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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

Winter has arrived – a time to sit back and reflect on the past season and analyze what went well and what didn't. For many of you, it is also budget time. With what is going on in the world and here on the homefront along both economic and political lines, budget setting is sure to be a particularly daunting task for 2009.

he Ontario Turfgrass Symposium (OTS) will be on February 18 and 19 in Rozanski Hall at the University of Guelph. This year promises to be another great educational forum. A summary of the sports turf related sessions is inside on page 7. There are also a number of informative plenary sessions for your consideration. Complete details are available at www.open.uoguelph.ca/ ots. The Sports Turf Association is proud to present this professional development program together with the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, Nursery Sod Growers Association of Ontario, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Ontario Recreation Facilities Association, Professional Lawn Care Association of Ontario and the Office of Open Learning, University of Guelph.

During the OTS, we hold our annual general meeting which is open to all members. We urge you to join us to learn more about the association and our initiatives. The meeting will be held on February 18 at 3:30 p.m. We will also be electing directors to the board. Now would be the time to consider allowing your name to stand for election. If this interests you, please speak to any board member or call Lee at our office. The Call for Nominations and Nomination Form has been mailed to all members in good standing. They are also available in the Members Only/Member News section of the website www.sportsturfassociation.com. Deadline for nominations is December 19.

Also in this issue, we provide an update from the Parks and Open Space Alliance with details of the Parks and Open Space Professional Training Program being offered in Guelph in April and Petawawa in September, 2009. The Sports Turf Asso-



ciation will be delivering the Sports Turf Management and Maintenance portion of this three part certificate program. This is one phase of the development of certification programs outlined in our strategic planning initiative.

At this time last year you were asked to participate in a research study on the economic profile of the Ontario turfgrass industry. Survey results have been compiled and will be presented at the 2009 Ontario Turfgrass Symposium. This is the first comprehensive overview of the economic significance of the Ontario turfgrass sector since 1982. •



EVENT CALENDAR

January 6-8

Landscape Ontario Congress Toronto, ON Info: 905.875.1805 www.locongress.com

January 13-17

Sports Turf Managers Association 20th Annual Conference & Exhibition San José, CA Info: 800-323-3875 www.stma.org

January 21-23

Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association Golf Course Management Conference & Trade Show Info: 519.767.3341 www.golfsupers.on.ca

February 2-27

University of Guelph Turf Managers' Short Course Guelph, ON Info: 519.767.5000 www.open.uoguelph.ca/turfmanager

FEBRUARY 4 & 5

Ontario Parks Association 53rd Annual Educational Conference Explorations Trade Show (Feb. 5) Hamilton, ON Info: 905.864.6182 www.opassoc.on.ca

★ FEBRUARY 18 & 19 ★

Ontario Turfgrass Symposium The Challenge of Green University of Guelph Guelph, ON Info: 519.767.5000 www.open.uoguelph.ca/ots

★ FEBRUARY 18 ★

Sports Turf Association Annual General Meeting University of Guelph (at the OTS) Guelph, ON Info: 519.763.9431 www.sportsturfassociation.com

February 22-25

Western Canada Turfgrass Association 46th Annual Conference & Show Victoria, BC Info: 604.467.2564 www.wctaturf.com

NEW! Parks & Open Space Professional Training Program

OSA (Parks and Open Space Alliance) is pleased to announce its latest professional development initiative, the Parks and Open Space Professional Training Program -Level 1, designed for seasonal workers as well as full-time parks and open space personnel.

The program consists of three, four-day courses: Parks Maintenance and Operations; Parks Equipment Safety Operation;

Mark Your Calendar! POSA Summer Operational Forum, Wednesday, June 24, 2009, Oshawa, Ontario.

and Sports Turf Management and Maintenance. Each of the three courses is taught using a combination of classroom-based study and some hands-on training. Participants are expected to be able to return to their workplace and utilize the skills and knowledge they have learned in the courses. The hands-on portion of each course requires participants to arrive in appropriate work clothes including CSAapproved footwear.

