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Continued on page 4

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This newsletter is the official quarterly publication of the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey.

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

New and Renewed SFMANJ Members

Continued from page 3

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Plan to send in your entry for

SFMANJ

Field of the Year Contest 2011

Among other things, the winner will also receive a stay at the Trump Taj Mahal, Atlantic City and free registration to the education courses and trade show at Expo 2011.

See page 14 for details



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A Message from The President

Why SFMANJ Opposes the “Safe Playing Fields Act”

By Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

I was not expecting the phone call on Monday, January 31. Nancy Sadlon, Executive Director, New Jersey Green Industry Council (NJGIC) called me at work with news that New Jersey State Senate Bill S.2610, the so-called “Safe Playing Fields Act”, was moving through committee. This Bill, if enacted into law would ban the use of lawn care pesticides on sports fields in New Jersey, unless the application can be justified as an emergency response to an immediate threat to human health. Because we are an organization of sports field managers and would be directly affected by the outcome should this Bill pass into law, Ms. Sadlon requested the help of Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ).

Over the past 5 years, SFMANJ has tried to remain apolitical. Our mission is and has always been enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers. Our primary goals include improving safety, playability, and appearance of athletic fields at all levels. Since our inception in 2000, SFMANJ members have had the opportunity to achieve these goals through seminars, field days, publications, and networking with those in the sports turf industry. After some thought and discussion, the SFMANJ Board of Directors agreed to lend our support to NJGIC in opposing this Bill. I would like to share with you our reasons.

Safety - The goal of sports field management is to provide a safe and playable surface. Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey has always been an advocate of good cultural management and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) on sports fields. We also acknowledge that the careful, restrained use of pesticides can be a component of a site-specific sports field management plan. Sports fields are subjected to many stresses—some made by people, some are caused by nature. Sports field managers are expected (by the people we serve) to do everything possible to keep sports fields safe and playable. In order to meet these expectations, we need all of the tools available to get the job done – including conventional pesticide products. If the Safe Playing Fields Act is enacted, some of our most effective tools will be taken away.

New Jersey School IPM Law - New Jersey already has in-place a School IPM Law. Should the use of a non-low impact pesticide become necessary, there is a well-defined protocol that must be followed before such a product can be used. The current Law requires having an IPM coordinator and IPM plan, NJ DEP Category 13 pesticide licensing, 72 hour notification, preferential use of low impact pesticides, 7-hour reentry period, and stringent record keeping. Applying a traditional pesticide in accordance with the NJ School IPM Law provides transparency

through its notification requirements and added security against potential exposure through a mandatory reentry period. The Safe Playing Fields Act, if enacted would virtually eliminate traditional pesticide use; applications that are already subject to a well-defined, well-regulated protocol in Schools.

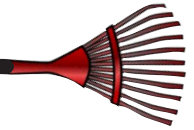
Economic Realities - A carefully planned, conventional pesticide application, in full-compliance with US EPA registered pesticide label requirements and NJ School IPM rules can provide maximum cost benefits. The application of conventional pesticide can be used to solve turf health problems quickly and effectively. Taking no action or using less-effective products may result in field loss, subsequent costly field replacement and a substantial loss of field space for use by children and parents. If we do not protect sports field surfaces from natural or manmade damage, we risk having to spend considerable taxpayer money to replace or repair sports field damage caused by pests. Currently, many New Jersey Schools and municipalities are cutting expenses by eliminating positions and programs. This is not the time to remove tools from the toolbox.

The NJGIC is a very effective watchdog group looking out for the interests of New Jersey’s Green Industry. As previously mentioned, NJGIC alerted SFMANJ to this bill and has asked for comments and participation from our Association. In contrast, those organizations supporting and lobbying for the passage of this Bill have not reached-out to SFMANJ for our opinion on this Bill; our Association being the leading Industry trade organization representing sports field managers in New Jersey. Without the efforts of NJGIC, issues affecting our Industry (and our livelihoods) could go forward in Trenton with upsetting results. The NJGIC has asked for our support, and SFMANJ has stepped-up. Several of our members have attended meetings with legislators, written letters and testified at hearings. At the March 2, 2011 SFMANJ Board of Directors meeting, our Board agreed unanimously to make a \$1,000 contribution to NJGIC with the stipulation that the contribution be used to help offset operating expenses.

