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Welcome! New and Renewed SFMANJ Members

Currently we have 218 new and renewed members. In January 2011, SFMANJ mailed invoices for 2011 membership dues to all current members. If you did not receive an invoice, please contact us at 856.514.3179 or download the membership form available at www.sfmanj.org. Mail membership dues direct to SFMANJ, PO Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070.

Earl Cocchi Morris Twp Parks and Rec
Rich Gervasio Morris Twp Parks and Rec
Keith Starache.....Brickman Group
Charles Steel..... Lindwood Board of Education



2012 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

STMA Annual Conference
January 10-14, 2012
Sports Turf Mgrs. Assoc.
Long Beach, CA
1.800.323.3875
www.stma.org

Rutgers NJAES OCPE Athletic Field Courses

Athletic Field Maintenance
February 14-15, 2012
Reduced Pesticide Inputs and Organic Options
for Sports Turf
February 21, 2012
Baseball and Softball Skin Surface Selection
and Management course
February 22, 2012
Rutgers' Cook Campus
New Brunswick, NJ
732.932.9271
www.cpe.rutgers.edu

NJ Recreation and Parks Association Conference
March 4-7, 2012
Atlantic City, NJ
732.568.1270
www.njrpa.org

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MISSION STATEMENT

Committed to enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers by improving the safety, playability and appearance of athletic fields at all levels through seminars, field days, publications and networking with those in the sports turf industry.

Contact us at:

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Sports Turf Managers Association

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This newsletter is the official quarterly publication of the
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SFMANJ does not necessarily support the opinions of those reflected in the following articles.

MANAGEMENT OF CANADA GEESE AT



Bank BALLPARK

By Dan Turner

A golf course superintendent recently asked me what the number one pest problem is that we face at TD Bank Ballpark. They probably expected to hear a response of some turf disease or insect problem but the greatest pest we face is the damage caused by *Branta canadensis* or Canada geese. Whereas a turf disease can be treated with a one-time solution such as a spray application or aeration, geese become an every day problem that continues for months. When left unchecked, geese will eat turf down to the crowns, dig holes in the ground and leave behind a large amount of waste. As a result, turf quality for early spring games is greatly reduced and may also cause health concerns for both athletes and employees on the field. Additionally, fertilizing the turf to recover from the Canada geese damage leads to excess growth in late spring and an increase in high nitrogen diseases such as leaf spot and summer patch. During the baseball season they do not pose a threat since we have events on the field most days, but when activities stop from late fall to early spring they become a problem. One of our challenges is that they feed at dusk and dawn so we never see them, only the damage to the turf they leave behind. We also have found that on weekends when there are no cars in the parking lots both the number of geese that feed and the duration of time they are there increases significantly. This meant that we needed to come up with a solution that would control them even when we were not present.

Over the past few years we have tried several different approaches with limited success; however, now have a system that provides good control. The main thing we do is set up a grid pattern on the field after the last mowing using rebar and string lines so that it is difficult for them to land and walk around. Geese require a large space to land and fly since they need a running start. Though this might not be practical with multiple fields, it may be possible to grid a baseball infield or any high profile areas where you have zero tolerance for them. We set our string lines about 18" off the ground and use a zigzag pattern to break up the space. We also have a Goose Buster machine from Bird-X that makes geese distress calls, gunshots, and coyote sounds based off of a timer. We set it for dusk and dawn on weekends when we are not at

the stadium. One key to audio deterrents is to use them on an infrequent basis so the geese do not become accustomed to it. We do use lifelike coyotes and foxes on the field that we will move around but have found that without the string lines, the geese will get used to them and actually will feed more often in those areas where you have them positioned. I will also make random visits to the field to monitor their activity and chase them out. This is useful when they first start feeding because they are easily moved at that point. Once they become established they are much harder to scare-off. Though this may mean a few early morning or weekend visits, I prefer that to spending a full day cleaning up after them for the first game. Finally, when we do get to our games in March, since we will have to remove all of the string lines, coyotes, etc., we will run



Continued on page 16

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Perspective on 2011

By Brad Park

& Looking Ahead to 2012

Late fall marks the end of the fall sports season (and hopefully a needed break for many sports fields), the Detroit Lions and Dallas Cowboys playing home games on Thanksgiving, the annual New Jersey Green Expo in Atlantic City, and some much-needed downtime that many of us are afforded between Christmas and New Years.

It's also a time to look back on 2011 and to peer forward into 2012.

