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#### **SPORTS TURF MANAGER**

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#### STA OFFICE HOURS

Lee Huether is in the office from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. The office phone number is (519) 763-9431. At other times, a message may be left on the voice mail system. Please include the vital information of name, telephone number with area code, and time of calling. The office may be reached at any time by faxing (519) 766-1704 or via e-mail.

# The President's Desk – Gord Dol

Spring is here, and it's time to get back to the business of sports turf management. On a personal note, I'm proud to be serving as your president for another term.

his year's Ontario Turfgrass Symposium was again a great success with a terrific venue and a first class slate of speakers. The OTS is, and continues to be, the premier turf education forum on Ontario. Many thanks to the OTS committee for another job well done. We have three *OTS Highlights* articles in this issue.

During the symposium, we also held our Annual General Meeting at which elections for board positions were conducted. I would like to extend a very special thankyou to Dr. Bob Sheard who has stepped down from the board after many years of faithful service. All directors slated to complete their second year were re-elected and I am pleased to sit as president for another two years. Congratulations to Paul Gillen, now our vice-president.

Also at our AGM, we announced the creation of the Michael J. Bladon Educational Link. This link, available to our members via the association's website, will take you to the Michigan State University's Turfgrass Information File where you can access virtually any type of turf

#### The eagerly awaited Athletic Field Construction Manual is hot off the press and ready for distribution.

related information. This announcement was made with Michael's lovely wife Elaine and son John present, and is a tribute to Mike's many years of invaluable service to the STA.

I am pleased to announce that the *Athletic Field Construction Manual* is complete and ready for distribution. This publication was almost four years in the making. Thanks to the manual committee, and a special thanks to Bob Sheard, Editor-in-Chief, and Lee Huether who worked many hours pulling this all together.

I recently attended the Atlantic Turfgrass Conference in Halifax, Nova



**Above:** STA President Gord Dol (left) presents the association's annual donation to the Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation. Corrie Almack accepted on behalf of the OTRF.

Scotia, and had the pleasure of sharing the podium with Dr. Eric Lyons for a full day of sports turf education. The session was well attended with good interaction and response from all participants. All of the sports turf sessions were chaired by Gordon Horsman from the City of Moncton, New Brunswick. Gord is a member of the STA and is profiled in this issue. He is working towards starting an Atlantic STA Chapter, so to all of our east coast friends, please contact Gord or Lee at our office.

Finally, part of our mandate set out in our strategic plan is to encourage and support education and research. During the OTS, I had the pleasure of once again presenting an annual donation to the Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation. This donation was accepted by Corrie Almack on behalf of the OTRF. We have a great team of researchers at the University of Guelph who need and deserve our support. The OTRF is a very worthy cause. Have a safe sports turf season! ◆

# EVENT CALENDAR

#### June 25

Parks and Open Space Authority (POSA) Summer Operational Forum Glen Abbey Community Centre Oakville, ON Watch for details! Ontario Parks Association www.opassoc.on.ca Ontario Recreation Facilities Association www.orfa.com Sports Turf Association www.sportsturfassociation.com

#### September 11

Sports Turf Association 21st Annual Field Day Chinguacousy Park Brampton, ON Watch for details! Info: (519) 763-9431 www.sportsturfassociation.com

#### November 1

Sports Turf Association Robert W. Sheard Scholarship Application Deadline Info: (519) 763-9431 www.sportsturfassociation.com



#### April 27 to May 2 Ontario Recreation Facilities Association 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Professional Development Program University of Guelph, ON

www.orfa.com

August 11 Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation Fundraising Golf Tournament Westmount Golf & Country Club Kitchener, ON Info: www.otrf.ca

#### August 21 Guelph Turfgrass Institute *Research Field Day* Guelph, ON Info: www.guelphturfgrass.ca

# Ontario Turfgrass Symposium Celebrates its 17th Successful Year

he 17<sup>th</sup> annual Ontario Turfgrass Symposium (OTS) was held at the University of Guelph's Rozanski Hall this past February 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Hundreds of delegates attended the symposium with international industry experts and university faculty from across Canada providing leading edge seminars on a wide range of turf related topics.

