Between the Lines
Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization

Inside:
ATTEND THE 16TH ANNUAL ATHLETIC FIELD CONFERENCE
February 17, 2012

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Awards
Raffle
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The times they are a-changin’,” Bob Dylan sang about the social and political upheaval of the 1960s. I’m referring to the effects the economy has had to Penn State’s Turfgrass Science program. The program and major will remain intact; however, the College of Agriculture is shrinking from 12 departments to eight and the Turfgrass Science major’s current home, The Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, will no longer exist. The major will join Horticulture in a department to be named later.

Dr. Al Turgeon is retiring and at least for now his position will not be filled. He will continue to teach in the online program but the rest of his responsibilities will be spread among the remaining faculty.

While the changes will provide some challenges to the program, the Turfgrass Science major at Penn State is still tops in the nation. The 2-year program continues to grow under Dr. John Kaminski’s leadership. The 4-year program graduates an average of close to 30 per year. The new online Masters of Professional Studies in Turfgrass Science program has more than 50 students enrolled. Most importantly, the Turfgrass Science program boasts a 100% job placement rate for its graduates.

KAFMO’s financial support continues to provide dividends. Useful sports turf research is conducted at the Penn State Center for Sports Turf Research since 2001. KAFMO provides scholarships for sports turf education and sponsors collegiate teams in the Sports Turf Managers Association. Today, KAFMO would not be the organization it is today without the Penn State Turfgrass Science program and the Penn State Cooperative Extension. The times might be a-changin’, but KAFMO’s support of Penn State will not.

KAFMO’s upcoming Athletic Field Conference will feature a Penn State professor, two graduate students and alumni. KAFMO would not be the organization it is today without the Penn State Turfgrass Science program and the Penn State Cooperative Extension. The times might be a-changin’, but KAFMO’s support of Penn State will not.

-- Dan Douglas, KAFMO President

Supporting Those Who Support Us

The Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization was formed in 1994 by a small group of individuals who were concerned about the quality of the athletic fields in Pennsylvania. In 1997, KAFMO became incorporated as a chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association. Today, KAFMO is over 300 members strong and each individual is committed to enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers in the Keystone State.

Our goals are to improve the safety, playability and appearance of all athletic fields in Pennsylvania. As an organization we strive to accomplish our goals through seminars, field days, publications and networking with other professionals in the sports turf industry.

Any individual, institution, organization, vendor or supplier who has sincere interest in athletic field maintenance is welcome to become a member. Our members represent a wide range of professionals in the sports turf industry. From high school, collegiate and professional athletic facilities, to parks and recreation departments, municipalities, educators, youth leagues, contractors, and commercial vendors, our membership base is made up of a broad range of individuals who pool their knowledge together for the good of our craft.

Annual Events include:
- Summer - Field Day(s)
- October - KAFMO Cup Open golf tournament – proceeds benefit the Awards Fund
- January - Eastern Pennsylvania Turf Conference
- January - Northeastern Pennsylvania Turf Conference
- February - Annual KAFMO conference featuring seminars, exhibits and the annual awards program
- February/March - Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference
- March - Northwestern Pennsylvania Turf Conference

Educational Grants and Research

KAFMO has donated over $47,000 for educational grants and sports turf research since 2001. KAFMO provides scholarships for sports turf education and sponsors collegiate teams in the Sports Turf Managers Association’s Collegiate Challenge at their annual national conference. Research beneficiaries include: Sports Turf Managers Association’s Foundation for Safer Athletic Field Environments (SAFE); Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council’s fund for sports turf research at Penn State University and the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Research Fund, Inc.

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The magazine will be free to KAFMO members.

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Membership

Our brochure can be downloaded at: www.kafmo.org/membership.htm
The 16th Annual Athletic Field Conference will be held on Friday, February 17, 2012 at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg/Hershey. As in the past, this conference will have excellent educational presentations along with a trade show, awards presentations, raffle, great food and networking opportunities.

Dr. Michael Goatley will be the featured presenter. He will talk about Spring Recovery Strategies along with some other Best Management Practices for athletic fields. Dr. Goatley is a Professor of Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences and Extension Turfgrass Specialist at Virginia Tech University. He is also President-Elect of the Sports Turf Managers Association.

The Pennsylvania legislature is working on fertilizer regulations that will affect the green industry. Penn State’s Dr. Peter Landschoot will bring everyone up to date on these regulations and what it means to the industry. Also, Penn State’s Tom Serenits and Mike Shelley will cover weed control and tall fescue use, respectively.