In the end, our endeavor is to continue to create the safest playing conditions for all of New Jersey’s sports field users.

Don Savard is a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) and Certified Grounds Manager (CGM); Director, Athletic Facilities and Grounds, Salesianum School; and President, SFMANJ.

GROUNDS CARE BY THE ATHLETE



By James Cornelius, CSFM

Education is the root of world. We now have computers that spell check our work - long gone are the dictionaries, encyclopedias and all those research manuals. The world of robotics has replaced human hands in many aspects of the manufacturing world. Yet when it comes to grounds/athletic field care, you still find that some of the best ways are the traditional ways (human power with manual tools). Yes, we have machines that help with the larger tasks and we use these as tools the way they were meant to be used; and sometimes in ways the manufacturers never intended. Yet in few places have machines replaced human power to provide the athletic facilities to the high degree of quality that we can. By and large, the industry has not changed all that much, even though we have a better selection of turfgrasses, artificial surfacing, soil analysis, topdressings, research materials, soil amendments, etc. to aide us in meeting the challenge we face every day: To provide better and safer facilities with aesthetics that are second to none.

Looking back, things have changed. Teams rarely bring out the big water jug, now replaced with individual water bottles that need recycling cans to collect them all. Most seem to find the ground long before being placed in the proper can. Trash is prolific and seems to multiply over night; still the trash can remains in-place. The holes on the mound, around home plate, in the infield, as well as the outfield become larger, deeper and if ignored, will continue to grow to mammoth size. The grass continues to grow and we struggle to keep it mowed at an acceptable height, all the while continuing to feed it with fertilizers, topdressings and additional seed to grow more grass. At this rate, frustration can set in quickly and if not dealt with in a manner that becomes positive, can lead to running oneself out of a job, or working in an endless circle that never changes much like being jobless and not looking for one.

At last there is hope. We have opened our ears and instituted a different approach to our problems. We now have athletes doing

grounds maintenance as part of their education and athletic experience on our sites. Instead of coming to work with built up frustration, we now come to execute a task. We finish what was started. We plant seeds, not only turfgrass seed but educational seeds. We now work outside the box on most occasions.

We still only have five employed in the athletic field maintenance department yet our team has grown to more than we expected. The best part is the majority of the athletes work for the ability to use our facilities. Puzzled, are you? Here is how we do it and how we got to this part of our journey.

With our frustration at an all time high, the district was renovating two high schools and building a third. Our athletic field numbers were growing, yet the staff count was not. It became time to turn things around. The district soon realized that with the athletic numbers growing and the dollars being spent needing to be protected, they formed a committee of administrators, teachers, students, public representatives, facility staff and many others to work on developing an Athletic Strategic Plan for the High School Athletic program. Nothing was overlooked. They covered everything from student safety and conduct to maintenance of the fields, indoor athletic facilities, etc. Having the privileged to be part of this committee and a voice of concern, we were able to institute an evaluation tool that we revised from information generated by Dr. Dr. Dave Minner at Iowa State University and many others Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) and Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization (KAFMO). We developed a

Continued on page 15

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TORPEY Athletic Complex Baseball Field

Wins SFMANJ Field of the Year for 2010

Continued from page 1

School, he admittedly didn't have much experience. However, as most successful sports field managers do, Jeff enlisted the help of local turf experts. Jeff took advantage of many educational opportunities to continue learning about sports field and turf management.

Director of Facilities, Peter Galosi, praised Jeff for his efforts and accompanied him to the annual meeting to accept his award as 2010 Field of the Year runner up.

