

STA Member Profile

Michael Bladon • Past President

1. You were president of the Sports Turf Association from its inception in 1987 until 1989. What was your role in the turfgrass industry at that time?

At the time I was president of the Sports Turf Association, I was with the Grounds Department at the University of Guelph. Included in that role was the maintenance of 17 acres of athletic fields. I came from Regina, SK, where I was involved with the Wascana Centre Authority, a 2,200 acre parks system where once again part of the job was the maintenance and care of athletic fields. I am retired but still enjoy contact with the STA.

2. What was the biggest challenge in your job at that time?

Keeping people off fields when they were frozen and on warm spring days before they were ready for play, and the old one of two many games scheduled too close together.

3. What was the most satisfying part, what made the job worthwhile for you?

The compliments on occasion from user groups made the work worthwhile.

4. What was the biggest misconception about your job?

That we were sitting by the phone waiting for work.

5. What is your educational/employment background?

I am a graduate of the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture. On leaving there I was employed in large landscaping – dam sites in Quebec, Trudeau Airport in Montreal, anything over \$5000. I then established a large tree farm in Cambridge where people would come and order trees for their needs 2-5 years later. The trees were then balled, burlapped and shipped by company truck

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to their site. After that, I went to Wascana as an area foreman for six years which is where I met my wife. Then in 1969 I moved to the University of Guelph.

6. Tell us about your family.

I have an extremely supportive wife, one daughter and one son. My wife is a nurse, our son is employed in the horticulture industry and our daughter works in the university system.

7. What do you enjoy doing now that you are retired? Hobbies, favourite past times?

I enjoy volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, the local theatre in various jobs, and am now helping prune an orchard for a non-profit organization. I enjoy painting in oils when I make the time.



8. How has the industry changed and in what direction(s) would you like to see the industry, as a whole, move towards?

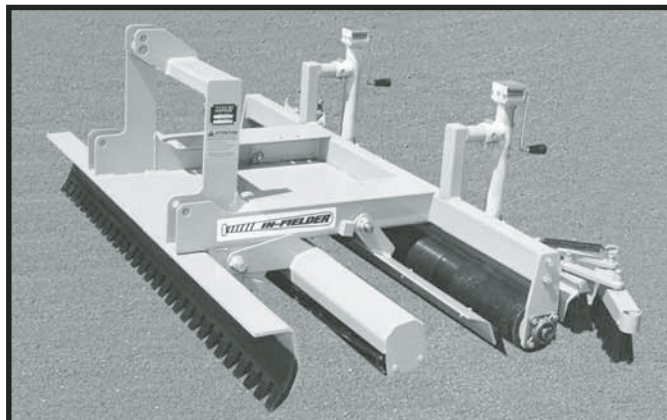
The industry has changed in terms of methods employed in maintenance and construction. I believe that as an association we have helped initiate those changes through books, a newsletter, and single information sheets. User groups are also becoming more knowledgeable and more vocal when field conditions are poor or unsafe.

9. What do you consider to be the biggest benefit of being a member of the STA?

There are several – the newsletter and books that keep one current, field days and conferences each year are both educational and the networking which occurs is invaluable.

10. What would your advice be for current and future presidents of the STA?

Keep current and when attracting new board members ensure they are given a job to do on behalf of the association. As a niche organization there is a need to be vigilant and to continue to plan as to where the association is going and what it must accomplish to reach those goals. Do not back away from change, plan for it and embrace it.



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