Soggy fields were an issue all across Pennsylvania in 2011. In the worst cases fields were submerged. A panel of KAFMO members will review the problems they had with flooding and discuss how they dealt with their situations.

Mark February 17, 2012 on your calendar now. The conference brochure can be found at www.KAFMO.org.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company/School</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donald Barr, Jr</td>
<td>Pequea Valley School District</td>
<td>PO Box 130, Kinzers, PA 17535</td>
<td>717-768-5535</td>
<td><a href="mailto:d.barr@pvsd.k12.pa.us">d.barr@pvsd.k12.pa.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dane Beakler</td>
<td>Manchester Township</td>
<td>3200 Farmtrail Road, York, PA 17406-5009</td>
<td>717-764-4646</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Bechetel</td>
<td>Heritage Lawn &amp; Landscape Care</td>
<td>4741 Biesecker Road, Thomasville, PA 17364</td>
<td>717-292-9994</td>
<td>heritagelawn@ gmail.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Bell</td>
<td>Hershey Park Stadium</td>
<td>100 West Hershey Park Drive, Hershey, PA 17033</td>
<td>717-774-8059</td>
<td>jbell@ hershey pa.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyler Belz</td>
<td>Allegheny College</td>
<td>520 North Main Street, Box 28, Meadville, PA 16335</td>
<td>814-439-1300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Bennett</td>
<td>Ursinus College</td>
<td>PO Box 1000 601 E Main St Collegeville, PA 19426</td>
<td>610-499-5598</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dbennett@ursinus.edu">dbennett@ursinus.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Bentley</td>
<td>Earth &amp; Turf</td>
<td>112 S Railroad Avenue, New Holland, PA 17557</td>
<td>888-693-2638</td>
<td>johnb@nds group.net</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon Beuschlein</td>
<td>York County Solid Waste Authority</td>
<td>2700 Blackbridge Rd, York, PA 17406</td>
<td>717-845-1066</td>
<td><a href="mailto:j.beuschlein@ycswa.com">j.beuschlein@ycswa.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Bevenour</td>
<td>Millersville University</td>
<td>PO Box 1002, Millersville, PA 17551</td>
<td>717-871-5357</td>
<td>psva@ aol.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Wayne Bieseker</td>
<td>Susquehanna School District</td>
<td>691 Wineberry Circle, Lewisburg, PA 17339</td>
<td>717-756-1033</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bieseker@epix.net">bieseker@epix.net</a></td>
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<td>Scott Bills</td>
<td>Green Pro Materials</td>
<td>PO Box 265, Bound Brook, NJ 8805</td>
<td>908-647-0835</td>
<td><a href="mailto:scottbills@yahoo.com">scottbills@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Bingeman</td>
<td>Turf, Track &amp; Court LLC</td>
<td>PO Box 332, Hershey, PA 17033</td>
<td>717-982-0221</td>
<td>bbingeman@ turftrackcour t.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Birch</td>
<td>Germantown Academy</td>
<td>PO Box 287, Fort Washington, PA 19034</td>
<td>267-240-2972</td>
<td><a href="mailto:joellavonne@aol.com">joellavonne@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Bockholder</td>
<td>Philadelphia Phillies</td>
<td>One Citizens Bank Way, Philadelphia, PA 19148</td>
<td>215-218-5650</td>
<td>mbockholder@ phillies.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrell Bohannon</td>
<td>Derry Township School</td>
<td>PO Box 898 Homestead Rd, Hershey, PA 17033</td>
<td>717-534-2501</td>
<td>dbbohannon@ hershey. k12. pa.us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Boll</td>
<td>York Suburban School District</td>
<td>1800 Hollywood Drive, York, PA 17403</td>
<td>717-848-2814 ext 276</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bball@yssd.org">bball@yssd.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>John Book</td>
<td>Lower Daugh School District</td>
<td>291 E Main Street, Hummelstown, PA 17036</td>
<td>717-566-5036</td>
<td>jbook@ ldsd.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Borger</td>
<td>Department of Crop &amp; Soil Science</td>
<td>244 ASI Blvd, University Park, PA 16802</td>
<td>814-863-3005</td>
<td>jab267@ psu.edu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Bortz</td>
<td>Wilson School District</td>
<td>2601 Grandview Blvd, West Lawn, PA 19609</td>
<td>610-670-0180 ext 1241</td>
<td>bolar@ wils onord org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg Borzok</td>
<td>5530 Marivale Ct Harrisburg, PA 1712</td>
<td>717-443-0774</td>
<td>zoki@ aol.com</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonathan Bosold</td>
<td>Berks County Crop Ext</td>
<td>1238 County Welfare Road, Suite 110, Leesport, PA 19533</td>
<td>610-378-1327</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nfb1@psu.edu">nfb1@psu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Bowers</td>
<td>Philadelphia University</td>
<td>118 Stone Fence Rd West Chester, PA 19382</td>
<td>540-808-8629</td>
<td>jbowers@ erneal.com</td>
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<td>Andrew Brandt</td>
<td>Mount Joy Township</td>
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<td>717-367-9817</td>
<td><a href="mailto:andy@montjoypw.org">andy@montjoypw.org</a></td>
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<td>matthewbrown@ turf- equipment.com</td>
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<td>Chris Bruce</td>
<td>Northern Lebanon School District</td>
<td>RT 22 &amp; School Drive, Box 100, Fredericksburg, PA 17026</td>
<td>717-865-0541 ext 2575</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cbruce@norleb.k12.pa.us">cbruce@norleb.k12.pa.us</a></td>
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<td>Ben Burns</td>
<td>375 Holyoke Drive, York, PA 17402</td>
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<td>Tom Burns</td>
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<td>610-499-1640</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Chianos</td>
<td>Lower Allen Twp.</td>
<td>1400 S. St. Johns Road, Camp Hill, PA 17011</td>
<td>717-975-7576</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenneth Churney</td>
<td>Township of Upper St. Clair</td>
<td>1820 McLaughlin Run Road, Upper St. Clair, PA 15241</td>
<td>412-831-9000 ext 271</td>
<td>churney@ wpusc.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Clelan</td>
<td>Hunter Industries</td>
<td>1 Heather Hill Lane, Elkton, MD 21921</td>
<td>301-514-0899</td>
<td>rclelan@ hunterindustries.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Collier</td>
<td>S &amp; S Processing Inc.</td>
<td>PO Box 373 478 Beaver Road, West Pittsburgh, PA 16160</td>
<td>724-535-3110</td>
<td>ccollier@ ssprocessing.com</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued on page 6)
KAFMO MEMBERSHIP LIST (Cont. from page 5)