Head Groundskeeper, David Kuscynski, through tireless dedication, has transformed the Torpey Athletic Complex Baseball Field into one the best in the state. Despite many constraints maintaining a public park, David has found a way to improve both the safety and playability of the fields. In addition to one lighted baseball field and one lighted softball field, the Torpey Complex now has a lighted all-purpose synthetic field. From April until late October, the ballfields are in use 7 days a week, sometimes hosting 3-4 games or practices.

Dave began his sports field career as an employee of the Somerset Patriots and credits both Ray Cipperly and Dan Purner with helping him hone his skills. While at TD Bank Ballpark, Dave learned both pre-game and post-game maintenance techniques. Dave has brought those skills to the Torpey baseball field.

Unlike many groundskeepers, Dave performs much of the infield grooming by hand. After every game or practice, he makes sure all displaced infield mix is swept out of the grass. He also varies his grooming patterns on a weekly basis to prevent lip build up.

In the past two years, Dave has re-built the pitcher's mound with clay, amended the existing infield mix and re-sodded areas along the infield. Perhaps the most impressive improvement is in the outfield. When Dave took over the complex, the outfield turf was thin and choppy. Through improved cultural practices, consistent overseeding and a comprehensive fertility program the turf is now thick and attractive. Dave varies the cutting height based on the time of year and scheduled usage.

SFMANJ would like to congratulate Dave and the Somerset County Park Commission for being the 2010 Field of the Year winner.

In recognition of this honor, SFMANJ is holding a Spring Field Day at Torpey Athletic Complex on **April 20, 2011**. During the morning we will tour the facility and have Dave provide some insight as to his secrets, including a hands-on clinic covering pre and post-game field maintenance. The day will continue with a tour of the TD Bank Ballpark, Bridgewater, NJ, home of the Somerset Patriots Atlantic League baseball team. We will tour the field with head groundskeeper, Dan Purner, plus have an educational session for pesticide credits.

Look for more information in this issue of SFMANJ *Update* on the front cover and at www.sfmanj.org.

*Scott Bills, CSFM is Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM);
and Secretary, SFMANJ Board of Directors*

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TOURNAMENT TIME **A Groundskeeper's Account of Preparation for a Baseball Tournament**

by Rich Watson

Editor's Note: This article 1st appeared in the July/August 2006 edition of SFMANJ Update

Hosting a tournament is a lot of work, however it is a good opportunity to showcase your facility. There will be people seeing your field for the first time, so make them remember it for the right reasons. We were informed this year that we would be one of three sites hosting the 33rd Annual Joe Hartman Diamond Classic. The tournament brings together the top 16 baseball teams in South Jersey. On May 13, 2006 Overbrook High School hosted two games, but the preparation started weeks earlier.

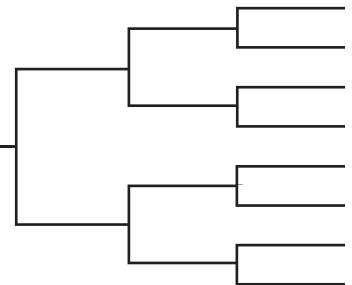
The call informing us about the tournament came in mid-April, so we had a good amount of time to prepare. First, we checked our baseball team's schedule for possible conflicts. Next was to check our field maintenance program. As luck would have it, a fertilizer application was scheduled the week before the tournament as well as spraying Roundup on our skinned areas. Timing is everything. The grass looked great and our skinned areas were free of weeds.

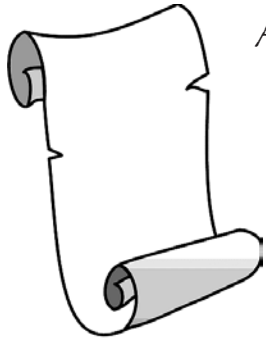
With two weeks to go, we started cutting-in our pattern for the games. We cut the outfield in three directions at 2 inches every other day. The

infield was cut in two directions at 1½-inch every other day. We use an Exmark Lazer Zero Turn mower (with a striping kit) to cut our outfield and an Exmark walk-behind mower for the infield. Sharp blades are very important, so we change them at least once a week.

