

NEWS NOTES

FALL 2009 | VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 3

MICHIGAN
TURFGRASS
FOUNDATION
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TURFGRASS 2010

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

I can't believe it's already fall, although, so far the weather has been better than the summer. Fall has always been fundraiser time; hopefully you have all taken the opportunity to get involved this year. Overall attendance has been pretty good, but we can always hope for more people and more participation from our members. As you all know, 100% of the money raised at our fundraisers will go directly to research.

On campus, things are moving along very well. Classes have started, and the turf team is back up to full throttle. The biggest news on campus, after a long drought, a new turf team member has been added who will replace Dr. Branham's spot. Dr. Steinke comes from Texas A&M via Wisconsin. He received his masters and PhD from the University of Wisconsin under Dr. John Stier (another MSU alumnus). I look forward to everyone getting an opportunity to meet Dr. Steinke, I'm sure you will be just as impressed as we are.

Planning for the Great Lakes Trade Expo is wrapping up. This year should be one of the best; we have engaged the Michigan PGA, and the GAM to provide additional education for our members during

the show. Also, with the change in the GLTE partnership (loss of ASM), our relationship with the MNLA has greatly improved. Our chairpersons, Brian Schwehofer and Carey Mitchelson have done a great job. Hopefully

everyone can make it over to Grand Rapids for the conference. Spread the word; mark your calendar for January 4-6, 2010. Also plan on attending the MTF annual meeting on Tuesday January 5th at 7:00 am.

It has been a great experience to be the MTF president for the past two years. We have been through a lot in a short amount of time. I encourage you to get involved, run for the board volunteer or a committee. As with any volunteer organization, we always could use an extra hand.

Terry Poley



Terry Poley



**MTF ANNUAL
MEETING**
7A.M. TUESDAY,
JANUARY 5, 2010

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www.michiganturfgrass.org

UPDATE

FROM THE HANCOCK TURFGRASS RESEARCH CENTER

BY MARK COLLINS
MANAGER, HANCOCK TURF CENTER

As summer draws to a close, the Turf Center has had one of its busiest seasons in years. In June we hosted the North Central Region meetings. Turf researchers from the midwest attended meetings at MSU. They also had an afternoon to tour the Turf Center. Several positive comments were made about the top notch facilities that are here at the Turf Center.

In July we hosted the Turf Producers International (TPI) summer meetings and field days. Nearly 400 people from around the world stayed at the Kellogg Center. Amy Fouty of MSU athletic program was a speaker at the conference. She also gave visitors a tour of the stadium and its modular turf. The field day

was a huge success. Dr. Kevin Frank gave conference attendees a tour of the research plots. Visitors to the conference were able to watch the latest equipment used in the sod industry operate. The field day vendors were very impressed with our facilities and the assistance we could provide for a trade show. I would like to thank the MTF and Michigan Sod Growers for all their assistance in making this event a success.

This fall we have been busy renovating some areas of the Turf Center. An acre of greens and another acre of fairways were established. We also seeded the areas that were harvested at the TPI trade show.

The summer was also busy for our family. Our son graduated from the 2 year turf program and is now an assistant at Biderman Golf Course in Delaware. We enjoy talking turf and comparing notes about golf on the East Coast. One daughter graduated MSU and another got married and is now a teacher in Tennessee. My wife and I will now enjoy travelling to visit the kids.

I would like to especially thank Frank Roggenbuck and the crew of the turf center for all the extra effort that they put in this summer. I know that the MSU Turf Program was well represented at all the events this summer.



DR. KURT STEINKE JOINS THE MSU TURFGRASS PROGRAM



Dr. Kurt Steinke

As another growing season begins to wind down many of us are left wondering about one of two things: 1) will the Spartans have a victorious football season, or 2) when will Mother Nature close our golf courses this year. Despite my recent location change, some things never change no matter where you live. Greetings I am Kurt Steinke, the new turfgrass ecologist here at Michigan State University.

Beginning in August of this year, I assumed my new research and teaching post in the turf program here at Michigan State. I am excited and charged to continue the enhancement of not only the MSU turf program but also the Michigan turfgrass industry. Born and raised in Belvidere, IL, I attended college in north-central Wisconsin at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point where I received my B.S. degree in Soil Science.

