

GCSAA honors troika for Distinguished Service

By MARK LESLIE

SAN 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. A 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 (USGA) Turfgrass Research Committee since 1984, as well as serving on the GCSAA's Technical Research 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



Dr. Ali Harivandi



Dr. Milton 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 that wholeheartedly, 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 be put on 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 we will be releasing 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 compatible 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 work 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 several years ago when the use of effluent came on the scene, particularly affecting golf courses. He published a booklet through the university and started working 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 prob-

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Supers salute Hiers

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tuary Program for Golf Courses administered by the New York Audubon Society in concert with the U.S. Golf Association. The recipient is chosen by the GC-SAA board of directors based on exceptional environmental contributions to the game of golf — contributions that exemplify superintendents' image as stewards of the land. It will be presented to Hiers at the opening ceremonies of the GCSAA International Conference and Show in San Francisco.

William Timothy (Tim) Hiers, a certified golf course superintendent, has fought for years to illustrate that superintendents are environmentalists of the first degree. Now at Collier's Reserve in Naples, Fla., the first Audubon Signature facility and a worldwide model of environmental excellence, he received the first-ever John James Audubon Steward Award and the Florida Region Environmental Steward Award last year.

A member of the GCSAA Government Relations Committee and co-chairman of the Florida Turfgrass Associations External Affairs Committee, he was recently named the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association's government liaison.

Hiers has actively presented the case for golf courses regionally with tours for schoolchildren, seminars and local speaking engagements.

"I can tell you in individual categories where other superintendents 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 Enterprises 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 talking. Collier Enterprises was committed 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, pesticides, fuel and manpower.

"It is good for the game, good for the environment and good for business," 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 engagements scheduled at turf industry events, and is constantly addressing schools and civic organizations. He also leads schoolchildren on tours of Collier's Reserve, GOLF COURSE NEWS

because "observation is worth a lot more than dissertation."

"As long as we're involved, we can help pass laws that make sense. But as long as we have politicians and people who label themselves as environmentalists writing laws, they are always going to be superfluous, extreme, capricious and counterproductive," he said. "Superintendents have been and will continue to be the leaders in many of these [environmental] areas. We're in the trenches. We're the ones who have to deal with the regulators and the fire marshals, EPA and club members."

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.

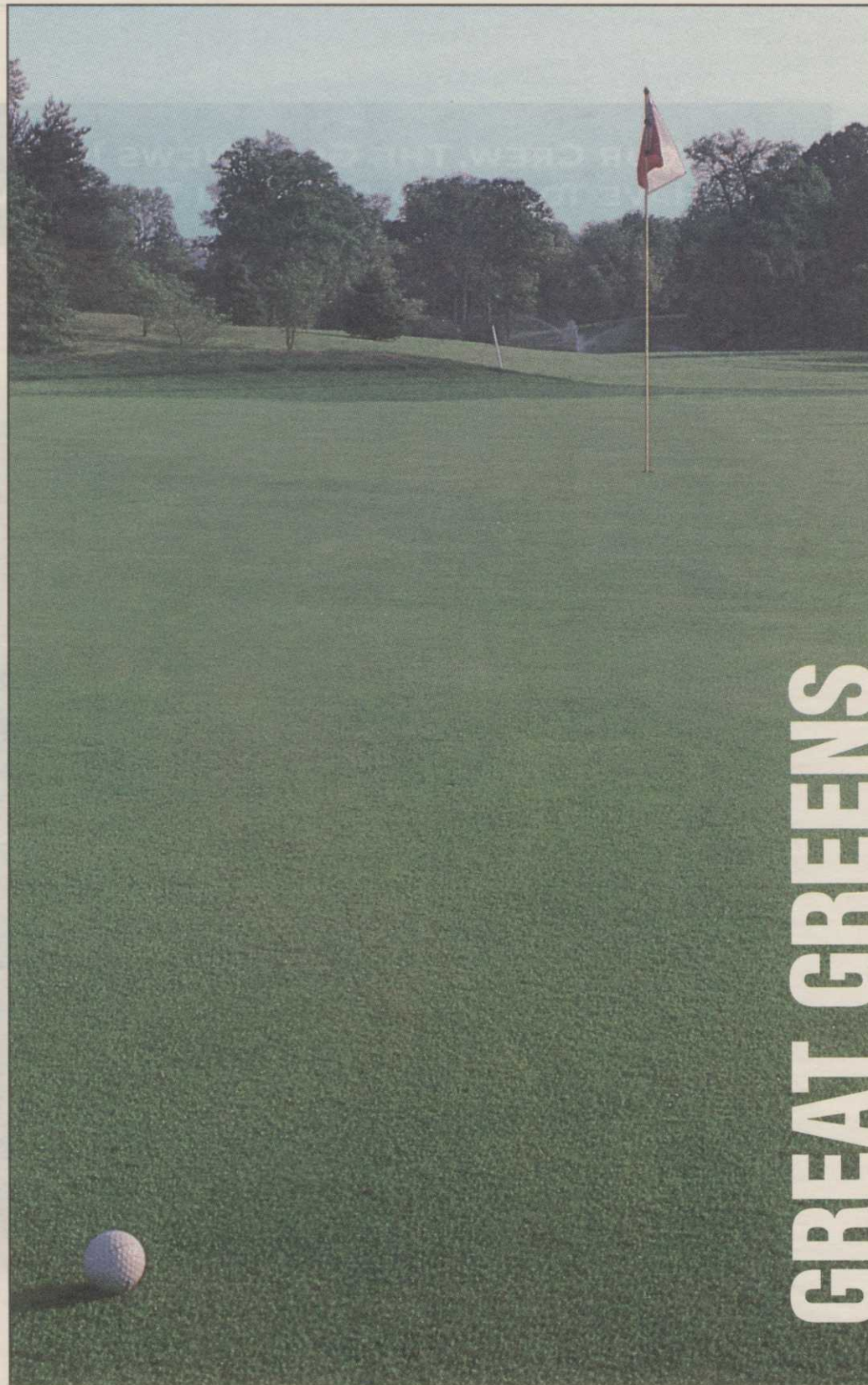
"If, indeed, they have very low-quality water, they must think of remedies and there are many ways to deal with that: such as blend with a better quality water or grow salt-tolerant grasses" or inject acid, or gypsum or another chemical into the irrigation system.

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 waste by 25 by 1995, and 50 percent by 2000.

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 toxicity, use recycling mowers and manipulate your fertilization program to slow growth. The combination will reduce the amount of clippings tremendously. You can basically eliminate 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 1990.



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