Herb Combs
Pennsylvania State University
103 Bryce Jordan Center
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-9077
prc4@psu.edu

Mike Connors
Shaler Area School Dist
1660 Butler Plank Rd
Glenshaw, PA 15116
412-492-1200 ext 2901
connorsm@sasd.k12.pa.us

Ed Consalo
Derry Twp School Dist
PO Box 898 Homestead Rd
Hershey, PA 17033
717-534-2501
econsalo@hershey.k12.pa.us

John Conyette
Lawn-Saping
303 Quail Hill Rd
Connellsville, PA 15425
724-628-3445
connorsm@sasd.k12.pa.us

John Coombs
Coombs Sod Farms LLC
84 Route 77
Elmer, NJ 8318
860-358-4763
717-466-2417
cooka@mercersburg.edu

Rob Copp
Wallington Swarthmore School Dist
200 S Providence Rd
Wallingford, PA 19086
610-842-6518
turfman80@verizon.net

James Cornelius
Fisher & Son Co. Inc.
110 Summit Drive
Exton, PA 19341
610-496-7100
jcc@coombsfarms.com

Joe Crescenz
Downington School Dist
10 Juniata Drive
E Fallowfield, PA 19320-4215
610-383-9636
jcrencenz@hotmail.com

Mark Cunningham
Coatesville Area School District
545 E Lincoln Highway
Coatesville, PA 19320
610-466-2417
macham75@yahoo.com

Paul Curtis
Pennsylvania State University
103 Bryce Jordan Center
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-3788
prc4@psu.edu

Alfred Cybart
Upper Merion School Dist
435 Crossfield Rd
King of Prussia, PA 19406
610-203-6408
acybart@umasd.org

Ray D’orazio
East Norriton Township
2501 Stanbridge Rd
Medina, PA 19063
610-892-6127
cad29@psu.edu

Chales Daly IV
Penn State University
25 Yeasley Mill Rd
Mount Joy, PA 17552
610-876-6531
chales@psu.edu