During the course of multiple internships, I first became interested in the soil and agricultural sciences through potato and vegetable production. One day while doing potato stem counts in the field of one of our experiment stations,

I happened to meet a professor of turfgrass science (and MSU alum) and alas, I was hooked and saw the light. I began my Master's Degree program in turf physiology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison that autumn. Upon graduation, I decided to make the change to private industry and worked as an assistant manager and consultant at a lawn and landscape firm in Milwaukee, WI. Sometime later, I realized that I missed investigating and exploring the science behind turfgrass management and decided to begin my Ph.D. studies in both Horticulture and Soil Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Upon completion of my dissertation research, I immediately began a faculty position down at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX. I have spent the last 3.5 years as an assistant professor of turfgrass ecology in the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences with a research and teaching appointment. Here I ran a research program in turfgrass ecology and physiology, taught upper-level undergraduate courses in turfgrass science, mentored undergraduate and graduate students, and co-advised the undergraduate turf club.

My past research has focused on turfgrass systems within urban environments and environmental stress physiology.

Projects investigated have included developing a regime for shaded golf course tee box management, using plant growth regulator's for decreasing sod harvest interval, extending the shelf life of sod, and several other cold, heat, shade, and water environmental stress investigations. More recently, I completed a 4-year study evaluating the effects of turfgrass and prairie buffer strips on stormwater runoff volumes, phosphorus loading, and groundwater recharge. More specifically, I quantified how much phosphorus was exiting turfgrass landscapes and compared these values to those leaving alternative native plant landscapes. Another contribution of this work included experimenting with several impervious to pervious surface ratios in combination with multiple types of vegetation in an effort to decrease runoff volumes and increase infiltration of runoff waters.





Dr. Rieke, Kathy Antaya and Dr. Frank



Carey Michelson welcoming the MTF to College Fields.



Mike Plague with fellow golfers.

THE MICHIGAN TURFGRASS FOUNDATION WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE WHO WAS ABLE TO MAKE IT OUT TO THIS YEAR'S MTF FIELD DAY FUN DAY.

Instead of having the traditional Field Day this year we held a golf outing at College Field. Thank you to College Fields and to Carey Michelson for hosting us at your beautiful course and for your generous donation of \$2,000 to the MTF General Fund. We had a great turnout with over ninety golfers. Sunny weather made for the perfect atmosphere for Randy Hahn to grill hot dog all afternoon. Lunch was followed by a question and answer session with the Turf Team. Thanks for supporting of the turf industry and MSU.



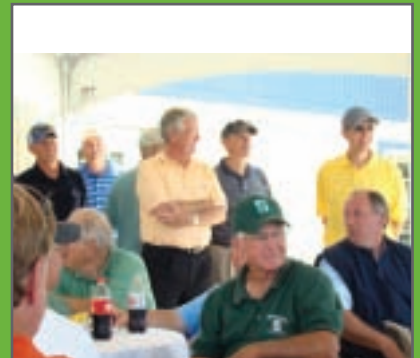
Duane Daam winner long drive #14.



And the winner is?



Dr. Rieke and John Kirtland



Does anyone have a question for the professors?



Gordon LaFontaine and Dr. Rieke are perhaps discussing fundraising?



Randy Hahn lending a hand by making lunch.



50/50 winner, Paul Kolbe. Who donated back \$50 from his winnings.



Skins winners Bob Preist and Dennis Wolfe.



Chris Wilczynski, Adam Neate, Joe Hancock, Tim Dark, Doug Johanningsmeier

ON COURSE OFF THE COURSE

BY: DAVID M. GILSTRAP, PH.D.

I have just started my 17th year of teaching here at MSU, and does that make me feel old (and probably some of you too). Yes, 17 football seasons, five head coaches, and I've yet to sniff the roses. Thank goodness for March Madness.

PROGRAM UPDATE

During that time my two-year program has metamorphosed from Lawn Care Technology to Lawn Care/ Athletic Turf Maintenance to Sports and Commercial Turf Management. So you can see its emphasis has changed over my years here during which time I've had 162 graduates. This year the program has eight second-year students and ten first-year students.