"We are delighted with the reaction of delegates to the OTS program. It is the kind of information that turf managers in a variety of work environments need to do their jobs better," says OTS Executive Chair, Chris Mark.

The Ontario Turfgrass Symposium is a two day conference that allows turf experts to share insight and research regarding best practices for turf care. Delegates from across Ontario were in attendance to benefit from these information sessions.

"Reaction to topics offered at OTS is always very positive. Lectures tend to spark a lot of discussion amongst delegates and new ideas are taken back to the workplace. This is training that has a very strong impact on both turf managers and staff," says Steve Fleischauer, Manager of Program Development with the Office of Open Learning.

Details for the 2009 Ontario Turfgrass Symposium will become available later



this year. For more information, stay tuned to www.open.uoguelph.ca/OTS or call 519.767.5000. ♦



#### WELCOME TO THE STA!

**Sean Gault** Woodbine Entertainment Group Rexdale, ON

Matthew Sutherland Town of Okotoks, AB

**Claus Zander** Zander Sod Co. Limited Kettleby, ON

**Todd Bailey** Town of Markham, ON

**Timothy Armstrong** STA R.W. Sheard Scholarship Recipient

#### **STA Membership Plaques**

Display membership plaques are available in executive engraved walnut for \$50 plus S&H and gst. To order, contact Lee at the STA office.

#### Summer 2008 Submissions

If you have something you'd like to submit for the next issue, please forward it to the STA office by May 16, 2008.

#### **Editorial Content**

Opinions expressed in articles published in *Sports Turf Manager* are those of the author and not necessarily those of the STA, unless otherwise indicated.

# Turf Industry Seeks Construction Standards. STA Provides a Solution.

hen setting out to build the next great playing field, professionals strive to create a masterpiece that will be used for generations. Construction standards have

been a missing link in the creation of the most effective and highly functional sports fields.

Commenting on the problem the sports turf industry has faced, Michael Bladon, former Grounds Superintendent at the University of Guelph, says, "Specifications could have saved grounds maintenance personnel and others thousands of dollars in corrective ac-

tion when poor construction methods were used, partly because pertinent information was not readily available."



correctly the first time," says Bladon. Landscape Architect Lawrence Stasiuk

of the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects, adds, "Competitive athletes

> demand high quality and safe playing surfaces. *The Athletic Field Construction Manual* provides standards for five categories of field construction that will help designers determine the appropriate field design for the intended level of use and competition."

> > This classification system is based primarily on the root zone material and the

provision of drainage, irrigation

and lights. The resulting specifications for each category of field are based on the best available scientific information.

**Bringing uniformity to the construction of sports fields, this manual is long overdue.** Also included are more than 20 diagrams outlining the approved field dimensions for most sports fields using a turf surface.

The Sports Turf Association has moved to solve this issue through the creation of construction specifications in *The Athletic Field Construction Manual*. "The value of this manual to the industry is in the recognition of the need for a comprehensive set of specifications which, if followed or used, ensure that athletic fields are built The Sports Turf Association has made the manual available through its website at www.sportsturfassociation.com. Bladon encourages municipalities, private enterprise, consultants, landscape architects and any involved in maintenance budgets to make use of this invaluable tool. ◆



#### Green Steam Weed Killer

Rittenhouse is proud to introduce the latest product in our alternative weed control line. The Green Steam Weed Killer uses patented technology to produce 660° steam, which quickly kills weeds. Using high temperature steam is an effective alternative to chemicals for controlling annual weeds, grass and young perennial weeds. Even with a single application, the Green Steam can effectively eliminate many invasives. The Green Steam will not harm trees as their bark acts as an insulator, making the Green Steam perfect for controlling weeds around the their bases. In addition, the steam temperature can be controlled, thereby minimizing the damage to beneficial organisms in the soil. Not only does the Green Steam work well for weed control, it is also popular for sterilization purposes in greenhouses. For pricing and more information regarding the Green Steam Weed Killer, visit www.rittenhouse.ca.