Mike Daubert
Northern Lebanon School Dist
RT 22 & School Drive, Box 100
Frederickburg, PA 17026
610-275-2800
chales@psu.edu

Ryan Davidheiser
Ace-Care
1486 S Hanover St
Pottstown, PA 19465
610-327-3390

Glenn Davis
Lampeter Strasburg School Dist.
PO Box 428
Lampeter, PA 17537
610-496-3311

Anthony Defeo
Lancaster Barnstormers/Brickman
Sportsturf Soc
650 N Prince St
Lancaster, PA 17603
610-654-9674
adefeo@landcasterbarnstormers.com

Ralph DeFrain
Central Columbia School Dist
1777 Old Berwick Rd
Bloomsburg, PA 17815
570-784-2850
rdefrain@clsd.com

Tanner Delvalle
Fisher & Son Co. Inc.
110 Summit Drive
Exton, PA 19341
610-496-7100

Mike Dickert
108 Swedesford Lane
Millersville, PA 17551
717-872-5312
mikedickert@comcast.net

Joe DiNorscia
Laurel Valley Soils
PO Box 5001
Cononcosville, PA 19331
302-494-8405
diromcoj23@hotmail.com

Alfred Cybart
Upper Merion School Dist
435 Crossfield Rd
King of Prussia, PA 19406
610-203-6408
acybart@umasd.org

Ray D’orazio
East Norriton Township
2501 Stanbridge Rd
Medina, PA 19063
610-892-6127
cad29@psu.edu

Chales Daly IV
Penn State University
25 Yeasley Mill Rd
Mount Joy, PA 17552
610-876-6531
chales@psu.edu

Mike Daubert
Northern Lebanon School Dist
RT 22 & School Drive, Box 100
Frederickburg, PA 17026
610-275-2800
chales@psu.edu

Ryan Davidheiser
Ace-Care
1486 S Hanover St
Pottstown, PA 19465
610-327-3390

Glenn Davis
Lampeter Strasburg School Dist.
PO Box 428
Lampeter, PA 17537
610-496-3311

Anthony Defeo
Lancaster Barnstormers/Brickman
Sportsturf Soc
650 N Prince St
Lancaster, PA 17603
610-654-9674
adefeo@landcasterbarnstormers.com

Ralph DeFrain
Central Columbia School Dist
1777 Old Berwick Rd
Bloomsburg, PA 17815
570-784-2850
rdefrain@clsd.com

Tanner Delvalle
Fisher & Son Co. Inc.
110 Summit Drive
Exton, PA 19341
610-496-7100

Mike Dickert
108 Swedesford Lane
Millersville, PA 17551
717-872-5312
mikedickert@comcast.net

Joe DiNorscia
Laurel Valley Soils
PO Box 5001
Cononcosville, PA 19331
302-494-8405
diromcoj23@hotmail.com

Donald DiStefano
DiStefano Landscape
1957 Chestnut Lane
Downingtown, PA 19335
610-269-9800
donalddistefano@gmail.com

Nick DiTrollo
Hilltop Babe Ruth Baseball
1420 Parkside Drive
Haverstown, PA 19083
610-353-6200
nickd@ditrollo.com

Dan Douglas
Reading Phillies
PO Box 13503
Reading, PA 19612
610-375-8469 ext 212
kafmo@aol.com

Ken Dyer
600 S Hanover St
Elizabethtown, PA 17022-2500
717-367-4425

Jeffrey Eastburn
Franklin Township
PO Box 118
20 Municipal Lane
Kemlebes, PA 19370
610-255-5212
jeastburn@franklintownship.us

Phil Easton
Agrim Advanced Technologies
1731 Rockvale Rd
Lancaster, PA 17604
717-490-4692
peaston@agriumat.com

John Eberhart
Gettysburg Area School Dist
900 Biglerville Rd
Gettysburg, PA 17325
717-334-6254 ext 6101

Donald Eck
Upper Saucon Twp.
5500 Camp Meeting Rd
Center Valley, PA 18034
610-282-1711

Keith Evans
Lancaster College
9 E Main Street
Annville, PA 17003
717-867-6340
kevans@lvc.edu

Aaron Fackler
HERCO
102 N Union St
Hummelstown, PA 17036
717-579-9861
cfackler@yahoo.com

David Fick
Profile
PO Box 210
Virginiaville, PA 15643
610-362-8274
dfick@profileproducts.com

Mike Fidanza, PhD
Penn State Unic Berks-Lehigh
PO Box 3099
Reading, PA 19610
maf100@psu.edu

