



The Sports Turf Association of Ontario: A Celebration of 10 Years

Give people enough rope, and they will hang themselves. Just as likely, they will tie themselves up in knots.

On a February day in 1987, Mike Bladon convened turf industry people to discuss the feasibility of a sports turf association. That day, at the University of Guelph's Arboretum, he clearly established himself as somebody who could rope people into something—including myself. Mike introduced me to the twenty-odd experts as a new guy who would run their inaugural meeting. No one but Mike knew he had provided me with an agenda as tight as rails on a railway track. He knew he had to keep me on a short leash.

I recall after that meeting feeling confident in the Sports Turf Association; it's mission; it's reason for being. Everyone seemed elated that the organization was "off and running." All agreed that "this was a good start," and I had similar thoughts. But I don't think that anybody realized how far down the road an unleashed STA would run in the ten years since that initial 90 minute meeting.

Here are some of the markers along that decade-long road. First, membership growth from 20-something to nearly 200; second, field days in nine different locations after a first event at the

University of Guelph's Alumni Stadium; third, appointment of an executive secretary, Dr. Bob Sheard, who edited and published a field guide, the Association's newsletter and a three-part video series on turf for sport venues; fourth, establishment of the Association's office at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute; and fifth, creation of the STA's strategic plan, "Towards 2000."

Along the way, the Sports Turf Association exhibited commendable strength of character by providing three honorary life memberships to James Boyce, Norman Rothwell and Clayton Switzer. And, on top of all that, the STA built its profile as a "wired entity" with the creation of its own web site and electronic mail address.

What the coming decade holds for the Sports Turf Association will be revealed in the fullness of time. I only hope that whatever may be won't tether the association—its spirit or its imagination—but will usher it into its "field of dreams." The Association should be proud of its accomplishments to date and confident in its future. I am happy to be allowed to convey my wish for high fortune. ♦

—*Bill Culp is the Director for Independent Study/OAC ACCESS at the University of Guelph*

OPPORTUNITIES!!

Become a Trade Show Buff

Trade show season will soon be upon us which gives suppliers and attendees the opportunity to talk about products and services both old and new. To get the greatest benefit from trade shows and make the most effective use of their time, exhibitors and attendees alike have to come with a good attitude and know what they want to achieve while at the show.

Successful exhibitors come to a trade show with high expectations, high energy, and eager booth personnel. Good sales people greet attendees with enthusiasm, make eye contact when talking and are never seated. Instead they are ready to talk and explain to potential clients the features of their product or service.

Trade shows also offer tremendous value to attendees. Where else can you see so many products in a relatively short period of time and have all or most of your questions about a product answered. Attendees can get

the most out of a trade show by being prepared beforehand. Come with a written list of objectives so that you know who and what you want to see and what you wish to talk about. You can gain all kinds of information from salespeople who want to tell you about new products or new features on established ones.

Trade shows also offer the venue to meet with old friends and colleagues. It is the ideal setting to talk about the industry, new products and ideas, or just catch up and socialize.

To get the most from a trade show either as an exhibitor or attendee, come prepared to discuss, ask questions and listen. There are few situations that can be more productive or informative to the individual. Try it. I guarantee you'll enjoy it! ♦

—*Harold Van Gool is a Director of the STA and a contributing editor to Sports Turf Manager.*