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# MICHAEL J. BLADON EDUCATIONAL LINK TO MSU ESTABLISHED

#### GRANTING ACCESS TO WORLD'S MOST EXTENSIVE PUBLIC COLLECTION OF TURFGRASS MATERIAL

he Sports Turf Association, at its Annual Meeting on February 19, 2008, announced the establishment of the Michael J. Bladon Educational Link to the Michigan State University's Turfgrass Information File (TGIF). The blanket subscription provides an opportunity for the association to not only make the resources of the Turfgrass Information Center (TIC) available to its membership, but also as a way to support the continued expansion of the content and availability of the center's information

#### History of the Turfgrass Information Center & the Turfgrass Information File

In the 1960s, the Michigan State University (MSU) Library began to collect printed turfgrass materials. In 1968, the personal collection of the late O.J. Noer, pioneer turf agronomist, was added to the library holdings through the O.J. Noer Foundation. Later gifts have included the Noer/Milorganite® Division MMSD Image Collection (on indefinite loan), the Scotts Company Archive, and most significantly, the James B. Beard Turfgrass Library Collection. Today, the combined

collections are recognized as the most extensive public collection of turfgrass material in existence.

Between 1983 and 1992, the United States Golf Association (USGA) Turfgrass Research Program supported the development of the USGA Turfgrass Information File (TGIF). Using the Noer Collection as a foundation, TGIF was designed to systematically inventory published turf research and make the bibliographic information available via a computerized database (http://tic.msu.edu).

The TGIF database is now accessible online. With over 125,000 searchable items using over 300,000 keywords, these resources cover the full scope of the turfgrass industry. The database monitors over 320 journals and magazines, including the STA's *Sports Turf Manager*, research reports, and conference proceedings. In addition, the database includes records for extension bulletins, books and book chapters, technical reports, theses and dissertations, web documents, published Q & As, scanned golf course plans, and video interviews with selected members of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, sample photographs from the Noer/Milorganite® Division MMSD Image Collection, and more!

#### The Michael J. Bladon Educational Link

It is only fitting that the portal to this information resource be named after the Sports Turf Association's founder, Michael J. Bladon. It was Michael who provided the impetus for the inaugural meeting in 1987. He became the association's first president and has since served as past president, director, and editor of and contributor to the *Sports Turf Newsletter*, now the *Sports Turf Manager*. He has played a role in most, if not all, association initiatives. Mike was awarded an Honorary Life Membership in the year 2000. He retired from the Board of Directors in 2002.

In an era of increasingly restricted chemical use and water availability, an ever-wider range of techniques and tools will be needed by managers to respond to user expectations. The TIC is the vehicle by which the information required to support research, education and management is made available for all of these efforts.

The TGIF database is now accessible online. With over 125,000 searchable turf items using over 300,000 keywords, these resources cover the full scope of the turfgrass industry. The database monitors over 320 print publications.

The TGIF provides access to better information, which converts to more effective management of turf facilities, whether athletic fields, golf courses, or other managed landscapes.

Sports Turf Association members can now access this information via the Michael J. Bladon Educational Link. Login to www.sportsturfassocation.com and follow the link under the members only section. ♦

Above: Recently retired STA Director Bob Sheard (left) with Michael Bladon and his wife Elaine at STA's Annual General Meeting.

# **More Sports Turf Association News**

#### 2008/2009 Officers & Directors

The Sports Turf Association (STA) elected its 2008/2009 officers and directors at the annual meeting held during the Ontario Turfgrass Symposium, February 19, 2008.

