

Headquarters Report

by Steve Trusty, Executive Director

This is the time of year that things start to slow down for most sports turf managers. Baseball and softball season is over. Football and Soccer is over for some sectors and winding to the finish for others. For your Headquarters Staff, we are gearing up for our busiest time. Conference registrations are coming in. Dues renewal notices are going out for National members. We also handle the dues notices for the majority of our 26 chapters. While it creates extra work for staff, it is a big help to chapters and most importantly, it can make things easier for members. We have heard from many members over the years that it is much easier to get their National and Chapter dues paid if they can be paid on one invoice. If they receive two invoices, the facility frequently takes the first one in, or the smallest one, pays that and then refuses the other one. We like to assist our members whenever we can.

Headquarters is also busy preparing for the Conference. Speakers, Board Members and staff travel and housing arrangements have to be made. Food and beverage arrangements must be finalized. Trade show arrangements are being finalized. Current sponsors are being contacted for renewals. Potential new sponsors are being contacted. The SAFE Foundation is in the midst of its first major fundraiser. Arrangements are being made for the Live and Silent Auctions for SAFE. Scholarship application materials are being reviewed. The recipients will all be contacted and their travel arrangements will be made. Field of the Year winners have been notified. Their travel needs are being arranged. Arrangements for the Awards have to be made. Publicity to local and national media is prepared and sent out. In some cases interviews with home town media has been arranged through Headquarters and your Communications Director or Executive Director provide background and other information for local news stories.

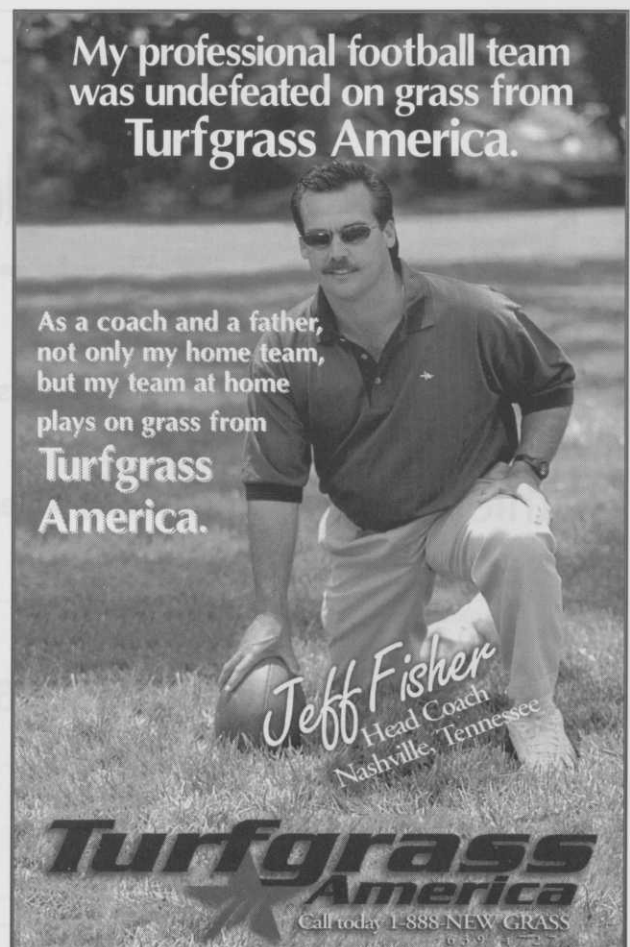
As this is written, there are still some Chapter visits to be completed, Turfgrass Conferences to be spoken to and other Trade Shows to attend.

STMA participates in a number of other shows throughout the year to spread the word about what Sports Turf Managers do and how recognition of their importance can positively impact those we speak to at these shows. We show at the High School Athletic Directors Conference to acquaint ADs with importance of good, safe playing fields and what STMA members can do for them. We have been a part of the Baseball Winter Meetings since 1995. That exposure has led to much greater recognition of the Sports Turf Manager by both Minor League and Major League Baseball. The STMA Sports Turf Manager of the Year Awards for Minor League Baseball, which came about because of contacts made at the Winter Meetings, have raised the recognition of the Sports Turf Manager to a new level. The various Leagues are now recognizing "Sports Turf Managers of the Year" rather than "groundskeepers". Participation at the FFA Career Fair exposes your profession to over 40,000 students, 3,000 advisors and several thousand parents and chaperons.

They are recognizing, in increasing numbers, that yours is a profession that might interest them or at least that what you do is much more than just cutting the grass. STMA has been gaining a greater presence each year for the past several years at the NRPA (National Recreation and Parks Association). More and more Park Directors now recognize that there are Professionals that they can hire to maintain their athletic fields. STMA also has a presence at the Green Industry Expo to acquaint Grounds Managers, lawn care operators and landscape professionals with what you do.

While it can be tiring and travel can sometimes be frustrating, it is really a great joy to get around and tell others about this great profession of Sports Turf Management. It is even better when your Headquarters representatives come in contact with members in our travels. You are a great bunch of individuals that have a right to be proud about what you accomplish on a daily basis. We look forward to continuing to tell your story.

We wish you all a most joyous holiday season and hope to see each and every one of you in San Antonio.



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