Job placement continues to be good, and this is for the non-golf undergraduates as well. While most of my graduates were looking for sports jobs, the grounds maintenance sector remains the most favorable in terms of job-placement successes. For instance, in 2008, one student landed a top grounds job at a small private college just east of Chicago. Another student got a full-time crew - leader position at University of Michigan. Only 19



years old, his starting base was around 35K, and that's before overtime. He said that the key to his qualifying for the job and the salary assigned by Human Resources was his turf management education.

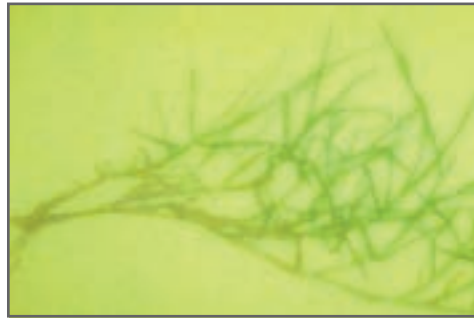
Ironically, we have five graduates working there, which is the most we have at any one place. Obviously, they have to import their turf talent. By the way, I personally don't have a problem with

ONE RESEARCH PROJECT I HAVE PURSUED IS AN INVESTIGATION OF THE BERMUDAGRASS (CYNODON DACTYLON) GROWING HERE ON THE MSU CAMPUS. EVEN THOUGH IT IS CONSIDERED A SOUTHERN TURF-GRASS, IT THRIVES HERE IN FULL SUN AND IS PARTICULARLY DENSE ABOVE HEATING TUNNELS OR ALONGSIDE PAVEMENT.



UM students, graduates, or employees. It's those Wal-Mart Wolverines that I can't stand!

The other hotbed for MSU turf grads is the San Francisco Giants, where two years ago Greg Elliot became our second Head Groundskeeper in the Major Leagues (the first, of course was Heather Nabozny with the Tigers). Greg now has one of our four-year graduates on full time and a two-year graduate working seasonally (he's pursuing a BBA during the school year); plus he had an intern this summer. The Giants' colors may be black and orange, but the grounds crew is definitely green!



In 1991, several cup-cutter selections were transplanted from the main campus to a plot area at the Hancock Turf Research Centerturf and far away from pavement and tunnels. Within a few years the bermudagrass had grown to cover a 3600 square-foot area. In 1995 and 1996, I made concerted efforts to grow and harvest seed there (frequent and

timely fertilizing and no mowing); however, only pollen was ever observed.

In 2003, I collected over 50 selections from all parts of the campus. While they had differences in appearance at the time, they became very similar looking after a year in one of our greenhouses. In 2005, I procured eight cultivars of diverse origins from a turfgrass breeder down south. Subsequently, I contracted the services of a research lab here in our department that analyzed the DNA of my collection as well as that of each of the "tester" cultivars from afar. This portion of the project was partially funded by the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation (the \$2500 over a two-year period was greatly appreciated, but it did not go far with this kind of research).

Results found no genetic variability in the MSU collection, which strongly supports my hypothesis that the bermudagrass had become clonal in nature and explained why it was unable to produce seed. Also, the MSU cultivar was shown to be genetically different from any of the other eight cultivars. Its closest relative was 'Midlawn' an interspecific hybrid bermudagrasses (*C. dactylon* X *C. transvaalensis*) that has enjoyed commercial success resulting in appreciable royalties for Kansas State University and Oklahoma State University that jointly released 'Midlawn' in 1991. Its registration document stated that the maternal parent was "a hardy common bermudagrass collected on Michigan State University campus." Two scientific papers in the 1990s out of Oklahoma showed that a sample from MSU has the "greatest cold-tolerance of any bermudagrass germplasm known to exist."

Currently, 'Midlawn' is the most cold-tolerant commercially available bermudagrass. Perhaps, if further funding was obtained (particularly that needed to secure a patent), this distinction could belong to our MSU bermudagrass. Sooner or later this campus bound treasure needs to be exploited.

DOCTORAL RESEARCH

Since I do not have a research appointment, such activities here have mostly been connected to getting my degree with Dr. Vargas. Working with fungicide-resistant dollar spot, I showed that it takes about 20 applications of a demethylation inhibitor to begin a shift in the pathogen population toward one that is resistant to this class of fungicides. Also, I demonstrated that this can be delayed by alternating those types of fungicides with chlorothalonil. The take-home message was that one should use a single class of systemic fungicides exclusive of any other systemics until resistance occurs. Then shift to another and continue with that class until resistance occurs again, and so forth. Leave it up to the chemists to come up with novel fungicides to deal with the dollar spot of the future knowing that you've done the best you can. By that time, hopefully you will have retired instead of getting fired.