In order to successfully complete the program, participants must also have a minimum Grade 12 education, be a mem-

ber of the OPA, the ORFA or the STA; maintain current WHMIS and Standard First Aid training; and have a minimum 24 months related practical work experience affirmed by an immediate supervisor.



All three courses will be offered in Guelph from Monday, April 27 to Thursday, April 30, 2009 and in Petawawa from Monday, September 28 to Thurday, October 1, 2009. For registration information, please visit www.orfa.com.

What is POSA?

The Parks and Open Space Alliance (POSA) is a coalition of the Ontario Parks Association, the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association and the Sports Turf Association dedicated to strengthening parks and open space practitioners through professional development, recognition and advocacy. For more information, please visit www.opassoc.on.ca, www.orfa.com, or www.sportsturfassociation.com.





STA Membership Plagues

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

Spring 2009 Submissions

If you have something you'd like to submit for the next issue, please forward it to the STA office by February 27, 2009.

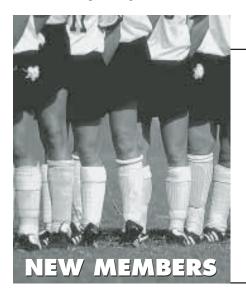
Editorial Content

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 Managers' Short Course Celebrates 40th Anniversary

he Turf Managers' Short Course (TMSC) at Guelph will celebrate its 40th year of offering top training to turf professionals. Management and staff can benefit from this program by attending the TMSC, being held at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute February 2 to 27, 2009. In this highly valued four-week certificate program, students will learn about a variety of issues facing today's professional turf manager. Sessions explore topics relating to soil, the value of irrigation, disease and pests, landscape and turf management practices and other helpful insight leading to superior turf care.

"The ongoing success and longevity of this certificate program is an indication of its importance to turf care in Canada and abroad," according to Rob Witherspoon, Director, Guelph Turfgrass Institute.



"The combined expertise of both industry and academic instructors makes the Turf Managers' Short Course a unique learning experience for individuals in the turf business," adds Steve Fleischauer. Manager, Program Development, Office of Open Learning, University of



Guelph. "Students can be assured that they are getting the most current science and turf techniques available."

Learn more about TMSC 2009 and its unique classroom experience by visiting www.open.uoguelph.ca/turfmanager or by calling 519.767.5000.

Welcome to the STA!

Paul Degli Angeli Latitude 67 Ltd. King City, ON

Ben Tymchyshyn MMM Group Limited Mississauga, ON

Steven Walsh Zander Sod Co. Limited Kettleby, ON

New Resource

Partners in Training Launches Innovative Website

Partners in Training and the Lifestyle Information Network would like to announce the launch of the Partners in Training website where recreation professionals can find all their training and professional development needs and where schools and training organizations can connect with their audience directly.

Partner organizations include the Sports Turf Association, Ontario Parks Association, Ontario Recreation Facilities Association, Parks and Recreation Ontario, the Canadian Red Cross, Lifesaving Society, Older Adult Centres Association of Ontario, Steps Canada and Therapeutic Recreation Ontario.

Our vision is to encourage the development of industry guidelines related to training that creates and maintains safe, enjoyable, good quality recreation environments.

As an individual, student or professional, the Partners in Training website is a great tool to access the specific training you need to achieve success in your field.

A Guideline for Training has also been created as a tool for training organizations and is available as a PDF file on the website.

Visit www.partnersintraining.ca and see how easy it is to search for your training needs. For more information, contact Amanda Street-Bishop at astreet-bishop@lin.ca.



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Seasons Greetings

from Lee & the Board of the Sports Turf Association

TURF... LIKE A FINE WINE?

Wine connoisseurs are noted for their unique and vibrant descriptions of fine wines. Having said that, have you ever wondered how turfgrass might be described if it were judged in somewhat the same manner?