The year got-off to quick start on the legislative front with the passage of the 2011 New Jersey Fertilizer Law. Praised by some as the 'toughest set of laws regulating fertilizer in the Nation', elements of the law went into effect upon the legislation's passage including blackout dates restricting fertilizer applications and language requiring spills to be cleaned-up on impervious surfaces. In 2012, professional fertilizer applicators will require certification (there is also a provision for 'trained' applicators), nitrogen rates will be restricted, and the application of phosphorous will be limited to locations where soil testing indicates it is necessary or where turf is being established or repaired.

A potential unintended consequence of this new Law is the termination of existing fertilization programs due to certification requirements, uncertainty over annual and per application nitrogen limits, blackout dates, and other specifics contained in the Law. This Law should **NOT** serve as a reason to stop fertilizing sports fields and grounds. Log on to <http://profact.rutgers.edu>, read the educational modules, re-refresh what you already know about turfgrass fertilization, take the certification test, and **PUT IT ON YOUR RESUME** that you have attained this certification. In addition to my Commercial Pesticide Applicator License, I will become a Certified Professional Fertilizer Applicator – after I pass the test ...

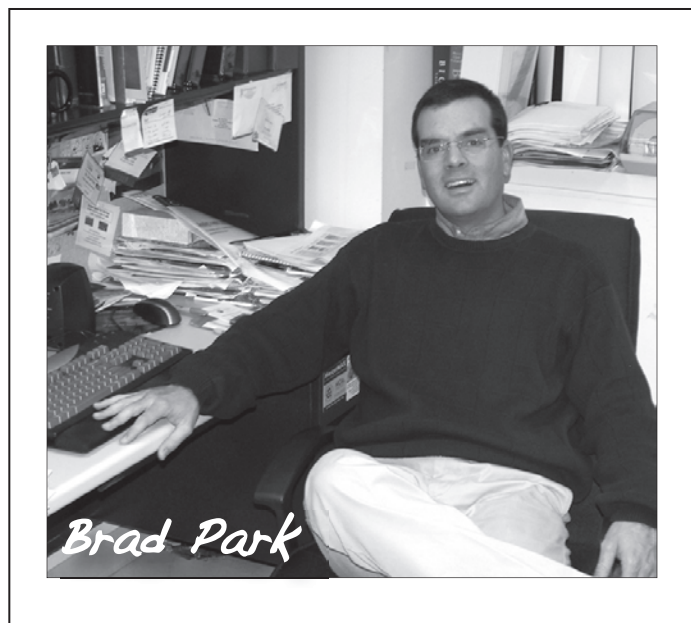
The Safe Playing Fields Act was introduced in both chambers of the New Jersey State Legislature and will, if signed into Law in its current form, ban the use of synthetic pesticides on the grounds of child care centers, schools and sports fields in municipal, county and State Parks. Exceptions will be made in cases where it is deemed that there is an immediate threat to human health.

Passage of the Safe Playing Fields Act **will** affect how sports field surfaces are managed in the State of New Jersey. The removal of conventional pesticides for control of white grubs and summer annual weeds such as crabgrass and knotweed will present a significant challenge for sports field managers working in public arenas such as schools, municipalities, and counties.

Issues Not Going Away Anytime Soon: The dilemma of what to do with aging synthetic fields in New York City was featured prominently in a *SportsTurf Insider* email blast dated November 9, 2011. Provocatively titled, *NYC's synthetic turf gamble: a \$300M mistake?* the article stated that, "over the past 12 years New York City has borrowed an estimated \$300 million to put 204 artificial-turf fields at parks, schools and playgrounds."

Furthermore, "relentlessly pitched as a financial boon, plastic grass has turned into a pricey time bomb. As more fields hit the end of their useful lives, the city faces the prospect—and increased expense—of reconstructing them. The price of new turf fields to replace the current, damaged ones is rising. And installing a new turf field requires the expensive task of disposing off the old one—meaning the shift to turf may have been a costly gamble."

Lastly, the article indicated that, "in a random survey of 56 artificial fields this summer ... 25, or 46 percent, [are] in serious state of disrepair, with gaps, tears and holes forming obvious trip hazards. At least 14 fields had minor damage, but without fixes, their defects are sure to grow worse."



Brad Park, Rutgers University, was elected to the SFMANJ Board of Directors in 2003 and has served as Editor of SFMANJ Update beginning with publication of the November/December 2005 issue.

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How to Write Like a Pro

Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Editorial Staff*



O.K., so you don't like to write and you didn't go to turf school to focus on writing. However, good written communication skills are critical to your job success. Being able to communicate well in writing can help you in a myriad of ways. A well-written memo can persuade your employer to authorize budget dollars for products, equipment, personnel and training. Or, an e-mail that confirms your understanding of a discussion with a coach or athletic director can make the difference between success and failure.

