

SPORTS TURF MANAGER

Official Newsletter of the Sports Turf
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President's Message

Reaching Out

by Rich Moffitt, President

The more I work with our Strategic Planning Committee on the focus of STMA's future, the more I realize how many opportunities there are for us to grow our profession and our professionalism. One area of future growth will focus on our image and will include outreach efforts to raise the level of understanding about what sports turf managers do and how it affects the quality and overall playability of athletic fields. This outreach will extend to those who use our fields, to facility ownership and administrative groups, and to the general public.

One arm of that outreach effort continues to be assistance in providing quality athletic fields for individuals and groups who would not have access to such facilities without this assistance.

Many of STMA's affiliated Chapters "adopt" a field in need of help as their service project each year. They work with their commercial members to arrange for donations of materials and the use of equipment, or with more extensive projects, special pricing on these items. Then they bring together as many of their members as possible to tackle the field make over. This may be a one-day project, a weekend project, or a long-term project involving many days of service throughout the year. They also serve as a resource for those who will be handling the continued maintenance of the improved field.

I'm currently involved in a more extensive outreach project in conjunction with the St. Louis Cardinals, metropolitan St. Louis officials, and general contractor Clayco Sports. The Cardinals work with the officials to identify locations where youth baseball facilities could be constructed and would be used. We're currently working at the first site on the prototype for what is anticipated as a long-term, ongoing project. While the Cardinals are funding the majority of the costs for this project, the



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companies involved are donating services. There's great satisfaction in turning a barren lot into a baseball field and providing some inner-city youth with a quality, accessible field on which they can develop their skills.

Outreach continues in other areas as well. In early September, two STMA Board members, President-Elect L. Murray Cook, and Secretary Tim Moore, were part of the team in Sydney, Australia, working at Palm Meadows Baseball Park, the Team USA training facility, and assisting the Sydney Olympic staff with the preparation of the baseball facilities and fields at Sydney Olympic Park.

Cook also had taken a crew to Cuba to work on Estadio Latinoamericano for the Baltimore Orioles exhibition game against the Cuban National Team.

While the Olympic preparations were taking place, STMA Executive Director Steve Trusty was in England, attending the IOG's SALTEX 2000. (See Headquarter column for details.)

And, keeping in this international mode, two of STMA's featured speakers at the STMA 2001 Conference in Tampa, Florida, are from across the pond. Turfgrass Consultant John Souter, of Braco, Perthshire, Scotland, will be speaking on the topic, "New Technologies in Construction & Maintenance of Soccer Pitches." Eddie Seaward, Head Groundsman for The All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club Wimbledon will provide a behind the scenes view of "The Wimbledon Year."