Turfgrass Connoisseur Natural Turfgrass, 96-100 points "Provides a refreshing scent of nature combined with an earthy aroma that encircles the senses in a joyous celebration of environmental effervescence. Can be enjoyed throughout the day; be it in the early hours as dew enhances and brings out its inviting fragrance; midday with its cool-to-the-flesh approachability, or in the early evening when its lush and robust scent seems to cloak the air like a wondrous yet faint perfume that elevates the consciousness, the human spirit and the senses. The soft, subtle fragrance provides refreshing hints of childhood memories and memories yet to be."

– Jim Novak, Turfgrass Producers International E-Newsletter, Vol. 1 (5) Dec. 2008

STA PARTNERS WITH MSU TO INCREASE **FULL TEXT ACCESS TO TURF RESOURCES**

t its Annual General Meeting in February 2008, the STA announced the establishment of the Michael J. Bladon Educational Link to the Michigan State University's (MSU) Turfgrass Information File (TGIF). The blanket subscription provides an opportunity for the association to make the resources of the Turfgrass Information Center (TIC) available to its membership and, in addition, support the continued expansion of the content and availability of the Center's information.

make available to the public the complete back files of our Sports Turf Newsletter and Sports Turf Manager. Future issues will be accessible on the archive site six months after publication. In embarking on this project, scheduled for completion in 2009, we join the ranks of such publishers as the International Turfgrass Society, Sports Turf Research Institute, Sports Turf Managers Association, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, and the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association who, along with

MSU has the most comprehensive publicly available collection of turfgrass educational materials in the world. And the Sports Turf Manager is now part of this invaluable resource. STA members can access it via our website.

Access to the *full text* (not just abstracts) of research reports, periodicals and other management content can be challenging as most turf professionals don't live near a research library. This access is changing. The Turfgrass Information File, originally conceived to index and abstract the literature of turfgrass, has now taken dramatic steps to increase user access to the full text of articles. And the STA is on board.

The Sports Turf Association is partnering with MSU to digitize and

others, provide the more than 35% of linked full text articles in the TIC's primary database.

The Turfgrass Information Center contains the most comprehensive publicly available collection of turfgrass educational materials in the world. STA members can access this information via the Michael J. Bladon Educational Link. Login to www.sportsturfassocation.com and follow the link under the "Members Only" section.

LETTER

To President Gord Dol, Members of the Board of Directors, **Executive Manager Lee Huether and Fellow STA Members**

Thank you for the extraordinary gift of the Michael J. Bladon Link to the Michigan State University's Turfgrass Information File. There were many who played an important role in the formative years of the Sports Turf Association and to whom appreciation must be expressed. These include my wife Elaine and family for their administrative contributions, and the many members of past boards whose hard work and dedication has brought the association where today it plays an important role in the sports turf industry. I am pleased that the board has made this link available as an invaluable resource for those involved in turf for both present and future generations.

Sincerely Michael J. Bladon

OTS 2009. THE CHALLENGE OF GREEN.

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SPORTS TURF RELATED SESSIONS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

1:30-2:00. W6 GTI Soccer Fields: An Irrigation and Overseeding Case Study

Peter Purvis, Guelph Turfgrass Institute. The GTI developed two "mini" soccer fields for use by adult and under-10 players for Guelph Soccer. The partnership was so successful that full-sized fields will be developed in the upcoming season. Over-seeding and irrigation research conducted during the playing season will be presented. IPM 0.66.

2:00-3:00. W7 Rainwater Harvesting

Chris Davies, Bushman Water Products Canada. Learn the current state of the world's water supply and how it affects water in Canada. Explore the benefits, applications and uses of rainwater harvesting. IPM 1.33.

