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Currently we have 107 new & renewed members. In December 2007, SFMANJ mailed invoices for 2008 membership dues to all current members. If you did not receive an invoice, please contact us at 908-730-7770 or download the membership form available at www.sfmanj.org. Remember to mail your renewal/payment direct to SFMANJ, PO Box 370, Annandale, NJ 08801.

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(continued on page 4)

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This newsletter is the official bi-monthly publication of the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey.

For information regarding this newsletter, contact: SFMANJ at (908) 730-7770 or Brad Park at (732) 932-9711, x127

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SFMANJ does not necessarily support the opinions of those reflected in the following articles.

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MAKING THE EXPERIENCED OPERATORS OF TOMORROW

By Scott Beachy

hink about your starting day at your first job in this industry. You did not have any experience and never used any of what seemed like large equipment, whatever it was, dedicated mowers, sprayers, and tractors with different attachments or even loaders, backhoes or dump trucks. You were either one of two types: scared and unsure of yourself as far as running equipment or you were over confident and thought, "where are the keys?"

Now, jump ahead to today. Every year seems to bring one or two new employees to our department and at least half have no experience, yet they are still unsure and overconfident. So, how do you train them? First, I would check with your insurance company. Sometimes they will have training available that is at least partially relevant (usually the safety aspect) to the equipment you use. If not, ask them for any recommendations.

At our department, we do a blended program. We have employees attend classes and in-house training. Also, do not forget about continuous training. We try to send employees to some of these classes every one to three years to keep them safe and current. A lot of factors come into play when it comes to deciding when a person is ready to run a piece of equipment. It may be a time factor or if you have one, it may be a union issue. Once all the other issues involved have been satisfied, it is important to point out that you have to feel compfortable with an employee using a piece of equipment. I try to get through these issues to get at least one training session done as early as possible. I find that once a person starts to learn the controls and operation of a piece of equipment while watching other operators they will be able to learn a lot faster, They will ask themselves, "How is that done?" and pay close attention to that particular operation. They will pick-up on things that they would not have without that first training.

The first thing I say to a new trainee is, "This

is the most important thing I am going to tell you." Then, I say slowly and clearly, "TAKE YOUR TIME." That also means when you train someone make sure you have plenty of time and are not in a rush. You want to give this person a sense that he/she has all day. I start by explaining the controls and what they do. I also strongly encourage them to ask questions. When I am done explaining something I ask them if they understand and have them repeat back to me the functions of those particular controls. I give them an open area where they cannot do any damage or hurt anyone. I have them perform one function at a time and if I seem them doing something wrong I will stop them right away to prevent them from forming any bad habits. If it is a complex piece of equipment I may only teach them a portion of the equipment's operation. Once they are comfortable with that, I will teach them the remaining portion.

We never put a maximum on the number of training sessions. We always want to do a minimum, but are willing to do more. Even if I think they are ready I will want them to feel comfortable and vice versa. Again, I do not want them to feel rushed in any way because being rushed is how accidents happen.

Finally, when they start using the equipment on their own, do not give them jobs that precision or speed are necessary. That is what your experienced operators are for. Let them get enough time under their belt before expecting these things out of them. After all, **experience is the best teacher**.

Scott Beachy is Crew Chief, Department of Public Works, Township of Millstone, NJ.



Dr. Henry W. Indyk **Graduate Fellowship** in Turfgrass Science

As many of you know, the turfgrass industry lost a dear friend and colleague in September 2005. We will all miss Henry very much and would like to insure that his legacy lives on. The Indyk family would like to establish a memorial fellowship to support graduate students interested in applied turfgrass science. This fellowship is being created to help assure that tomorrow's graduate students have the financial resources to get an advanced degree in turfgrass science at Rutgers University. To fund a full graduate assistantship each year in Henry's name, we will need to raise a total of \$400,000. Your generous support at this time will bring us closer to reaching this goal.

To make a tax-deductible contribution today, please send a check payable to the Rutgers University Foundation, 7 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901. Be sure to indicate "Indyk Fellowship, Turfgrass" in the memo portion of your check. If you desire, you may provide a donation in the form of a pledge payable over several years.