Effective written communication in the workplace will position you as a professional to your peers, your employer and your staff. To extend that recognition to a broader audience, consider writing articles for your chapter newsletter, regional turf publication or the STMA SPORTSTURF Magazine. You have excellent experiences to share about your work and help others learn. Use these five easy tips to help you put together the right message for strong writing.

5 Tips to Write it Right

1. Use the three "S" structure. Keep your sentences Simple, Short and Succinct. Shorter sentences are easier to read and understand.
2. Use "Active" voice rather than passive. Better - Ex: Our field management program uses IPM to provide healthy turf and safe playing conditions. Not as good: Ex: IPM was used as a management program to provide healthy turf and safe playing conditions.
3. When possible, use "Action" verbs, which communicate authority, a solution orientation, and allow you to highlight accomplishments. 40 verbs for stronger writing include : Accomplish, Achieve, Advise, Analyze, Complete, Control, Create, Conduct, Design, Develop, Direct, Evaluate, Execute, Facilitate, Generate, Identify, Implement, Improve, Increase, Innovate, Introduce, Launch, Manage, Monitor, Negotiate, Organized, Overhaul, Plan, Prepare, Prioritize, Recommend, Research, Resolve, Restructure, Specify, Streamline, Strengthen, Supervise, Train, Upgrade.

4. Write down the three specific messages you want to communicate through your writing at the top of your document. Three is a magic number. People can remember and comprehend messages and ideas in groups of three. Make certain that each sentence you write supports one of the messages, and that you are not including miscellaneous, non essential information. Be sure to delete your outline before you send your document.
5. Set your memo, article or other written communication aside for at least an hour -- a day if possible. Go back and reread it to catch errors in spelling and grammar and rework weak sentences.

* Sports Turf Managers Association,
Lawrence, KS

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Me?

A Certified Sports Field Manager?

Don Savard, CSFM, CGM

Ross Kurcab, turf manager for the Denver Broncos INVESCO Field at Mile High Stadium became the first Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) in 2000. Since then, over 136 sports field managers have become members of this select group. Thousands of associations utilize professional certification programs to recognize individuals for their dedication to their chosen career and their ability to perform to set standards. Ask a certified professional "why?" and many of them will tell you that the certification process is one of the single most important steps they made in career development. Certification demonstrates that successful job applicants have the knowledge to deliver safe, playable and attractive sports fields. It also demonstrates to employers a significant commitment to career and competence. Quite simply, in an increasingly competitive and changing work environment, certification is an essential investment in one's professional future.

There are many qualified sports field managers taking care of sports fields, from the local ball field in the park to professional stadiums. When you become a CSFM, it means that you have taken your profession to the next level. After meeting the credentialing standards of education, experience, the applicant takes a written test. This exam is considered by many to be one of the most difficult in the industry to pass, which is one of the main reasons that those who do pass them display their credentials with pride. The sophistication of the exam development process also contributes to the preferred status of the credentials. Overseen by industry experts, the CSFM exams are specifically based on "real world" responsibilities of sports field management professionals. The program also requires that the CSFM stays current with trends, ethics, regulations, products and new developments that pertain to sports field management through continuing education as well as giving service back to the industry.

Over time, the CSFM credentials have gained a reputation among employers, professionals and industry experts as the most respected and preferred sports field management credential.

I work for a private high school. Whenever I request funding or make a proposal, I found I have more credibility as a CSFM than I would have as only "the guy who works outside taking care of the fields". It has expanded my network through my involvement with my local Chapter and by serving on STMA committees. I have become acquainted with people who I otherwise would not have met. I have trusted colleagues I can call when I need answers.

With over 20 years in the golf course and sports field industries, Scott Bills, CSFM understood golf course superintendents were way ahead of sport turf managers in education, experience and professionalism, as perceived by the public and their own supervisors. Wanting to play a bigger role in bringing more respect to position of 'sports turf manager', Scott sought the CSFM designation. In an interview with UPDATE, he explains: "As a contractor I was constantly frustrated by the poor designs and construction specifications put out by engineers and architects. In many cases, these professionals are learning about designing fields on the dime of the public. Over the past 8-10 years, I have worked for several bonding companies, municipalities and school boards doing forensic work, to determine what went wrong or why athletic fields have failed. I still see specifications with roots zones, grass seed varieties, fertilizer formulations and drainage plans that have been out of date for years or are no longer accepted practice within the industry. In addition, many sports fields are allowed to be built by road builders or other site contractors who have minimal

experience and do not understand the nuances of sports field construction. For the above two reasons, I felt to be a respected source of information and guidance, I needed to first qualify for the CSFM test and then pass it".