Gord Dol, of Dol Turf Restoration Ltd., continues as President of the STA for a second term. Elected officers include Paul Gillen of AerWay/Vice-President, Andrew Gaydon of Vanden Bussche Irrigation/ Secretary, and directors Jane Arnett-Rivers/Town of Oakville, Dave Chapman/ City of Toronto, Bob Kennedy/Sport Turf Management Solutions, Grant Mckeich/ Town of East Gwillimbury and Paul Turner/G.C. Duke Equipment Ltd. Others currently serving are Rick Lane of Haldimand County/Treasurer and directors Cam Beneteau/Ridley College, Murray Cameron/City of Guelph, Bill Clausen/University of Guelph, Paul Cooper/Turf Care Products Canada, and Rob Field/Plant Science, Inc. Longtime director Robert W. Sheard has stepped down from the Board of Directors.

#### 2008 Robert W. Sheard Scholarship Recipient

The Sports Turf Association Scholarship Program was established in 1993 to encourage, support and provide leadership



to those considering a career in the sports turf industry. The 2008 recipient of the R.W. Sheard Scholarship, announced at the Association's annual meeting, is Timothy Armstrong. Tim, a second year student in the University of Guelph's Diploma in Turfgrass Management Program, is from Blenheim, Ontario and spent his required summer internship working at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute. He was previously seasonally employed by the Municipality of Chatham-Kent Parks and Recreation Department. He graduates this spring. For scholarship details and an application form, visit the STA website.



# STA WEBSITE UPDATE

www.sportsturfassociation.com

As part of our 20th anniversary tuneup, a project to revise and update our website was implemented. In the primary phase, the improvement was in the approach, not the appearance, as we moved to a content management system. The password-protected members only section was introduced and the *STA Membership Roster*, historically updated by annual print inserts, was replaced with a web-based version.

We have recently 'gone live' with the secondary phase of the project. In this phase the changes are very much 'out in front' and we hope you like our new look.

In order to access the members only resources, you will need to login as a user on the website.

#### STA MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY NOW ONLINE

In order to do this for the first time, please follow the directions outlined below.

**1.** Click on 'Login' (upper right corner below the header picture);

**2.** Click on the link 'Forgot Password?';

**3.** Enter your email address in the field provided, click on 'Send Password' and a user name & password will be sent to your email address;

**4.** Once you receive your user name and password you will be able to login, allowing you access to all password-protected areas;

**5.** Upon initial login, please review your profile information and update, if necessary. This forms the basis of our membership directory.

We trust you will find the improved STA website to be a valuable resource!



### COVER STORY CONTINUED...

#### TURN OFF THE PESTICIDES & TURN ON THE VACUUM • NANCY HUDSON, LEAD RESEARCHER • CHINCH BUG RESEARCH PROJECT

and mechanical controls, for example vacuums.

At about the same time, new uses for vacuums were developed which permitted the capture of live insects instead of killing them outright. For instance, large vacuums used in cotton crops were equipped with insect collectors which captured the insects without harming them, handheld units are used for monitoring insect pests in greenhouses, row crops, nurseries and orchards. These vacuums might also be used for monitoring certain pests affecting lawns and landscape plants.

While the smaller vacuum samplers practically coasted through the last half century, large agricultural vacuums experienced a turbulent history.

Agricultural vacuum inefficiencies may have resulted from a failure to account for insect biology and behaviour. To prove this, studies were conducted on Colorado potato beetles to determine how they interacted with potato plants when subjected to air-stream velocities.

which enabled the release of beneficials back into the fields and the subsequent destruction of pests. Small portable vacuums came into existence and were used by researchers to efficiently collect insects and other ecological data in hard to access or remote areas, such as tall grass fields, forest floors, dense woody habitats, and large shrub or small tree canopies.