Gail Fitzgerald
Krigger & Co Inc
PO Box 12
Gibsonia, PA 15044
800-252-8873
gailfitz@krigger.com

Charles Fitzgerald
Grass Management Inc
140 Wilson Rd
Coatesville, PA 19320
610-436-5055
grassman@kennett.net

Donald Fowler
113 W Wood St
McConnellburg, PA 17233
717-485-4709
fowdon@comcast.net

Jeff Fowler
Penn State Coop Ext - Venga Co
867 Mercer Rd
Franklin, PA 16323
814-637-7601
jtf2@psu.edu

John Fox
Pittsburgh Steelers Sports Inc
3401 S Water Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15203
412-292-2614
steelcity92364@yahoo.com

Mark Fretz
Hamburg Area School District
701 Windsor Street
Hamburg, PA 19526
610-562-2241 ext 1732
marfre@hasdhawks.org

Robert Galdieri
21 Fawood Drive
Sarananton, PA 18504
570-357-0503
rgaldieri@swbyankees.com

Brad Garrison
Diamond Pro
1341 W Mockingbird Lane
Dallas, TX 75247
1-800-228-2987
bgarrison@txi.com

Chris Garwyla
Penn State University
103 Bryce Jordan Center
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-3788
cag950@psu.edu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richard Godvin</td>
<td>409 Matson Avenue, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705</td>
<td>570-278-1311 ext 674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeryl George</td>
<td>Shippensburg University, PA 17257</td>
<td>717-477-1597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Gialloreto</td>
<td>11 Evelyn Drive, Bethlehem, PA 18018</td>
<td>412-508-6314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerard Givinich</td>
<td>4825 Germantown Avenue, PA 19144</td>
<td>215-843-4195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Goyne</td>
<td>36 Woodland Avenue, Mountaintop, PA 18070</td>
<td>717-656-2601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Gohn</td>
<td>160 Newport Rd, Leola, PA 17540</td>
<td>717-656-2601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Goyne</td>
<td>36 Woodland Avenue, Mountaintop, PA 18070</td>
<td>717-201-5334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Gohn</td>
<td>160 Newport Rd, Leola, PA 17540</td>
<td>717-656-2601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Granieri</td>
<td>996 Stout Drive, Ivyland, PA 18074</td>
<td>215-957-2700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Granieri</td>
<td>996 Stout Drive, Ivyland, PA 18074</td>
<td>215-957-2700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod Groff</td>
<td>Central Pennsylvania College, Berks County</td>
<td>610-693-8507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Haffling</td>
<td>Moravian College, Bethlehem, PA 18018</td>
<td>610-861-1550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Hall</td>
<td>Athletic Turf News, Cleveland, OH 44114</td>
<td>216-706-3739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Hansel</td>
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<td>Township of Upper St. Clair</td>
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</table>
KAFMO MEMBERSHIP LIST

Lee Kozevsky
Syngenta
3710 Amherst Ct
Bethlehem, PA 18020
215-796-0409
lee.kozesv@syngenta.com

George Krajnak, Jr.
Panther Valley School District
1 Panther Way
Lansford, PA 18232
570-657-0049
krajnakg@panthervalley.org

Sid Krebs
Southern York County School Dist
PO Box 128
Glen Rock, PA 17327
717-235-4811

Mark Kreysomich
Pennsylvania State University
103 Bryce Jordan Center
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-6944

Linda Kulputz
KAFMO
1451 Peters Mountain Rd
Dauphin, PA 17018
kulputz1451@gmail.com

Timothy Lansdins
Pottstown Parks & Rec
100 East High Street
Pottstown, PA 19464
610-323-7315

Dr. Peter Landschoot
PSU Dept. of Agronomy
415 ASI Bldg.
University Park, PA 16802
814-863-1017
pjl1@psu.edu

Julie Lanzillo
Worcester Township
PO Box 767
Worcester, PA 19490
610-584-1410
jlanzillo@worcesterwp.com

Tim Laraia
Elizabethtown College
1 Alpha Drive
Elizabethtown, PA 17022
717-361-1560
laraia@etown.edu

Christopher Lauer
The Episcopal Academy
1785 Bishop White Drive
Newtown Square, PA 19073
610-772-5014
clauer@episcopalacademy.org

T. J. Lawson
Rutgers University Dept. of Plant Bio.
Path 59 Dudley Rd
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
732-932-5107
lawson@aesop.rutgers.edu