BERMUDAGRASS RESEARCH

One research project I have pursued is an investigation of the bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*) growing here on the MSU campus. Even though it is considered a southern turfgrass, it thrives here in full sun and is particularly dense above heating tunnels or alongside pavement. Pictured is a particularly dense bermudagrass stand just south of the Wharton Center.

Historical records indicate that the only intentional plantings were by botany professor W. J. Beal. In the 1886 Report to the Board of Agriculture he wrote "the habits of this grass have been carefully studied for several years, where it has never failed to pass the winter." Other historical documents show pictures of the first heating tunnels being built in the 1890s. Therefore, the cultivar had cold tolerance before any soil was artificially warmed.



STEINKE

Continued from page 3

Much of my work in Texas centered on drought and water management. We completed a nationally-recognized project dealing with water restriction intervals and drought survival of warm-season turfgrass species and cultivars. Other studies completed include comparing water use between turfgrass and alternative urban vegetation landscapes and several cultural management field studies of



bermudagrass fairway and ultradwarf putting greens. My work has been published in a variety of journals including Crop Science, Journal of Environmental Quality, Journal of Environmental Horticulture, Acta Horticulture, and the American Chemical Society.

When not researching turf, one can usually find my wife and I running after our son who is a very energetic toddler. I also enjoy running, mountain biking, playing tennis, basketball, golf, camping, backpacking, and the great outdoors.

As I begin my tenure here in Michigan, I aim to continue an applied research program focused upon the management and ecology of plant communities within the urban/suburban environment. Topics may include urban nutrient and water restrictions, sustainability, and best management practices promoting the judicious use of water and nutrients within turfgrass, native, and agricultural ecosystems in order to sustain and improve soil quality. There is tremendous potential for the Michigan turfgrass industry to have an impact in our state, and I hope to continue the growth and organization of the turf industry across all sectors. One thing to keep in mind is that we as researchers are here to serve the needs of the general public. I am always more than willing to listen to your ideas, suggestions, or interests for future research projects. If all else fails, I always enjoy sitting down and talking turf. I hope to see you soon!!

SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER

Once again it is time for the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation to offer scholarship to the turfgrass students at MSU. There is over \$8,500.00 in scholarship monies to be awarded to MSU turf grass students. If you know a student, please encourage them to apply today.

Log onto michiganturfgrass.org to find all the information regarding the deadlines, forms and eligibility.

Information describing each of the four scholarships is also posted to learn more about the origin of these funds. Scholarships are due November 13, 2009 and interviews will be December 10, 2009.

If you have any questions regarding the scholarships please feel free to contact Dan Boak or Randy Hahn.

Encourage the youth today for tomorrow!

DAN BOAK



2009 | 2010 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

FULL NAME _____

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Completing this form serves management notice that you agree to be contacted by mail, phone, fax and email and have this information published.



Please mail or fax application to MTF:

3225 W. ST. JOSEPH
LANSING, MI 48917
PHONE: 517-327-9207
FAX: 517-321-0495

www.michigan turfgrass.org

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES AND DUES

REGULAR MEMBER AMOUNT: \$115.00 \$ _____

Benefit: Eligible to vote, hold office, quarterly issues of Newsnotes, reduced conference fees, and educational opportunities.

AFFILIATE MEMBER(S) DUES AMOUNT: \$30.00 X # _____ = \$ _____

Benefit: Reduced conference registration fees, quarterly issues of Newsnotes, and educational opportunities.

Eligibility: Individuals are eligible for affiliate membership after another individual from that organization joins as a regular member.

Please list affiliate names below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

STUDENT DUES AMOUNT: \$10.00 \$ _____

Benefit: Quarterly issues of Newsnotes and complimentary registration at conference.

ASSOCIATE DUES AMOUNT: \$75.00 \$ _____

(Working and living outside the State of Michigan)

Benefit: Reduced conference registration fees, quarterly issues of Newsnotes, and educational opportunities.

