

# EDITORIALS

From the President

## JOE ZEPPA, RUGGED INDIVIDUALIST

**JOSEPH ZEPPA WAS** the 18th President of IADC in 1959. Back then we were called the American Association of Drilling Contractors (AAODC) and the chief elected member was designated the President (now the Chairman of the Association).

I never had the pleasure of knowing Joe Zeppa, but he is my favorite figure in IADC history. He immigrated to America from Italy in 1906. In 1931 he started **Delta Drilling Company** in Tyler,



Lee Hunt, President

Texas with three partners: a native American and two Russian immigrants.

Joe Zeppa, President of Delta Drilling, also is one of the "Founding Fathers" of AAODC/IADC. In a speech to the First Annual Meeting of the Association in 1941 he began by reminding his colleagues that: "Next to the farmer the oilman is the most rugged of individualists; and among oilmen the drilling contractor is the most rugged of all."

He was an ardent advocate of establishing solid principles of doing business for drilling contractors. The IADC Model Contracts are a direct outgrowth of his early efforts.

I have a favorite story about Joe Zeppa, told to me by **Vinicio Di Cocco**. It seems that Joe wanted to buy a drilling company in "the old country". He found a small operation in Italy and quietly purchased it from the three debt strapped owners.



Joe Zeppa: 18th in a distinguished line of IADC leaders

On a Christmas morning, Vinicio was sitting in the small office taking a morning report by telephone. In the weak light of sunrise, he saw a stranger peering through the window, tapping on the glass. Vinicio opened the door and the stranger entered, stamping his feet, shaking off the icy cold. Slipping off his gloves and vigorously rubbing his hands together for warmth, the stranger asked, "Who are you?"

Vinicio told him he was the office assistant. "What are you doing here before sunrise on Christmas morning?" the stranger continued. "Taking morning reports," Vinicio replied. "Why you?" queried the stranger. "Well," Vinicio reports replying, "The other men are married and should be with their families today. Someone has to look after the rigs, so why not me?"

According to Vinicio, the stranger looked around the tiny office, nodded, clapped him on the shoulder and said, "I'm Joe Zeppa, the new owner and you're my new President. Better finish taking those reports," then turned and went back into the cold morning.

Joe Zeppa's son, **Keating** (IADC's 37th President in 1978), gave me his father's AAODC lapel pin to present to Vinicio Di Cocco when Vinicio retired as President of Delta Drilling-Italy. This we did at a small ceremony in Milan, Italy, in 1999 during an IADC Well Control Conference.

Joe, Vinicio and Delta Drilling are all gone now. Time moves on and things change.

I've been told that for the rest of his days, Vinicio Di Cocco wore a cherished object in his lapel, a pin belonging to an old friend.

Time moves on. Some things do not change.

Things like friendship, respect and the bonds that are forged among the rugged individuals who work in the drilling industry. ■

From the Chairman

## IADC: STEP CHANGES FOR TECHNOLOGY

**THE TOOLS AND** techniques of drilling has transformed itself several times over in the 65 years since IADC was founded. While the sweeping majority of the world's hydrocarbons come from rotary drilling rigs turning to the right, our industry has been laudably innovative in enhancing drilling efficiency and effectiveness.

Advancing drilling technology has long been among IADC's missions. This is most visible within **DRILLING CONTRACTOR**, IADC's official magazine, and our technical conferences. IADC World Drilling, which focuses on enabling technologies and emerging markets is an important example of this, where operators, contractors and service companies come together to examine the latest breakthroughs that promise to enhance efficiency and bring economic viability to marginal projects. (This year's World Drilling will convene 9-10 June in Rome.) And, of course, we co-sponsor with SPE our annual IADC/SPE Drilling Conference and the regional technology events we co-sponsor in the Middle East and Asia Pacific.

In the background, working feverishly away, however, are IADC's technical committees. These dedicated volunteers, assisted by IADC'S highly trained staff, strive continuously to advance technology and—just as importantly—the commercial interests of technical service providers and their customers.

Take, for example, IADC's Underbalanced Operations and Managed Pressure Drilling Committee. The UBO/MPD Committee has a long line of accomplishments that have greatly advanced these leading-edge technologies. These include a classification system for underbalanced wells, guidelines for UBO fluid selection, gap analysis, HSE planning guidelines for UBO activities, and RIG PASS and WellCAP accreditation programs for UBO.

Currently, the UBO/MPD Committee is developing API Specifications for Rotating Control Devices, guidelines for corrosion control for UB drilling and overall guidelines for UBO. This last item is a compilation of practices with the industry today. (You can learn more at the UBO/MPD Committee section of the IADC website, [www.iadc.org](http://www.iadc.org).)

IADC also works closely with the **Drilling Engineering Association**, the premier industry group for encouraging drilling research and development. If you have never attended one of DEA's quarterly meetings, I encourage you to do so. These eventful meetings review cutting-edge technology that operators look to for the next step change in drilling optimization.

IADC is all about drilling for energy. Whether that drilling takes the form of yesteryear's cable rig, turning to the right with a modern rotary rig, or drilling into the future with laser beams or some other futuristic technology, IADC will be there with sleeves rolled up to make it happen. ■



Edward D. Kautz, Chairman