'95 Show Me!

Rossi-winner Duich spreads out admiration to others in golf

By MARK LESLIE

SAN FRANCISCO — Dr. Joseph Duich was the man of the evening at the Golf Course Builders Association of America's (GCBAA) annual banquet, but he turned the table on his hosts, citing their work in golf.

Receiving the Don A. Rossi Humanitarian Award from the GCBAA, Duich said: "We know who gets all the press about golf courses. One day on TV, they ... will mention who actually built some of these magnificent golf courses."

Saying he admires the "shapers" who operate bulldozers and fine-tune architects' designs, he added that "99.999 percent of the population would devastate a landscape." And he pointed to the rigors of golf course construction, including its hard, dirty labor and time spent away from family.

Duich quoted his Penn State University department head, the late Dr. Howard Sprague, as saying that one should only be judged by those who've known him. "I have been in this industry long enough to know I can truly judge the value and contributions of golf course builders. And I salute you and thank you very, very sincerely for this award," he said. "It is very gratifying."

Tribute was paid to Duich by two former students — Golf Course Superintendents Association of America President Joseph Baidy and U.S. Golf Association Green Section regional director Stanley Zontek.

"I knew Don Rossi. He was a great man, a friend to us all, and quite literally a friend to the game of golf," Zontek said. "I know Joe Duich. He, too, is a great man, a major contributor to the turfgrass on which the game is played, and perhaps most importantly of all, a teacher and a friend."

Referring to the many dominant turfgrasses developed under Duich during his years guiding the Golf Turf Management program at Penn State, Zontek said: "But the grasses are not what Dr. Duich is most proud of. It's the people — the students...

"The sun doesn't set on courses containing Penn State grass, nor, do I suspect, does it set on graduates of the Penn State program."

Speaking of Duich's personal side, Baidy said: "He was concerned about our [superintendents'] depression and stress. He was concerned about the divorce rate among the students. And he shared that with us.

"He followed our careers and still follows them. His students are one of his greatest concerns."

Duich taught more than 5,700 students in more than 36 years before retiring in 1991.

The humanitarian award is given in memory of the late Mr. Rossi, former executive director of the National Golf Foundation and GCBAA.

Bioremediation technologies invented to solve UST leakage problems

By MARK LESLIE

SAN FRANCISCO — Underground storage tank (UST) leaks, a frightening thought not very long ago, are being neutralized by new but simple technologies, according to Dr. Ronald F. Turco of Purdue University.

Speaking on bioremediation at the International Golf Course Conference and Show, Turco said an estimated 25 to 50 percent of all USTs are leaking and most USTs leak within 15 years of installation.

"The real problem occurs when there is an aquifer," he said, adding that the leaking material goes to the bottom of the aquifer and forms tar balls, or, in the case of gasoline, floats on top of the aquifer and moves out of it along the gradient.

Leakage introduces chemicals at extremely high levels, Turco said, and "the subsurface ecosystem has very poor degradation powers." The solution is to create degradation in that subsurface.

"Smaller-scale bioremediation is usually relating to gasoline, and gas is very degradable by bacteria under the right conditions," Turco said. "You must make bacteria in the subsurface do the job. The alternative is to dig it out. And that means huge dollars.

"The challenge is to get the contaminant out of the subsurface and do it in such a way as to minimize more damage and maximize microbial activity."

Bioventing, air sparging and soil vacuum extraction are the 1990s' techniques overcoming the challenges. Turco explained:

• Bioventing is pumping air into the well. This forces the contaminated area to generate a microbially favorable environment to allow degradation.

The advantage of bioventing, he said, is that "it employs a cheap source of air, treats volatile and non-volatile contamination fairly well, and is low-cost and generally consistent.

"The trick is to avoid pumping too much air onto the zone."

• Air sparging is identical except the forced air is moved through a contaminated saturated zone.

• Soil vacuum extraction (SVE) — "a very recent practice" — is coming on line. A huge vacuum pump pulls air out of the ground. By sucking air out of the soil, other, fresh air is drawn into that zone, keeping air circulation moving.

Stossel, Baidy, et al on environment

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going to be around for 20 years."

When the country spends "a ton of money trying to squeeze the last pesticide off a golf course, or the last amount of formaldehyde out of the manufacturing process, we are making America a little poorer," Stossel said. "The factory doesn't open. The fruit costs more. Fruits are supposed to make you live longer, so if you make more pesticides more expensive that kills them by denying them fruits and vegetables... Wealthier is healthier.

"We do not, in the press, ever put these things in perspective. We are excessive about the trivial stuff, and we may be killing people by making the bottom line worse. Maybe the new headline should be: 'New EPA rule saves six, kills 60.' "

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"The superintendent is a very important starting point to the educational process," said Erusha, director of education for the USGA Green Section. "The owner, builder and architect must be involved as well. We have a technical language all our own. We must use a language people can relate to. Assess their perspective and interest and formulate your answer accordingly.

"We know if fertilizers and insects are properly chosen and applied, they don't harm the environment," she added.

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"Golf is an easy target" for environmental activists wanting publicity, said Dodson, president of the New York Audubon. "The public perception is that 'golf is an elitist sport that is unconnected to the vast majority of the American public. Golf managers have an almost uncontrollable urge to manage every square inch of earth under the golf course with wall-to-wall, closely cut turfgrass which uses huge quantities of water and chemicals, making an elite, attractive chemical waste site.' "

"Most golf courses embrace the idea of environmental sustainability," and on that concept all environmental groups agree, he said. He urged superintendents to "document — with hard numbers and scientific evidence — the value well-sited, designed and managed golf courses can have on the environment.

"Look for every opportunity to speak with and befriend members of your course, organizations, schools, etc. and encourage them to follow your examples of environmental stewardship."

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"The folks on the front line, discussing [matters] with environmentalists, make the difference," said Pyle, whose 15-year-old organization boasts 30,000 members across the spectrum of people who deal with chemicals.

Since its origins, when it successfully defeated an attempt to outlaw phenoxy herbicides, the Oregon group "kicked into an offensive mode," she said, to actively bring "a bigger comfort level to the public...

"The we moved to the legislative arena. If it's not law, it's not the case. We ensured we were at the table when legislation is introduced. We said to environmentalists: 'We agree. But let's have legislation based on fact.' "

Every state, Pyle said, "can have the success Oregon has had."