PAYMENT

(Optional) ANNUAL FUND DONATION \$ _____ **35.00**

ENDOWMENT DONATION (Please check appropriate box from section 3) \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

CHECK NUMBER: _____ Please make all checks out to MTF.

CREDIT CARD: VISA MASTERCARD DISCOVER

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RESEARCH DONATION

ANNUAL FUND

Annual contributions that are not designated to one of the endowments are the lifeblood of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation. These contributions fund annual research and support grants to MSU faculty. Annual funding helps solve current research problems in turf and supports the MSU turf team in meeting the extension needs of turf managers in Michigan.

LAFONTAINE ENDOWMENT

The Gordon Lafontaine Endowment for Turfgrass Research was created to establish a solid source of funding for basic research in the field of turfgrass science. Donations to the Lafontaine Endowment create a legacy to fund research long-term, as these donations work in perpetuity to generate interest for fundamental research projects. Donations to the Lafontaine Endowment help solve tomorrow's problems today.

RIEKE ENDOWMENT

The Paul Rieke Turfgrass Endowed Graduate Assistantship was established by the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation with generous contributions from Dr. Rieke, friends, family and colleagues at Paul's retirement. The Rieke Endowment will help fund communication and outreach efforts within the turfgrass industry, the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation, and the MSU Turf Team.

FOUNDERS SOCIETY

The Founders Society is an endowment used to purchase specialized research and support equipment for the turf program at MSU. For example, donations to this fund will provide funding to install additional lysimeters at the Hancock Center to expand research on nutrient fate and water movement—key research validation to better position the turfgrass industry for the continuing statewide debate on water policy and nutrient management. Funding is also needed to update the Hancock Center, including new office equipment and a heating system for the Fuller Building.



ANNUAL FUND

Annual contributions, that are not designated to one of the endowments, are the lifeblood of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation. These contributions fund annual research and support grants to MSU faculty. All grant requests are first reviewed by an industry committee, ranked in priority by this committee, and then referred to the MTF Board of Directors for action. Annual funding helps solve current research problems in turf and supports the MSU Turf Team in meeting the extension needs of turf managers in Michigan.



LAFONTAINE ENDOWMENT

The Gordon LaFontaine Endowment for Turfgrass Research was created to establish a solid source of funding for basic research in the field of turfgrass science. Basic research tends to be longer term, more involved and more expensive than applied research. The very nature of this research requires a stable source of funding. Donations to the LaFontaine Endowment create a legacy to fund research long-term, as these donations work in perpetuity to generate interest for fundamental research projects. Donations to the LaFontaine Endowment help solve tomorrow's problems today.

RIEKE ENDOWMENT

Dr. Paul Rieke is a dedicated MSU faculty member who made major contributions to turfgrass science through research, education, and outreach and shared his knowledge and expertise through the guidance of many graduate students. The Paul Rieke Turfgrass Endowed Graduate Assistantship was established by the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation with generous contributions from Dr. Rieke, friends, family and colleagues at Paul's retirement.

As part of Turfgrass 2010, the Rieke Endowment will help fund the communication and outreach efforts within the turfgrass industry, the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation, and the MSU Turf Team.

FOUNDERS SOCIETY

The Founders Society is an endowment used to purchase specialized research and support equipment for the turf program at MSU. For example, donations to this fund will provide funding to install additional lysimeters at the Hancock Center to expand research on nutrient fate and water movement — key research validation to better position the turfgrass industry for the continuing statewide debate on water policy and nutrient management. Funding is also needed to update the Hancock Center, including new office equipment and a heating system for the Fuller Building.



MICHIGAN TURFGRASS FOUNDATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIVING

IMPACT THE LIVES OF MICHIGAN CITIZENS AND PROTECT OUR NATURAL RESOURCES BY MAKING YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO TURFGRASS 2010!

ANNUAL RESEARCH FUND — annual MSU research & support projects _____

FOUNDER'S SOCIETY — for purchase of specialized research equipment _____

GORDON LAFONTAINE ENDOWMENT — supports basic research _____

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TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____



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Contact Patrick Long at (517) 327-9207 to make cash donations or pledges to the Turfgrass 2010 campaign. Contact Donn Eurich for non-cash gift, planned giving, wills and trusts at (517) 327-9207

MICHIGAN TURFGRASS FOUNDATION
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• Tara Valentino—Technician



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