Jacob Leadbetter
11 Water Street, PO Box 73
Corisca, PA 15829
814-715-1587
jdl5222@psu.edu

Steve Legros
120 Heron Way
Carlisle, PA 17013
443-606-7960
steve@turfanandir.com

Keith Lehman
Pine Grove Area School Dist
103 School St
Pine Grove, PA 17963
570-345-2731 ext 208
klehman@pgasd.com

Tony Leonard
Philadelphia Eagles/Novacare
One Novacare Way
Philadelphia, PA 19145
267-570-4105
leonard@eagles.nfl.com

Kenneth Lepley
Lewisburg Area School Dist
1951 Washington Avenue
PO Box 351
Lewisburg, PA 17837
570-522-3268
lepley_k@dragon.k12.pa.us

Chris Lessig
S & P Processing
PO Box 373 478 Beaver Road
West Pittsburg, PA 15601
727-627-3152

Dustin Levan
322 Fraternity Row
State College, PA 16801
814-404-7297
drl5049@gmail.com

Dr. Doug Linde
Delaware Valley College
3400 S Water St
Pittsburgh, PA 15203
412-697-7159

Andy Linspitz
Pittsburgh Steelders
3400 S Water St
Pittsburgh, PA 15203
412-697-7159

Ed Lloyd
Muhlenberg School District
726 N Temple Blvd
Temple, PA 19560
610-823-6236

Michael Lofthus
University of Delaware
28 New London Rd
Newark, DE 19716
302-831-2792
mloftus@udel.edu

Gene Long
Long Specialties
4 Pleasant View Drive
Grantville, PA 17028
717-507-5427
longspecialties@yahoo.com

Zack Long
Lancaster Bible College
901 Eden Rd
Lancaster, PA 17601
717-560-8200 ext 5401
zlong@lbc.edu

Bonita Lucas
Little League Baseball Inc
PO Box 3485
Williamsport, PA 17701
570-326-1921
bhlucas@littleleague.org

Brian Luetchford
Leaser Paxton Twp
4508 Carrollton Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17112
717-657-5635

Eric Lutz
Conradweiser Area School District
44 Big Spring Rd
Robesonia, PA 19551
610-693-8507
e_lutz@conradweiser.org

Jon MacNamara
Genesis Turfgrass Inc
737 Fieldstone Lane
Elizabethtown, PA 17022
866-763-1828
jonathan@genesisturfgrassinc.com

Neale Magill
Hampden Twp.
230 S Sporting Hill Rd
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
717-661-4951

Shawn Mahonski
Towson University - Athletics
8000 York Road
Towson, MD 21252
410-704-2197
smahonski@towson.edu

Jerry Males
South Fayette Township
515 Millers Run Road
Morgan, PA 15064
412-221-8700

Loren Martin
Terra Gro Inc
PO Box 700
Terre Hill, PA 17581-0790
717-443-6587
terragro@ptd.net

Bill Mast
Aer-Care Inc
1480 South Hanover St
Pottstown, PA 19465
610-327-3390
bmast@aer-core.com

Eli Mast
Mifflinburg Area School Dist
PO Box 285
Mifflinburg, PA 17844
570-966-8247
emast@mifflinburg.org

William May
New Britain Township
207 Park Avenue
Chalfont, PA 18914
215-822-1391
abtener@newbritaintownship.org

Greg Mayfield
Martin Limestone Inc
74 Kurz Road
Denver, PA 17517
800-823-7866
gmayfield@martinlimestone.org

Scott McCabe
Hampden Twp.
230 S Sporting Hill Rd
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
717-761-4951

Timothy McCordell
Windview Athletic Fields
727 Street Road
Cochrannie, PA 19330
610-608-4290
cccctim@aol.com

Christopher McCordell
Windview Athletic Fields
230 S Sporting Hill Rd
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
717-661-4951

Philip McCarty
Trenton Thunder
7212 Kelly Drive
East Norriton, PA 19401
424-841-8464
daniel.mcginley@gmail.com

Grant McKnight
Natural Sand Company
4783 Harlamsburg Road
Slippery Rock, PA 16057
724-530-2298
jpaherson@naturalsand.com

Andrew McNitt
PSU Dept. of Agronomy
116 ASI Bldg.
University Park, PA 16802
814-863-1368
asm4@psu.edu