For information on other ways to support this fellowship, please contact Dr. Bruce B. Clarke, Director - Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science (732-932-9400, ext. 331; or clarke@aesop.rutgers.edu) or John Pearson, Director of Leadership Gifts at the Foundation, by calling (732) 932-7899 or email: pearson@winants.rutgers.edu

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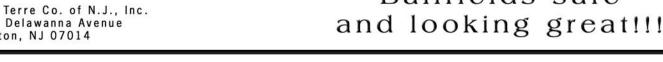
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Always Consider the Environment

By Jim Hermann, CSFM

As students of the turf industry we try to read as many articles as we can find on the subject of turf management. We use the information we receive from these articles to help formulate the management programs we implement on the fields we maintain. These articles often times include topics such as aeration technique, selection of topdressing materials, yearly maintenance programs, athletic field renovation etc.

When you evaluate an article, always make sure you consider the similarities and differences in the environment of the field you are reading about and the environment of your own field.

I trust that many of you have found your selves in the following situation. You are trying to decide how to deal with a problem on your field. Not having had personal experience with this particular problem, you base your decision on an article that was written about a similar situation, or so it would seem.

Let's assume your soccer field is constructed on heavy textured native soil. The chemical soil analysis has determined that you have an acceptable pH of 6.5 along with adequate amounts of available phosphorous (P) and potassium (K).

It's September and the soccer league is tearing your field up and you're in a quandary over what to do first. You go to your mailbox and what do you find but the new issue of *Sportsturf*. By sheer coincidence the main article is written about how some facilities management company maintains a world-class soccer field. After you finish reading the article, you commit to a fertilizer program consisting of 8.0 lbs of nitrogen (N) a year along with an obscene amount of P and K and micronutrients you never heard of before. In addition to this you purchase a trailer load of sand from the local supply house to use as a topdressing material. What's wrong with this picture?

The field you are reading about is more than likely constructed on a sand-based root zone. Water is most certainly supplied by an automatic irrigation system. It is more than likely mowed every other day with a reel mower. It has a slit drainage system, and employs a maintenance crew the size of a small town.

Sand-based root zones have notoriously low water and nutrient holding capacity as compared to heavy textured root zones. A more complete and intensive fertilizer program typically including micronutrients is necessary to supply the turf with what it needs. Nutrients are typically supplied at lower rates and at more frequent intervals than are most heavy textured native soil New Jersey fields.

The sand-based topdressing is supplied with a sieve analysis "compatible" (the key word when discussing topdressing) with the root zone.

Although sand may be indicated as a topdressing material for many fields, its use should never be contemplated without first consulting an agronomist well versed in soil science. The risk of causing more harm than good is extremely high.

If the environment of the field you are reading about differs greatly from your own, the maintenance program is going to differ from your own.

As you enter into decisions concerning maintenance and renovation procedures of your sports turf always ask yourself this question, what am I trying to accomplish? Here is an example. Modification of heavy textured soil with sand is often times recommended as a means of increasing the drainage qualities. What many fail to realize is that in order for drainage to occur, their needs to be a place for the water to go. If your field is not equipped with underground drainage, this procedure may not work.

Whenever making maintenance decisions, "always consider the environment".

Jim Hermann, is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM);

President, Total Control Inc. and member of the

SFMANJ Board of Directors.

DID YOU KNOW?

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Understanding Synthetic Fields

March 6, 2008

Rutgers University - Office of Continuing Professional Education New Brunswick, N.I

732-932-9271 • www.cookce.rutgers.edu

Baseball/Softball Infield Skin Construction and Management

March 12, 2008

Rutgers University - Office of Continuing Professional Education New Brunswick, N,J

732-932-9271 • www.cookce.rutgers.edu

Sports Field Management Workshop

April 16, 2008

New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station/Rutgers Cooperative Extension Weequahic Park, Newark, N,J

973-228-2210 • email: zientek@njaes.rutgers.edu

2008 Rutgers Turfgrass Research Golf Classic

May 5, 2008

New Jersey Turfgrass Association and Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science Fiddler's Elbow Country Club, Bedminster, NJ (973) 812-6467 www.njturfgrass.org

2008 Rutgers Golf and Fine Turf Research Field Day

July 29, 2008

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July 30, 2008

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