3:00-3:30. W8 Municipal Sports Field Closure Policies

Bob Kennedy, Sports Turf Management Solutions. Most Ontario municipal parks operations departments have an excellent relationship with sports communities. However, many of those same municipalities are overwhelmed by sports organizations, coaches, managers and parents who insist on using sports fields when turfgrass

is virtually unplayable due to inclement weather. This presentation explores policies that can be put in place by municipal councils to ensure that sports field usage is controlled by the municipality and not the sporting community. IPM 0.66.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19

9:00-9:30. T1 Construction of the 2010 International Athletic Association Federation Athletic Field in Moncton, NB

Dr. Robert Daniels, Nova Scotia Agricultural College. The City of Moncton, New Brunswick, has been awarded the 2010 International Athletic Association Federation (IAAF) track and field games. In order to host this event, the City is required to construct a facility to meet the specifications as set out by the IAAF. Learn about specifications, planning, construction, grow-in, and maintenance of the athletic fields during the period of initiation (Winter 2008) until the Summer 2010 games.

9:30-10:30. T2 Synthetic Turf: Facts Everyone Needs to Know

Mark Nicholls, Turf Industry. This presentation debunks myths surrounding synthetic turf by looking at the advantages and disadvantages of the product. Financial justification, warranty issues, maintenance strategies, usage audit and environmental impact details are all

discussed to allow for informed decisionmaking.

11:00-12:00. T3 Holistic Turf Management Program for Halifax Regional Municipality

Dr. Robert Daniels, Nova Scotia Agricultural College. The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) sports fields are in a pesticide free zone.

Turf can only be improved by using "best management practices" which excludes the use of pesticides. With an emphasis on recreational fields, a program has been developed and im-



plemented to improve and upgrade worker skills and the condition and playability.

There are also a number of informative plenary sessions:

- Economic Profile of the Turfgrass Industry in Ontario
- Alternative Products: What Works & What Doesn't
- Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act, 2008
- Turf Care Alternatives Round Table
- Understanding the Supervisory Role
- Water Symposium







HOLISTIC TURF MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN NOVA SCOTIA

DR. R.W. DANIELS, PROFESSOR (RETIRED), DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES, NOVA SCOTIA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

Continued From the Front Cover. Two other principles followed were to not get involved in personnel decisions, thus not recommending that changes be made in the number of employees involved in maintaining the fields, and to identify where efficiencies could be gained, rather than asking for increases in annual budgets. The first two years of this program have now been completed. Continuation and success of this program is due in large part to the support and efforts of Peter Verge, as during its initial phase, much groundwork had to be established, and visual results - which of course all end users wanted to see - were relatively nonexistent.

Early Inspection & Trouble Shooting

Prior to recommending a program, an on-site inspection and analysis was made of representative sports fields. One problem identified initially was the existence of a thick layer of organic matter on most fields. In its effort to eliminate pesticides, HRM had embarked on a heavy topdressing program using organic materials. This practice was very much in line with HRM's mandate of being "environmentally friendly." What those who recommended this program failed to foresee was the fact that unless the topdressing was incorporated adequately into the existing soil, a "layering" of the applied

media would be created. The result of this layering was the creation of shallow rooted plants that thrived well during non-stress periods but were damaged quickly whenever any stress occurred. This problem is being addressed by implementing a multiyear program of core aeration and topdressing with a soil based material.

Component 1: Procurement

The HRM program consists of three main components: Procurement, Employee Training and Field Trials. With respect to procurement, new specifications have been written on sourcing materials and for the construction of future athletic fields. In respect to materials, HRM is now using specific turf fertilizers, etc., and all materials are tendered in large quantities to take maximum advantage of purchasing power. The establishment of new specifications for sod means that only a certain quality of product is accepted and the lowest cost price is not the determining factor in accepting a specific bid. Using the latest specifications, a new soccer field was constructed in 2008. During the construction process, the quality of materials and workmanship were closely monitored and recorded. Upon completion, all involved will meet to evaluate the process and suggest ways in which future fields can be constructed to an even higher standard.