Neal McNew
Muhlenberg Twp Parks & Rec
5401 Leesport Avenue
Temple, PA 19560
610-929-1503 ext 264
mmcnew@muhlenbergwp.com

Jeff Meadows
Juniata College
1700 Moore St
Huntingdon, PA 16652
814-644-3396
meadowj@juniata.edu

William Meisser
Middletown Area School Dist
100 Industrial Lane
Middletown, PA 17057
717-948-3327

Collin Meyers
115 Delawre Road
PA Furnace, PA 16865
814-883-6980
asm5035@psu.edu

Cont. from page 7
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Sportsturf Magazine</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KAFMO MEMBERSHIP LIST

Greg Walters
South Hanover Township
111 W Third St
Hershey, PA 17033
717-566-0224

Jim Welshans
100 Kokomo Avenue
Hummelstown, PA 17036
jew2@psu.edu

John Werley
Werley Associates
7108 Church Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15202
412-766-1221

Shawn Werley
Jones Turf Management Inc
960 Swedesford Road
Exton, PA 19341
610-644-7224
jonesturf@gmail.com

John White, III
West Shore School Dist.
507 Fishing Creek Road, Box 803
New Cumberland, PA 17070-0803
717-938-9577

Seth Whitehill
Little League Baseball Inc
PO Box 3485
539 US Route 15 Hwy
Williamsport, PA 17701
570-326-1921 ext 259
swhitehill@littleleague.org

Lynda Wightman
Hunter Industries
3933 Trails End Road
Missoula, MT 59803
406-273-3073
lynda.wightman@hunterindustries.com

Michael Wildasin
South Western School Dist.
225 Bowman Road
Hanover, PA 17331
717-652-2500
mike_wildasin@swsd.k12.pa.us

Steve Williams
176 Gordon Drive
Gettysburg, PA 17325
717-337-1861
stephenwilliams_52@hotmail.com

T J Willoughby
Willoughby Landscaping Service
14 Park Avenue
Danville, PA 17821
570-764-0185
pstu1missy@yahoo.com

Jeremy Witt
Philadelphia Phillies
One Citizens Bank Way
Philadelphia, PA 19148
215-218-5493
jwitt@philadelphia Phillies.com

Bill Wise
Hunter Industries
2040 W Greenleaf St
Allentown, PA 18104
215-439-0093
bill.wise@hunterindustries.com

Craig Wojszwillo
Alvernia University
400 St. Bernadine Street
Reading, PA 19607
610-796-8322
craig.wojszwillo@alvernia.edu

Kevin Wood
Bloomsburg University Athletics
Nelson Field House
Bloomsburg, PA 17815
570-389-4371
kwood2@bloomu.edu

Ronald Woodhead
Centre Reg Parks and Rec.
2643 Gateway Drive, Suite 1
State College, PA 16801
814-231-3071
rwoodhead@crcog.net

J William Woodring
Heritage Creek Golf Club
1789 York Road
Warminster, PA 18974
610-703-6264
jbird_cigar@hotmail.com

Philip Woods
Quakertown Midget Football Assoc
204 Hackberry ct.
Warrington, PA 18976
267-496-2443
Philwoods72@hotmail.com

Doug Yager
Lancaster Bible College
901 Eden Road
Lancaster, PA 17601
717-560-8200 ext 5263
dyager@lbc.edu

Jim Yamnitzky
The Tor Company/EH Griffith Inc.
2250 Palmer St
Pittsburgh, PA 15218
412-848-2024
jimmy@ehgriffith.com

Kevin Yeiser
Lebanon Valley College
Maint Cen 101 College Avenue
Annville, PA 17003
717-867-6342
yeiser@lvc.edu

Michael Yerger
Pottstown Parks & Rec.
100 East High Street
Pottstown, PA 19464
610-323-7315

Rich Yoder
Yoder Hill Landscape
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Nescopeck, PA 18635
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2011 KAFMO CUP recap

The 2011 KAFMO CUP golf tournament was held at Dauphin Highlands Golf Club in Harrisburg October 10, 2011. This year’s event raised money for the Waddington/Harper Awards Fund and provided a great day of golf, food and beverages for the 80 players and volunteers who attended. Hole sponsorships were presented with new signs bought by KAFMO that can be reused allowing more money to go back into the scholarship fund.

