Clinic
May 5-6, 1997
Chatham ON
Contact: Mr. Tom Beaton
519-352-3888

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Greetings to everyone and I hope 1997 has started well for all members.

As we begin 1997 we also embark on the 10th Anniversary year of the Sports Turf Association. On this issue of the Manager you will see a special commemorative banner on the front page which celebrates our 10 years of service to our members and the industry. This banner will appear on each Manager throughout our anniversary year. From the smallest and humblest of beginnings the STA has grown and evolved to become one of the leading voices in the turf industry. At the recent Annual Meeting we held a gala 10th Anniversary Dinner to celebrate our first 10 wonderful and successful years, and it was my privilege to be the host, reminisce and thank some very special people who have been instrumental in our first decade.

The STA began as a brainstorming session in early 1987 when a group of individuals, representing a cross section of the turf industry gathered at the U. of Guelph Arboretum to discuss and endorse the need for an association which would focus itself on minimizing and avoiding injury to those using athletic facilities as they relate to turf. The STA - it was an idea whose time had come.

Better, safer sports turf, it has been our mission statement from the beginning, so brief, yet so succinct. Our mandate has been carried forward with the assistance of some extraordinary individuals. People such as Annette Anderson who provided guidance and invaluable assistance in the early years and acted as our first conference chairperson in 1987. Early Board of Directors included Mike Bladon who served as President (1987 - 1989 inclusive), Director and Newsletter Editor, Bruce Calhoun who served as Vice President for 3 years, President for 2 years, Robert Allen who served as Secretary and Treasurer, Ron Dubyk who assisted as Secretary and Newsletter Editor. Individuals such as these provided tremendous vision and commitment to ensure the STA had a firm foundation in the early formative years.

There have been a number of hallmark events and decisions over the first decade, but none so important as bringing Bob Sheard aboard as the STA’s first Executive Secretary in 1990. For four years Bob played a leading role in carry-
President's Message  (cont'd)

ing forward many of the Associations most important projects such as the Athletic Field Managers Guide for Construction and Maintenance, and a Three (3) volume turf management videotapes on Grass Selection, Cultural Practices, and Weed control. These books and videotapes have become well accepted within the turf industry and various horticultural institutions.

Another momentous event was the decision to join other turf organizations in coming together to develop the Ontario Turfgrass Symposium. Since its inception the STA has been a large contributor and supporter of this turf conference which has become one of the finest of its kind.

Throughout the first 10 years the STA has taken the opportunity to recognize the contributions of people to not only the Association, but the turf industry. We have presented 3 Honourary Life Memberships: Jim Boyce, Norman Rothwell and Clay Switzer. Each of these distinguished gentlemen have made enormous contributions to the turf industry and demonstrated tremendous support for the STA and our goals.

In October 1993 the STA officially recognized the need to institute an educational scholarship program in the amount of $200 which is awarded annually to the student with the highest proficiency in sports turf related courses at the U. of Guelph Turf managers Short Course. As we embark on our second decade, the STA has announced it will further offer another educational scholarship to the student with the highest overall mark in the turf management option of the Ontario Diploma in Horticulture program.

In January 1994 the STA took a large step forward and moved its office into the Guelph Turfgrass Institute which allowed the Association to reside at the centre of turf research in Ontario for the benefit of our members and demonstrate our support for the GTI. January 1995 witnessed the hiring of our second Executive Secretary Sonja Schneider who has greatly enhanced the day to day operation of the Association.

The STA has always shown a commitment to disseminating information related to the practical aspects of the care and improvement of athletic fields. We have remained focused on trying to convey hands-on information to front-line people. We have always tried to reach the person on the tractor operating the top-dresser, overseeder or core aerifier. We have to ensure our information gets to the lead hands, equipment operators, and out of the Directors in-basket.

It has been quite a journey as we enter our 10th year of service. We have serious challenges and cannot rest on our laurels for a single minute. Our Directors are finding it an increasing challenge to strike a balance in spending time on Association business and facing additional pressures at their places of employment and family responsibilities. We need to strive for good representation from across the industry on our Board. How will municipal amalgamation affect the Association? Our strategic plan Toward 2000, as well as our Field Managers Guide and videotape series require updating. We need to continue spreading the words of better, safer sports turf. Finally we must continue to ensure the person paying the annual membership dues feels he/she is receiving value for their investment.

A large vote of thanks is extended to all our past Presidents, and members of the Executive. Thank you for your hard work and leadership.

Last but not least a huge thank you to our industry representatives who have been big supporters of the STA from its inception. Space does not permit listing all of them, but they know who they are. Our industry colleagues have always been there for us and assisted in field days, conferences, our newsletter and participated as members of the Executive. They are a valued and integral part of our Association and the turf industry. To all of them we owe a large amount of gratitude.

We have enjoyed a wonderful 10 years and the future is bright. The opportunities and possibilities for this Association are great, and I am confident that together we will face the challenges head-on for the benefit of our members and the turf industry.

Wishing you better, safer sports turf

Christopher Mark