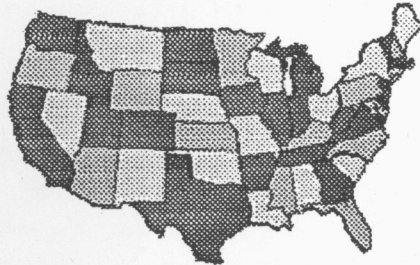


# TurfComms

V. 15, I.9



Oct. 16, 2004

**PURPOSE:** To pass on what we learn willingly and happily to others in the profession so as to improve turf conditions around the country.

**TIME FOR A CHANGE:** As your editor and publisher I am no longer charging for subscriptions. Have not sent out an invoice for this newsletter in over a year. I would like to continue sending copies to old subscribers and friends.

I would like to do this by email. I propose two groups of customers. A group that only wishes to get turf and hort commentary material. A second group that is interested in getting all my commentary material.

So, please **email** your choice of category:

**A. Turf & Hort.**      Or      **B. Everything**

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**COLLEGE:** You would think at 69 I wouldn't be so naïve. I thought colleges and universities were in the business of educating young people. Now I find out they're just in the business of education to make money. The article Higher Ed, Inc. by James B. Twitchell in the Summer issue of the **Wilson Quarterly** made that clear to me. I knew that football and other college sports were run in part to bring in alumni dollars. But, after reading that article, I realized that is just the icing on the cake.

After reading the article I would say that if you have a very outgoing, social youngster who has a good chance of making it big in the world because of his/her personality and intellectual skills than it is very important that you get that child into a school with a recognized 'brand' name. If on the other hand you have a child that is a student first and not at all a social animal than the 'brand' is not going to be as important as the caliber of instruction he/she can obtain in the chosen field. Let the latter get a B.S. or B.A. and then go to an 'elite' school for an advanced degree.

If you're doing the hiring of college grads realize that those coming out of 'brand' name schools may not be as well educated as those from lesser schools.

All the universities now have development offices. They are in essence fund raising departments. They are often closely connected to the univ. president, on one hand, and the athletic department on the other. At Michigan State Univ. they will soon be housed under the new 'sky' boxes that are being added to Spartan Stadium.

Recent research by Robert Frank of Cornell Univ. found that schools with winning sports teams "don't see increases in their applicants' SAT scores." What is more he found that "in the vast majority of cases, any indirect benefits of a good season are greatly outweighed by the huge costs." See pg. 70 of U.S. News & World Report, Sept. 20, 2004. Now, if you can convince the Universities and their alumni to put the money into research and teachers salaries, instead of football and basketball, the cost of education might go down and the quality go up.

**AIR SPADE:** Two article praising the air spade for tree work appear in September trade magazines. One (TURF – South) points out the benefits of using it to check for girdling roots. Digging with shovels is almost impossible up close to the trunk without doing damage. The air spade makes it easy. Both professionals recommended soaking the area the night before as damp soil is easier to remove with air spade.

The second article is in Tree Care Industry. This article concentrates on radial trenching with the air spade to save trees after construction compaction. When they are done, the tree trunk is the hub of the wheel; the trenches they dug with the tree spade are the spokes. Then, depending on the size of the tree, they may have one or more rim trenches.

They also do sheet excavation of the compacted soil in-between. Then they backfill trenches with compost and "put a shredded cedar mulch as far out as the client will allow." They stress the need to get in and work on the tree as soon as the construction vehicles that caused the compaction are gone.

**DEATHS: Houston Couch, Ph.D.** – He made turf pathology interesting as he entertained us while educating. A great educator.

**George Hamilton** – I met him once a few years back at an ASA meeting. We had a relatively short conversation but, I felt a kinship for him and put him on the mailing list for this newsletter. I'm sure his former Penn. State Univ. students will miss him. He seemed quite dedicated to teaching.

**BERMUDAGRASS MUTATIONS:** As a USGA agronomist, one of the first things I learned from Monty was that all those off-types in old bermudagrass greens were contamination and not from mutation. Now, if you have seen the latest research, they have found that many of the preemerge herbicides can indeed result in mutations in the bermudagrass cultivars used for greens back in those days (1978-84). My apologies, way too late, to all the superintendents and their bosses that I told otherwise. **I'm sorry, sorry, sorry!**

**A WEBSITE YOU MIGHT TAKE A LOOK AT:** I only have a telephone modem but found it easy and relatively quick to work through this superintendent's website. Here is the email I got recently from the superintendent. - - - - My name is Rob Crompton and I'm a turf manager in Victoria BC, Canada. I was surfing the web for turf info and found your writings, very interesting I enjoyed the read. At the top of your page you say that you like to pass on turf information, in a small way I do the same. I had a website made showing my effort in building a USGA putting green, tee box, and a sod wall bunker in my backyard. The website has over 100 pictures and walks you through the process. This is aimed to the "home owner" greenkeeper, someone on a green committee or anyone interested in turfgrass. If you get some time, I invite you to see the website - Rob [www.kinipela.ca](http://www.kinipela.ca)

**GCSAA ELECTION:** I have previously only endorsed one other candidate for director of the GCSAA, George Renault. Now that Mr. Robert M. Randquist, CGCS, has just been listed as a candidate for a directors position, I strongly endorse him for the position. I have known Bob Randquist since 1978. He will do what is best for the organization. Like the first endorsement, this one too is completely unsolicited.

**GOLFDOM, Oct. 2004:** I really enjoy this magazine and hope you do also. On page 12 they give the results of a poll of superintendents that found 66% would vote for Bush and only 26% for Kerry. The editors were surprised that it was so overwhelming in favor of Bush. It certainly doesn't surprise me. I'm impressed that Kerry was able to pickup 26% from such a conservative crowd.

Pg. 64-66 **Sodium** not all bad writes Dr. Hull. Apparently the salt tolerant grasses can actually get a little stimulation from sodium.

Pg. 70 **Sulfur** is shown to reduce the number of **grubs** per square meter by a considerable amount. And, it didn't take much sulfur to get it done. On Western soils you could put it on weekly all summer at the ½ or 1 lb./1000 sq. ft. rates that give partial control.

**Front cover:** I was disappointed to see a circular sticker on the front cover advertising a chemical company's Fall Sale. Isn't even the front cover off limits to advertisers?

**CORN GLUTEN the natural preemergence for crabgrass control gets a poor writeup from Oregon State Univ. researchers.** In summary they write, "Our research does not support the use of corn glutenmeal as a preemergence herbicide for control of weeds in either lawns or shrub beds in the Pacific Northwest." They ran evaluation in two seasons and found it did nothing more than fertilize the weeds. It "failed to control any of the test plants even at rates twice the maximum label rate." This is as reported in **Turfgrass Management in the Pacific Northwest**, Spring/summer 2004 issue, pg. 8.

**THE GOD OF THE MACHINE by Isabel Paterson:** This is a 1943 book. I am reading a 1993 edition with an introduction by Stephen Cox. As I write this, I have read the 55 page introduction and 66 pages of the text. I have found it a fascinating way to look at history.

Having now finished it, I will say that as a book on history it is strongly economically oriented. Cox writes that it is a defense of free enterprise. It is written by someone not professionally trained in either history or economics who uses transmission of electricity as an example of how countries become powerful and use that power. She has no education in physics either. Yet, she does a very good job of explaining. The fact that it was published in 1943 has to be remembered when reading it. She was one of the few Libertarian thinkers/writers who believed in God.

Both Bush and Kerry would do well to read Chapter 22, *The Energy Circuit in Wartime*.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS**

**DOUG.**

**END**