Component 2: Employee Training

HRM has approximately 80 full time employees involved in some level of turf management. Every employee was given a three day overview of turf and its basic maintenance requirements. From this group, approximately 50 were selected for additional training. They received six days of customized classroom based education on the yearly requirements of turf establishment and maintenance. A third level of training was offered to 30 individuals who were selected and classified as "Sports Field Technicians." Their responsibilities are varied but stipulate that they become competent in identifying and providing remedial action for specific turf situations and problems as they arise. These individuals received an additional three days of classroom training. Thereafter they will be given annual updates on turfgrass management.

For each educational level, participants were given a written exam. In addition, several on-site clinics were held. These included such practical tasks as measuring a field and determining the amount of fertilizer or seed to apply in a given situation. To selected groups, field clinics on equipment calibration, infield ball groom-

Above: George Bannerman, Bannerman Ltd., conducted a one day clinic to HRM staff on equipment set-up and calibraton.

ing and proper infield maintenance were offered. These clinics were presented by "experts" in their respective fields. George Bannerman, Bannerman Ltd., conducted a one day clinic on equipment set up and calibration and Ron Martin, Mar-Co Clay Products, conducted a day long clinic on baseball field layout, proper construction and seasonal maintenance of both the pitcher's mound and batter's box. Clinics were very "hands-on" and offered only to small groups of individuals so that maxiturfgrasses used on golf tees are now being established into HRM's athletic fields.

Component 3: Field Trials

Selected fields are chosen and specific treatments applied and evaluated for a minimum of three consecutive years. This time period is necessary to adequately evaluate the effect of a given treatment. Although this is only the second year of the program, some trends are appearing and subsequent changes are being imple-

For example, less money is being spent on sod and more on overseeding. The level of appearance and playability of all fields has increased greatly during the past two years. One measurement is the increased level of satisfaction by the end users and reduction in complaints by both athletes and the general public. Staff working on the fields have now taken a greater "ownership" of individual fields and their personal level of satisfaction of working for HRM has increased.

As the program develops, individual factors limiting its success become evident. One such issue is that of seasonal mowing. Some time ago, a political decision was made to contract out mowing of all turf, including athletic fields. When this was done, standards were set with which individual contractors must comply. When establishing these criteria, no provision was made for increasing mowing frequency or maintaining individual fields at lower heights of cut to improve their playability.

Most mowing contracts are awarded on a multi-year basis and changes can only be made when an individual contract comes up for review. In the meantime, the heavier usage of fertilizers on fields and infrequent mowing result in only a limited improvement in field playability. In some instances, HRM has taken responsibility for the seasonal mowing of selected fields. It is becoming recognized that in order to have consistent acceptable quality in their highest profile fields, mowing should become the responsibility of those directly responsible for the overall

HRM employees soon realized they had much in common with the golf course industry. They both manage turf, have to answer to a demanding end user, and their efforts are not always recognized and appreciated by the general public.

mum participation by all was achieved. Individuals were then asked to provide suggestions for future clinics.

Another area of education and training occurred when individuals visited the Glen Arbour Golf Course. HRM employees soon realized they had much in common with the golf course industry. They both manage turf, have to answer to a demanding end user, and their efforts are not always recognized and appreciated by the general public. One aspect of turf maintenance they discovered in common was the similar seasonal management of heavily used athletic fields and golf tees. As a result, intensively used areas on athletic fields will be treated in a manner similar to golf tees in terms of aeration, overseeding, fertilization, etc. Specific

mented. One of the most noticeable is the use of perennial ryegrass. With our milder winters and the introduction of more winter hardy varieties of perennial ryegrass, HRM has begun to use this species intensively. The municipality has purchased precision turf overseeders and are using perennial rye in overseeding existing fields. As a direct result, they now purchase less sod and are doing more "in house" overseeding. Those classified as sports field technicians are becoming more specialized with an "overseeding" team, "fertilizing" team, "aeration" team, etc.

Conclusions to Date

In many instances, this program has not resulted in increased budget demands, but rather a reallocation of existing monies.



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