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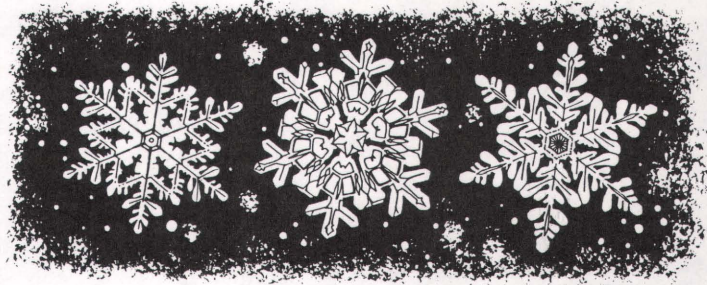
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...for better, safer Sports Turf

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Christmas season is fast approaching and the Directors and Executive wish all members and their families best wishes for a joyous holiday season.

In reflecting on 1996 outside the affairs of the Association, it seems during the past year one was constantly being filled with doubts, uncertainty, and reservations for the future. It appeared that every time one listened to the radio or read the newspaper, negativity and hardship was a common theme. It seemed like every labour group and profession has had enough and is fed up; teachers, nurses, doctors, day care workers, many municipal employees; all culminating in Days of Action. From the Somalia Inquest, to several jet airliners crashing and taking hundreds of lives, a bombing at the Olympics in Atlanta, to the human suffering and tragedy in Rwanda - maybe it's just me but it seems like it has been a painful and confronta-



tional year. Every issue seems highly charged, tempers are short, and the gap between the have and the have not in our society seems to be growing with each passing month.

It is wonderful to hear the deficit is shrinking and interest rates remain low, and Stats Can says consumer spending rebounded in the third quarter of '96. But does it all seem so positive when the result is child poverty rates continue to climb, wheel trans service is eliminated for those people in our communities who need the assistance to maintain their personal freedom and independence, and injured workers, already on permanent disability may get their benefit reduced. It seems at times our political masters at all levels have priorities confused, and like the tin man in the Wizard of Oz could use a heart.

On a cheerier note, with Christmas and the spirit of fellowship and giving just around the corner, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Directors and our Executive Secretary for all their efforts over the past year. Sonja Schneider provided tremendous support for the Association and Bob Sheard once again produced four top notch issues of the *Sports Turf Manager* which provided our members with a publication that is one of the best in the industry for content and value. This is the last *Sports Turf Manager* with Bob as Editor. My heartfelt thanks for his total commitment to

the newsletter over the past few years.

During 1996 our membership increased, and our goal is to maintained, service and support those new as well as our existing members. The Ontario Turf Symposium is rapidly approaching on Jan. 7 - 9 at the Regal Constellation and from all appearances it looks like a show case event once again. If you have not registered yet, or plan to register at the door, please remember to *check off the box indicating your STA membership*. It does make a difference. Our Annual General Meeting is on Jan. 7th, as well as our 10th Anniversary dinner. It promises to be a wonderful night where we celebrate our past and look to the future. I hope you can attend.

As we enter our second decade I am confident the next ten years will be as successful as the first. It will not be easy; it will require the total commitment of all Directors and the members to support our mission. We have had a wonderful first decade, and I challenge everyone to make the next one even better. As always, if you have any comments or ideas about the Association, please do not hesitate to call or drop us a line.

From all of us, a prosperous and healthy 1997 to you and your family.

As always, wishing you better, safer sports turf.

Christopher Mark,  
President

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