Today, vacuum samplers such as the backpack aspirator available through BioQuip in California, and smaller The implementation of IPM shifted the focus from killing pests with chemicals to understanding pest behaviour and applying measures to discourage, repel or otherwise manage them. When interest in agricultural vacuums resurfaced, it caught the attention of entomologists and others who became curious about how vacuums might be optimized. They believed that agricultural vacuum inefficiencies may have resulted from a failure to account for insect biology and behaviour.

To prove this, studies were conducted on Colorado potato beetles (CPB) to determine how they interacted with potato plants when subjected to air-stream velocities. Results of one study showed that CPB adults grabbed onto plants and maintained their grip in spite of incredible forces used to dislodge them. Fortunately in another study it was shown that CPB adults were knocked-off the foliage by air blown horizontally through the plants and while detached from the plants they were easily collected by the vacuum. Studies were also conducted to examine the affect of airflow velocities on potato plants in order to establish air-stream tolerance levels and methods to minimize plant damage.

As it turned out, the air-stream levels needed to dislodge CPB adults were within the range tolerated by the potato plants. Another approach that was taken to optimize vacuum efficiency was to analyze the affect of hood orientation and design on air-stream patterns and airflow rates. Laboratory experiments and the use of numerical model simulations allowed investigators to examine numerous configurations without having to produce costly prototypes and perform extensive testing. By the 1990s, agricultural vacuums were at their peak and were marketed worldwide. Unfortunately they could not maintain their stay in the market and as interest subsided, manufacturers halted the production of these machines. Today agricultural vacuums still exist but they are in limited use, and are mainly operated by organic crop producers and specialty growers.

A third vacuum emerged at about the same time as the agricultural vacuums and vacuum samplers, however it had no association with insect capture or control. It was instead intended to be used as a debris removal machine. Debris removal vacuums were manufactured to pick up leaves, organic litter, garbage, bottles, cans, dirt and other debris from hard surfaces and turfgrass. Use for insect control apparently was not an intended function for these machines. The debris removal vacuums were marketed as an essential labour saving tool for cleaning up exterior spaces.

Today numerous manufacturers produce a wide variety of debris removal vacuums that range in size, form and function. Smaller machines such as the Billy Goat wide area vacuum can be either selfpropelled or pushed manually; larger machines can be mounted on tailgates or trailers, and huge machines can be mounted on trucks or tractors for wide area applications. These vacuums have been used on sod farms, municipal lands, commercial sites, sports fields, public parks, cemeteries, concert sites, military bases, etc. Debris removal vacuums have been successful over time, perhaps due in part to the diversity of design and wide rage of application.

For decades, vacuums have been used to control agricultural crop pests, collect specimens, and remove debris, however their use to control lawn or landscape pests was somehow overlooked. Perhaps landscape vacuums were bypassed because of chemical pesticides; they were effective, easy to apply and there was a wide variety available. However, an unavoidable trend toward reducing chemical pesticides is underway, which may prompt the industry to consider vacuums as a viable means for managing certain lawn and landscape pests. With the need for alternatives to chemical pesticides at the forefront, perhaps interest in vacuums will surface and propel efforts to create designs that are suitable for managing pests in the landscape. Industry and the public at large could certainly benefit from a non-chemical pest control option, for example vacuuming to control chinch bugs.

Chinch bugs are common insect pests that are highly destructive to lawns and other turfgrass areas. They are true bugs from the order Hemiptera; both adults and young feed on grasses (turf and agricultural grass-crops) by siphoning plant fluids through their straw-like mouthparts. The adults are very small, roughly 3.5 mm in length which is similar to the size of a black fly. Chinch bugs typically aggregate forming tight colonies, one or more of which can be found randomly distributed in a lawn, particularly in locations that are hot, dry and sunny. They are mostly surface dwellers and can be exposed by parting the grass. There are several species of chinch bugs that are native to North America. In the US there are four subspecies that are considered to be of economic importance, three of which inhabit Mexico









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