

STMA's New Director Chief Groundskeeper at RFK Stadium

Tony Burnett, the 40-year-old chief groundskeeper for Robert F. Kennedy Stadium, is excited about the possibility of Washington, D.C., landing a professional baseball team in the near future. Burnett served as host grounds manager for the STMA booth at the GCSAA Show in February and was recently appointed a director of STMA.

A committee put together by Washington city officials is beating the drums to land a major league team and sent 12 representatives to the baseball winter meetings. Washington lost professional baseball teams twice during Burnett's tenure at the Stadium, in the mid-60's when the Senators moved to Minnesota to become the Twins, and again in 1971 when the expansion Senators moved to Arlington, Texas. Burnett began his groundskeeping career in 1962 with the Senators.

"I'd love to see baseball again in Washington," Burnett says.

Would a new baseball team at RFK affect Burnett's job?

"I really don't know," he says. "I suppose it would mean a lot more work. We'd also need a bigger crew. That's for sure."

What is certain, the return of major league baseball to the nation's capital would require significant work to RFK which was built in 1961 and was known as D.C. Stadium until 15 years ago.

Frank Smith, Jr., chairman of the D.C. Baseball Commission, recently told the Senate Commerce Committee that it will cost about \$16 million to renovate RFK for baseball. The money could be raised by floating a bond issue or leasing the stadium to the owner of an expansion franchise. The funds would be needed to pay for the construction of a new retractable seating as well as improvements to the locker rooms and the stadium superstructure.



Tony Burnett

Of special note, Smith estimated the cost could be decreased by \$1.25 million if the decision is made to continue using a natural grass playing surface.

RFK sports a modified PAT playing surface of Bermudagrass that Burnett is more than satisfied with.

"The majority of the Redskin players love the natural grass," he points out. "I think the players from out of town like to play here too."

For Burnett, the STMA's recent host, the addition of a baseball team at RFK would be a welcome, if hectic, change of pace.

Executive Secretary: A Couple of Thoughts

Currently we are receiving inquiries and new members at approximately 5 per week. All new commercial affiliates are listed elsewhere in the newsletter but since the last newsletter we have processed over 80 new members.

The membership directory binders were mailed to new members in June. Let us know what you think of them.

The STMA educational display we held at trade shows in Washington, D.C. (GCSAA Conference), Cal Poly (Sports Turf Institute) and the Landscape Conference in Phoenix (ALCA) has encouraged several people to join. *Weeds Trees & Turf* has run an ad for STMA in two issues and this has also helped (thanks HBJ and Bruce Shank). In the near future *Grounds Maintenance* will also assist us with an ad (thanks Intertec and Kathy Copley).

But the best way to get new members is by word of mouth so please encourage your school districts, parks, youth sports associations, colleges, universities, educators, extension personnel, farm advisors and commercial affiliates to join STMA.

I am currently on sabbatical leave from Cal Poly. I am travel-



An exhibit booth for the Sports Turf Manager's Association was setup at the Golf Course Superintendents Conference in Washington, D.C.

SPORTS TURF MANAGER'S ASSOCIATION