The credentialing process begins by contacting the STMA Headquarters and requesting a CSFM Information Packet, containing detailed information about the program as well as an application. The applicant qualifies for the program after first quantifying their education and their experience. The STMA's view is that a combination of education and experience are essential because the sports turf industry has become very sophisticated. You cannot become a CSFM by education alone.

Continued on page 17

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Sports Turf Managers Association Editorial Staff



Good communication is the cornerstone of great professional relationships. One communication strategy that is often overlooked is dress. How you dress is another way you communicate to your peers, your staff, your employer and the end users of your sports fields.

Dressing in a professional manner suggests that you are well organized and portrays self confidence. The impression is of one who is knowledgeable and in control. (Wow, all of that from a pair of Dockers and a golf shirt!). Obviously, we aren't talking coat and tie — unless the occasion calls for it. When you are physically working beside your staff on the field, of course you will be wearing work clothing, but think about keeping a change of clothing at your office for meetings or when you will be spending several hours in the office more visible to your employer.

Consider providing collared staff shirts to bring a more unified appearance to your crew, but wear a different color shirt so that you are distinguishable as the manager in charge. Be conscious of what your clothing says about you — faded tee shirts promoting old rock groups may bring a bit of nostalgia to your day, but they do not do much to position you as a professional sports turf manager.

Impressions do count. According to Ollie Stevenson, author of *101 Great Answers to the Toughest Job Search Problems*, found that in an interview situation, interviewers make an immediate overall judgment about you in the first **five** seconds. That applies to all first impressions. Five seconds isn't long so you are being judged on what you wear and how you react. Make the first five seconds count. Be dressed appropriately and remember, professionals do shake hands. Be sure your grip is firm and sincere and you make direct eye contact when you greet someone.

How do you dress for your chapter meetings? What type of role model are you for those who are just entering the profession and what type of message are you sending to them?

The job of a sports turf manager requires a strong knowledge of agronomy, pest management, environmental issues, sports strategies, and intimate knowledge of rules and regulations so that you can manage safe playing surfaces for your athletes. Be recognized for the knowledge, skills and abilities you bring to the game and garner the respect you deserve. Don't let a sloppy appearance downplay your importance when it is so easy to dress more professionally.

Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA), Lawrence, KS



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

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WINTER SPORTS FIELD TRIPS

James A. Murphy, Ph.D. *

Clean-up. Leaves, sticks, and other debris that accumulate on the grass over the winter should be raked up when weather permits. Debris lying on the turf too long can smother the grass and create bare spots. Bare spots will probably transform into weeds later in the season.

Mowing. Winter is a good time to clean, lubricate and repair your mowing equipment. You do not want to find out that your mowers do not work properly at first use in the spring. Because of the chance for wet weather and rapid shoot growth any delay in mowing at the start of the season (spring) can turn into a "behind the eight-ball" scenario very quickly.

Fertilization. Plan for your fertilization needs by testing your soil to determine whether liming is necessary to adjust soil pH (6.0 to 6.7 recommended) as well which nutrients are needed and how much. If you applied a thorough late season (autumn) fertilization, your turf probably will not need as much fertilization in early spring (March - April). Without a fall fertilization program, the turf may require some rather aggressive fertilization to encourage recovery from play or winter damage or to enhance spring green-up. Fertilization with phosphates or potash should be based on soil test results.

Winter Seeding. Winter seeding is a risky practice; the probability of the seed washing away and being eaten by birds is very high. Work the seed into the soil if you choose to seed during winter and realize that is likely to you will need to re-seed when warmer weather returns. Seeding when air temperature consistently exceeds 50 degrees Fahrenheit provides a better chance for success.

Drainage Assessment. Winter is good time to assess your fields for areas of poor drainage. Identifying and mapping out these areas now will give you a record of where you need to treat with your aerifier this spring. If aeration is not enough, maps of the poorly drained areas will provide documentation that you can use to show facility administrators where improvements such as slit drainage are needed.

Cover Skinned Infield Areas. Wet winter weather can lead to considerable erosion of skinned areas on baseball/softball infields. Consider covering these areas during the winter to eliminate much of the skin restoration headaches this spring. Type "baseball field covers" in any of the popular internet search engines to see examples of numerous companies that can supply covers in various sizes and shapes.

** James A. Murphy, PhD. is Extension Specialist in Turfgrass Management, Rutgers University; and SFMANJ Advisor*

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Photo Recap of SFMANJ-Sponsored

by Brad Park and Debbie Savard

