

## SPORTS TURF MANAGER

Official Newsletter of the Sports Turf  
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# President's Message

by Mike Schiller, President

Just before the official, calendar-proclaimed, arrival of spring, your STMA Board was thinking warm thoughts of -- your 1998 Conference and Exhibition. And -- even better, we were exploring the exciting possibilities that will become the exciting "realities" January 14 to 18, 1998.

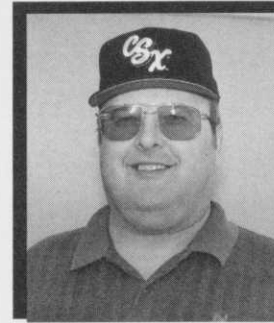
### Wow says it all!

Okay -- it was my first trip to "Mouse World" and I was overwhelmingly impressed with the expanse of Disney property, the quality level of Disney services and the whole Disney World experience.

AND -- even more than that -- I was in AWE of the new Walt Disney World Sports Complex. Our meeting was held in a conference room on-site, thanks to the generosity of Disney, and the courtesy extended to us by every "cast member" was superb.

To quote the Disney brochure, "Disney's Wide World of Sports will be the world's premier sports destination devoted to providing athletes, fans and all others moved by the spirit of sports competition an opportunity to be involved in the drama and exhilarating fun of sports every single day."

Lofty goals, yes, but backed by the Disney commitment and some great people whose enthusiasm for sports -- and for sports turf -- is exhilarating and contagious. Those of you who have met fellow STMA members Jon Strantz and Murray Cook have seen that sports turf commitment in action. During our visit, we were welcomed by the team's inspirational leader, Reggie Williams, Vice President of Walt Disney World Sports and former NFL linebacker with the Cincinnati Bengals, by Bill Squires, General Manager of the Sports Complex, and by Larry Lundy, Director of Sports Marketing. Each expressed their enthusiasm for working closely with STMA and their excitement about the 1998



Mike Schiller

Conference.

You'll see fantastic facilities for over 30 sports in this 200 acre complex. We took a short-form of the tour that will greet you in January, donning hard-hats because, with the Grand Opening slotted for May 15th, construction was very much in process. From the top of the Ballpark Stadium, which seats 7,500, you can catch a glimpse of the famous Disney theme parks. Besides the premium Stadium field, there's the Softball Quadruplex; Baseball Quadruplex and two Youth Baseball Fields -- and that only covers two of the sports that will be played here.

The impressive Fieldhouse, with space for 6 full-size, hardwood-floor basketball courts, will become the official training camp site of the Harlem Globetrotters, their team tryout and player development center and much more. The Fieldhouse also will be the site for our Conference Exhibition, providing a unique opportunity for vendor-attendee interaction following the same highly popular format of the 1997 Conference with some exciting additions.

Your board once again put on those hard hats to tour our headquarters hotel, The Coronado Springs Resort. Construction of this beautiful facility will be completed this summer. This extensive property is designed to provide meeting and reception space that combines the "intimate" advantages of privacy with premium resort-style services. STMA has negotiated special room rates for this caliber property for Florida in January --

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## President's Message

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\$123 -- single or double occupancy. Tax is currently 11%. And, as a Disney property, it offers the full inter-park transportation package.

And -- your Conference Committee is working with Disney to provide a special multi-day, multi-park admission package so you can add some family vacation time to the beginning or the end of the Conference.

During the short breaks in our meetings, we scouted for Tigers, some of us trying to catch a glimpse of the great young golfer, Tiger Woods, who was on-site for a combination exhibition and taping, others for Tigger, the famous character from Winnie-the-Pooh. Be assured, your 1998 Conference will have something special in store for everyone!

## How Do You Do...?

### The Question -- How Do You Prepare Your Fields for Spring Activity After Winter?

Answered by David Hanus, Bryan (TX) Independent H. S. District

Our bermudagrass athletic fields experience heavy use from fall football and winter soccer, so we like to start recovery work on them as soon as soccer is over and the weather permits, usually mid-March. Our first step is to mow the fields at a lower height than normal to encourage green-up and reduce thatch. Re-entry requirements for school grounds in Texas make it difficult to apply herbicides on a timely basis, so this scalping and the resumption of our normal mowing schedule reduces the need to treat for any winter weeds.

Soil compaction is the main problem on the fields, so most of our early spring work is spent on aeration. This will be our second spring to deep tine aerify the fields with an Aer-way unit with 7" shattertines. We've been able to get 5-inch penetration even on our most compacted fields, so it's done a good job of breaking up the soil profile. Each field is aerated in at least two directions, with a second aeration scheduled 4 weeks later.

Soil tests in January help determine the amounts of gypsum to apply, which is used to offset the high sodium found in our local water supply. Each field receives half of its gypsum allotment in April. The first of the regular fertilizer applications won't be done until soil temperatures reach at least 70 degrees. After that we start our normal bermudagrass maintenance schedule to transition out perennial ryegrass on the overseeded fields and to encourage as much growth and recovery as possible before football practice starts again in April.

Answered by Mike Trigg, Waukegan (IL) Park District

Since Illinois weather is so unpredictable, we pack as much spring preparation as possible into the fall. For example, we'll repair any worn turf areas and core aerify soccer fields. During late fall and winter we check material supplies and place orders so we'll have everything on hand we need when the weather breaks. We start with a field/facility check on EVERYTHING, infield and outfield condition, lighting, turf condition, fencing, benches, bleachers, etc. The MAIN thing is to do the pre-planning so we are ready for spring. The requests for athletic field use come earlier each year and the window of opportunity can vary so much that you have to be prepared for anything.

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