The week of the tournament was very challenging. We had two games of our own in addition to the final prep for the big games. The day before the tournament is very important. We tried to do as many things as possible to make game day a little easier. Bullpen mounds were repaired, extra bleachers were moved, trash cans emptied, the infield was edged, and a sound check was done on the sound system. We made final cuts on the infield and outfield because there is no time the day of the games. Our mound and home plate areas are made of Hilltopper mound clay. Both areas were repaired and covered. The infield was scarified, graded smooth, and then lightly rolled. The automatic irrigation system was used to wet down the infield at night, setting the stage for game day.

Continued on page 18





An SFMANJ Member's Prepared Testimony Concerning New Jersey's Proposed "Safe Playing Fields Act"

The following was prepared and read by Rich Watson, Grounds Supervisor, Pine Hill Public Schools and SFMANJ Board of Directors, at the New Jersey State Assembly Environmental and Solid Waste Committee Hearing in Trenton, NJ on Thursday, February 10, 2011.

Good afternoon ladies and gentleman.

My name is Rich Watson. I am the Grounds Supervisor for the Pine Hill School District in Southern New Jersey. It is a privilege for me to be here. The issue of safe playing fields is an important issue to all of us here today. It is important to me because I have three daughters, two of which play sports. One daughter plays on fields that have little or no maintenance performed on them, while the other plays on well maintained fields. Both sites are considered sports fields. One is safe the other is not. The unsafe field is at a local school and it amazes me that they let kids play on it. The other field is a municipal field. It is well maintained and plays great. This is where the real safety issues on sports fields are. Pesticides didn't cause one field to be unsafe and the other safe. They are a small part of a complete turf program that is the key to safe fields.

I am here today to talk about our sports turf program in Pine Hill. If you pull up to any of our buildings you will be disappointed in the condition of our grass. These lawns are covered with weeds and crabgrass. We as a district are ok with that. Our kids who compete in athletics or take part in gym class play on well maintained natural turf playing surfaces. Together we have decided to put our focus where the kids actually play and compete. We have a 40 year old facility that is in need of cosmetic attention, but we have some of the best playing fields in NJ. So, how did we do it?

The development of a Sports Turf IPM program took shape. We have taken the guidelines set up by the School IPM Law and fit our sports turf program inside. It was not easy at first. I struggled with the additional notifications and had doubts about if it would work at all. It took a lot of hard work, but over time we developed a program that not only worked, it exceeded my expectations. Here is how we did it.

The first thing was to develop a field history for each individual field. Then problem areas were identified and pest thresholds were set. Next, we took a look at what had been done in the past to determine what worked and what needed to be changed. What we discovered was that cultural practices are the backbone of our turf program. They include: Mowing frequency/

mowing height, aeration, fertility with soil testing, seeding during our sports seasons, and proper irrigation. These are the building blocks for our fields.

I know by now you are wondering how we deal with pest issues. In a school district costs are always a concern. Our supply budget has been cut and most likely will not be going up any time soon. The cost for our pest control on our athletic fields this year was \$1,425. That included three granular applications and two spray applications. Just for the record, one application was made during Spring break with notification and the others were all made during the summer also with notification. No children were on the property at the time of applications and fields were closed until the re-entry period had expired. All applications were made because the pest threshold set in our IPM program had been exceeded. Before these applications were made, we considered other low-impact /biological options. I understand there is a lot of talk about alternatives to chemical lawn management that work and are cost effective. I don't think we are there yet. I think we need to compare apples to apples. Corn gluten for example, is an accepted organic weed control product. Corn gluten costs \$29.95 per bag and covers 1,000 square ft. (at the lowest rate) The average football field is 66,000 square ft. In order to apply pre-emergent weed control for this field, it will cost \$1,976.70 for 66 bags. That is one application on one field at the products lowest rate. That is not cost effective in my book.

