GCSAA honors trio for Distinguished Service

By MARK LESLIE

S AN FRANCISCO — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's (GCSAA) Distinguished Service Award could be named The Beyond the Call of Duty Award. Given for contributions advancing the superintendents' profession, the award this year will be presented here to Drs. Milt Engelke of Texas A&M University, Ali Harivandi of the University of California-Davis Cooperative Extension Service and Michael Hurdzan (see related story, page 30), a golf course architect based in Columbus, Ohio.

"To me, it's what they do outside the scope of their job" that determines if a person is worthy of the honor, said Gary Grigg, GCSAA vice president and member of the board that voted on the honor. "We never ask Milt, for instance, to do anything. But he serves, speaks, teaches, and is a champion of the superintendent."

All three men were unanimous selections, Grigg said, adding that a two-thirds vote is needed. At turfgrass breeder, Engelke has made vast advances in bentgrass, zoysiagrass and buffalograss. Harivandi, an extension specialist in environmental horticulture, has performed extensive applied research programs. But both, along with Hurdzan, went beyond the call, giving high amounts of time to local, regional and national turfgrass industry affairs.

Now they will reap a reward. As Harivandi said: "I am still basking in the glory of it. I am really honored."

Engelke has been on the U.S. Golf Association's Technical Research Committee since 1984, as well as serving on the GCSAA's Technical Advisory Committee from 1987 to 1992 and now on its Research Committee.

"It has been an absolute pure joy working with GCSAA and with the quality of educational programs it has and the depth of its individual members," Engelke said. "Its education and certification programs are designed to improve the golf course superintendent and help him do a better job. I can embrace and support it energetically, and I have."

While sharing his knowledge through various educational outlets, Engelke has headed up breeding programs that have led to such bentgrasses as Cato and Crenshaw, prairie buffalograss and new zoysiagrasses.

Pointing to the financial support superintendents associations as well as the USGA and private corporations have given turf research at Texas A&M and elsewhere, Engelke said: "It is truly a marriage of associations, academia and industry."

Prairie buffalograss is the first to hit the market as low-maintenance buffalograss.

Cato and Crenshaw are "the first significant steps toward putting good genetics into bentgrass development as far as A&M is concerned, and giving the superintendents' stronger tools to work with," Engelke said.

And he added: "Very soon, you will see a marked change in the zoysiagrass market. Some new vegetative-type zoysias will be released which should impact superintendents' management requirements, the options they have available, as well as sports turf and parks and recreation people and homeowners."

"They are more commercially viable with natural environmental conditions but have much faster production time, much longer color retention, less maintenance and lower water requirements than even Meyer zoysia has."

Meanwhile, from his headquarters in Hayward, Harivandi has worked in two areas vital to California — use of effluent water and reducing green clippings.

Because of his PhD in turfgrass management with emphasis on soil and water salinity, Harivandi was perfectly situated to begin with people on the issue and gathering more information all the time. In 1994 he taught the first one-day seminar on wastewater use at the GCSAA conference in Dallas. It will be repeated this year.

Today, he receives calls from the world over seeking his advice. His recommendation? "Every plant produces a different quality water," Harivandi said. "You may or may not have..."
Supers salute Hiers

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tuary Program for Golf Courses
Audubon Society in concert with
administered by the New York
the U.S. Golf Association. The
tributions to the game of golf —
exceptional environmental con-
s AA board of directors based on
perintendents' image as stew-
dards of the land. It will be pre-
sented to Hiers at the opening
national Conference and Show
in Naples, Fla., the first Audubon
Signature facility and a world-
defender, has fought for years to
illustrate that superintendents
are environmentalists of the first
region Environmental Steward
Award and the Florida Re-
er John James Audubon Stew-
d Award last year.

A member of the GCSAA Gov-
ernment Relations Committee
and co-chairman of the Florida Turfgrass Associations External
Affairs Committee, he was re-
cently named the Florida Golf
Co Superintendents Association's government liaison.
Hiers has actively presented
the case for golf courses region-
ally with tours for schoolchil-
dren, seminars and local speak-
ing engagements.

"I can tell you in individual
categories where other superin-
tendents have done better than
we have," said Hiers. "That's
where I got a lot of the fodder for
doing this. And if it had not been
for a company like Collier Enter-
prises and someone like Jeff Birr,
who are committed to giving me
that opportunity and then backing
me up with the necessary
resources, we wouldn't be talk-
ing. Collier Enterprises was com-
mited to this as much as we
were. You have to have not only
financial, but moral support."
He also credited his staff,
Collier's architect, Arthur Hills
of Toledo, Ohio, and his lead
designer, Mike Dasher.

Performing the work for the
Signature Program is a money-
saver, he said, pointing to much
lower costs for electricity, pesti-
cides, fuel and manpower.
"It is good for the game, good
for the environment and good
duced costs," Hiers said.

Having completed the Collier's
Reserve project, Hiers said he
could do it "20 percent better a
second time."

Passing these tips along to the
industry, and spreading the good
word about golf courses to the
general public are next on Hiers'
agenda. He has speaking engage-
ments scheduled at turf industry
and co-chairman of the Florida

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Harivandi & Engelke

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lems... Superintendents need to analyze the
water and evaluate its suitability for irrigating
their golf course based on the type of grass,
plants and soil they have. That is the first step.
"If, indeed, they have very low-quality water,
they must think of remedies and there are
many ways to deal with that: such as blend with
a better quality water or grow salt-tolerant
grases" or inject acid, or gypsum or another
chemical into the irrigation system.
Harivandi is also spearheading research
projects to reduce green waste, especially grass
clippings. A law was passed in California in 1989
which requires all municipalities to reduce solid
The Alameda County specialist found that
mulch mowers are a great help. Also, he said,
"You can use slower-growth grasses, apply more
effective growth regulators with not much tox-
icity, use recycling mowers and manipulate your
fertilization program to slow growth. The
combination will reduce the amount of clip-
ings tremendously. You can basically elimi-
nate the grass clippings."

The 1982 and 1992 recipient of the Northern
California Turfgrass Council's Research and
Education Award, Harivandi was the GCSA of
Northern California's selection for its Distinguished Service Award in 1996.

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