The day started with an 11:00 registration and an 12:00 shotgun start, dinner, awards and the raffle followed. Lots of prizes, challenge contests and a great fall day helped to make this year’s event enjoyable and challenging for all who participated. Congratulations to the 2011 KAFMO CUP Champions James Wian III, Tom Kinzer, Kevin Bevenour and Sean Cooper.

I would like to thank all of our sponsors, players and volunteers who helped make the 2011 KAFMO CUP a success and I hope to see everyone again next year at Dauphin Highlands Monday Oct. 8, 2012.

Bobby Piccolo,
Tournament Chairman

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Turfgrass research update from Penn State

By Tom Serensits

At Penn State’s Center for Sports Surface Research, we continue to focus on both natural and synthetic turf research. We have a number of exciting projects underway and look forward to new projects that are already planned for the spring. The research section of our website includes links to many of our studies along with other related research (http://cropsoil.psu.edu/ssrc/research).

Natural Turf Research Projects

Trinexapac-ethyl on sports turf. Since our last research update, we have completed our second study evaluating the effects of trinexapac-ethyl (TE) applications on the divot resistance of Kentucky bluegrass athletic fields. Our results showed that applying TE monthly from May through July improved divot resistance in the fall by up to 20%. TE improved divot resistance most on a high-sand rootzone, but benefits were also found on native soil. Results from our studies indicate that the application TE throughout the spring and summer serves to “pre-stress condition” the turf before fall play by increasing tiller density and rooting. Our studies simulated fall-only turf use, such as on a stadium field. A TE program is not recommended for high-use fields under continuous play.

The new tall fescue—a viable option for sports turf? The current generation of turf-type tall fescue may offer an acceptable alternative to perennial ryegrass and/or Kentucky bluegrass on athletic fields in certain situations. We are investigating summer establishment methods that maximize turf coverage at the end of the fall playing season. We are looking at various seeding rates (6 to 18 lbs/1000 ft²) and several nitrogen rates (2 to 7 lbs./1000 ft²). Initial results show that for a short establishment period (10 weeks before use), a low seeding rate and a high nitrogen rate maximize turf coverage later in the fall (after fall field use). For a longer establishment time, higher seeding rates and lower nitrogen rates provided the greatest turf coverage in late fall. We have also observed that tall fescue was less traffic tolerant than perennial ryegrass when traffic was initiated 10 weeks after seeding. However, when traffic was initiated 14 weeks after seeding, all turf-type tall fescue exhibited greater traffic tolerance than perennial ryegrass.

Perennial ryegrass traffic tolerance. As part of the NTEP program, we are evaluating the traffic tolerance of all perennial ryegrass cultivars in the current trial. While we are excited to see how each cultivar performs, we are especially interested in the traffic tolerance and recoverability of the new stoloniferous ryegrasses.

Synthetic Turf Research Projects

Surface temperature. In the June 2011 edition of SportsTurf magazine, we published the results of our study examining the effects of various synthetic turf components and systems on surface temperature. We tested various infill types, infill colors, and fiber colors and found little evidence of significant cooling with any of the tested materials. In addition to the laboratory study that was discussed in the article, we collected surface temperature data from samples from new field installations.

Fiber Wear Testing. With help from field managers and owners, we have collected samples of various synthetic turf products from new field installations and tested fiber wearability under simulated field use. This is an ongoing project and the progress report on our website is updated regularly (http://cropsoil.psu.edu/ssrc/documents/lisport-report.pdf). We continue to invite field managers and owners to contact us about submitting synthetic turf samples from new field installations.

Human Performance and Safety. We recently completed a study in conjunction with Penn State’s biomechanics laboratory examining human performance and safety on various playing surfaces. Data was gathered from human subjects performing various athletic maneuvers while wearing several types of footwear. We are currently combining these results with data obtained with our traction tester (Pennfoot) to further improve our understanding of how the playing surface affects performance and safety.

Surface Characteristics – Hardness, traction, and abrasion. We continue to measure and track various characteristics of synthetic turf playing surfaces such as hardness (Gmax), traction, and abrasion. Results from our multi-year study comparing these characteristics on various synthetic turf systems can be found on the research section of our website (http://cropsoil.psu.edu/ssrc).

Baseball Research Projects. We also continue to evaluate baseball infield mixes and how components of infield mixes influence playability characteristics such as ball bounce and traction.

Tom Serensits is manager of Penn State’s Sports Surface Research Center at University Park.

Dr. Peter Landschoot, professor of turfgrass science, at the Valentine Turfgrass Research Center in University Park.

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