Nematodes have been suggested to replace insecticides. I have never used them, but I understand that they are difficult to work with, since they are a living organism. The cost for nematodes is \$200 per acre plus shipping. Compared to Merit at less than \$100 per acre, there really is no cost comparison. If I believed that nematodes would work in large scale applications, I would consider trying them. However, the cost and Dr. Koppenhoffer of Rutgers recommendation that they are not a good choice for sports fields has steered me away from them. I am not against any of these or other organic products. I just don't feel at this time with the current budget crisis and lack of unbiased research, we can use these products. Hopefully in the future the cost will come down in price and there will be a realistic way to use them in large scale applications.

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RUTGERS STUDENT RECAP....

By Justin Sadowski and Jeffrey Antoniewicz

First of all, we would like to thank Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA), Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ), Rutgers University, and the Rutgers Turf Club for making our trip to Austin, TX possible. Without these supporters, we would not have had such an opportunity.

The STMA Conference in Austin was one of the most incredible experiences of our lives. We came down to participate in the Student Challenge, attend the trade show, and hopefully meet and talk to some of the best in the business. We left with a feeling of satisfaction and reassurance that we wanted to be a part of the sports turf industry during our careers.



The Rutgers Student Challenge Participants received a tour of the Toro Booth during the trade show at STMA in Austin, TX. (l-r) Jeff Antoniewicz, Eric O'Toole, Kevin Rundstrom, and Justin Sadowski, Rutgers Undergraduate Students; Brad Park, Rutgers and Editor, SFMANJ Update; Jill Dunning-Harris, The Toro Company; Jim Heinze, The Toro Company.

The first day was a day to get acclimated. In the convention center, there was a meet-and-greet for students, where the proctor asked us some questions, and then students participated in an open-floor discussion on various topics, ranging from turf management techniques to simply talking about our individual goals.

One aspect that separates this conference from most other conferences was the STMA members at the welcoming dinner who talked with us students. These people welcomed us, asked us a little bit about ourselves, and asked us if there was anyone in particular that we wanted to meet. We thought this was one of the more unique portions because it gave students a networking opportunity that some of us have never had. Just having a chance to talk with some of these STMA members was rewarding because they offered us advice and wanted to know what

was important to us. It was a great thing to see them take an interest in each of us.

The trade show was interesting. In size, it was not as large as some other trade shows, but we feel like this was an advantage to the students. The vendors at STMA were very willing to talk to us at all times, gauging our interests. They did not seem to care whether we were currently in a position to purchase their products; rather they were interested in what we were looking to do, and were very enthusiastic in answering all of our questions. Having a slightly smaller trade show allowed for more personal contact for all.

We were given a personal tour of the Toro booth on the trade show floor where we were introduced to new and innovative products that the Toro Company has to offer. This included, but was not limited to their computer control systems, mowers, utility equipment, and sprayer technologies.

We sat-in on Weather 101 with Brad Jakubowski for a half hour before attending a series of three student sessions. The talks directed towards student attendees were great. The first was, "So You Want to be an NFL Sports Field Manager?" with Mr. Darian Daily, Head Groundskeeper for the Cincinnati Bengals. The second talk was "Field Maintenance is Only a Third of Your Job" delivered by Ms. Amy Fouty, CSFM, and Director of Grounds at Michigan State. The final session was "25 Years as a Sports Turf Manager - What I Wish I Had Known" from Bob Campbell, CSFM, and former Director of Grounds for the University of Tennessee. These three unique talks all focused on different challenges posed sports field managers, but the underlying theme was the important of family and maintaining a healthy relationship with family and friends outside of the workplace.

The awards banquet was a night to remember. We could all feel the vibe and unity of STMA within the walls of the banquet hall. Each award winner, regardless of the award, had a lot of pride and prestige. Our favorite part of the banquet was the slide show at the end. We thought that we were going to see pictures of groundskeepers and sports field managers in action. Instead, it was a compilation of photos of sports field managers and their families, nailing home the main message that no matter what we decide to do in life, we need to make time for our families and friends. We thought this was a great message for students, and was a great ending to a phenomenal conference. We cannot wait to attend the 2012 STMA Conference in Long Beach, California.

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