

1993 WTA Winter Conference is Big Hit

By Tom Schwab

The Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Winter Conference keeps evolving every year to top the success of its previous year. Rumor has it that chairpersons Wayne Otto and Ed Devinger have permanently volunteered to organize this conference since they do such a great job. Also appreciated is the skill introducing the speakers and adding comments provided by session chairpersons, Bob Erdahl, Scott Schaller, Roger Bell, and Bill Vogel.

New for this year was a Wednesday afternoon general session on "Native Prairie Restoration" presented by Molly Murray of the UW Arboretum, and one on "Improving Weed Control" by Frank Rossi. More time was also given for the trade show this year. This time with these exhibitors was really appreciated. They have so much helpful knowledge and they support this industry exceedingly well.

Olympia Resort in Oconomowoc turned out to be a very nice site for this 12th annual event. This is the third year in a row WTA has returned to Olympia. The only complaint aired was about the weather—which Wayne promises to fix next year.

Welcoming us and leading off the opening session was WTA president, Gary Zwirlein. He had the privilege to introduce the newest member of the U.W. turf research team, plant pathologist Dr. Julie Meyer. Julie comes to the U.W. after receiving her Ph.D. and working as an assistant professor at North Carolina State. Next she worked for the University of Bayreuth in Germany as a research scientist studying acid rain. She is now enthusi-

astic to delve into research on turf in Wisconsin. Julie said she'd like to hear from you, especially regarding your turf problems and how you deal with them. Her office phone is (608)262-9795.

Julie was just the first in the 1992 Research Report session. We also heard reports from our new professor of Horticulture, Dr. Frank Rossi, Soils Professor, Dr. Wayne Kussow, and Entomology professor, Dr. Chuck Koval. It's exciting hearing this group's reports. They are all such forward thinkers working on a gamut of things including: management techniques that require less chemical inputs with no decline in quality, ways to better work with beneficial insects, understanding weed biology better to control with less inputs, using alternative or waste products for pest control, and looking at the best fertilizer programs to get better color and health with less clippings. We'll continue to be top managers and environmentalists using this information generated by our U.W. researchers.

After lunch Tuesday and again Wednesday morning, participants had a choice of two groups of concurrent educational sessions to attend. These talks had information for everyone in the turf industry; be it the golf course manager, park manager, lawn care professional, athletic field manager, sod grower or landscaper. Some talks were for specific groups, others for everyone. All were wonderfully presented and given enough time to adequately develop the subject and get questions answered.



Neither Wayne Kussow nor...



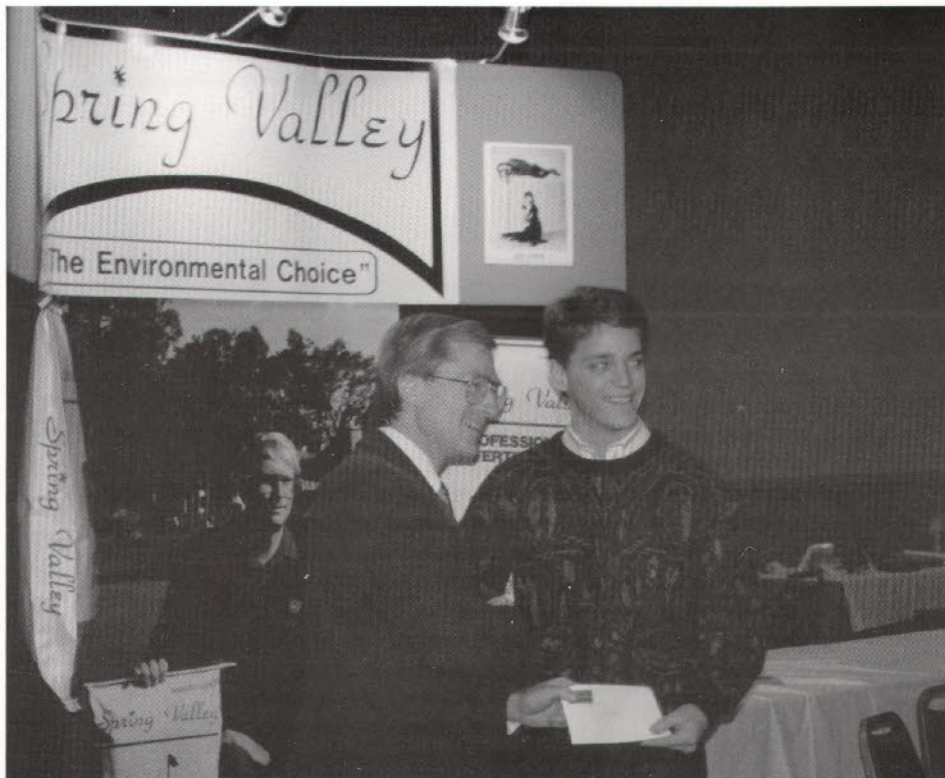
Bob Vavrek can speak without his hands!

I'd like to report to you which talks were my favorite but honestly they were all superb. My only regret is that I couldn't get to all of them. Dr. Clark Throssel of Purdue University gave an excellent talk on putting green speed. Dr. Rossi gave three talks during the conference while hardly breaking a sweat. My favorite was his research report on what we'll be looking at for turf management in the future. Kussow and Koval presented good practical knowledge in their respective fields that we can put right to work today.

Other talks were by Jeff Saatkamp, a state agri-chemical inspector, who updated us on new Ag 29 legislation. Dan Quast presented information on the state of the Turf Grass Information File. Gary Schinderle of Golf Enviro Systems Inc. gave a talk on Improving Irrigation Water Quality. Mike Trigg, President of the Sports Turf Managers Association and Bob Vavrek of the USGA had information for athletic field managers and golf course managers respectively.



There was a very nice noon luncheon crowd.



Uw Turf Management Student Chad Kempf received the 1993 Spring Valley scholarship from Bill Vogel.

Following Wednesday's luncheon were numerous scholarship and research presentations. John Turner presented a \$1000 Nor Am scholarship to U.W. Turf Management student Martin Posset and Bill Vogel gave the Spring Valley scholarship of \$500 to Chad Kempf also from the turf program. Spring Valley also gave \$750 to the WTA for turfgrass research from its Ciba Geigy promotion. Other research donations to WTA were from the Northern Great Lakes GCSA-\$200;

Horst Distributing-\$1,000; Ciba Geigy-\$3,975; Reinders Turf and Irrigation Daconil Promotion-\$5,330 (five year total exceeds \$26,000); Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendent Association-\$10,123; Wisconsin Landscape Federation-\$3,000; and Westmoor Country Club-\$2,800.

The Milwaukee Brewers Director of Communications, Laurel Prieb, was Wednesday's special luncheon speaker. He had many stories on the workings within a baseball franchise. He



New WTA president Curt Larson.

said the Brewers have all the pieces in place to chase the pennant. The marketing department is also working hard trying to get the new stadium built which he admits is a big job since the Brewers have "Milwaukee revenues and New York expenses." He had many more interesting comments and did great answering questions from the audience.

Lastly during the luncheon we were introduced to our new WTA President, Curt Larson. He presented a challenge to all WTA members that each of us should try to enlist one new member to the WTA in 1993. We'll be in good hands under Curt's knowledgeable direction. Thanks were also given to outgoing president Gary Zwerlein for his years of dedicated service to the turfgrass industry.

What a great conference. Let's all take up Curt's challenge and find that new member. 🍷

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