Venerated newsmen ignore the basics, again

Before I get started, let me say that I’ve never liked Paul Harvey. I never liked his voice or his freewheeling use of powerful opinions disguised as unbiased reporting. I never liked the way he takes complex issues and boils them down to 125 words and passes them off as common sense.

His reckless, uninformed diatribes (see story page 1) shouldn’t be called “News and Comments” — just “Comment” would suffice.

Harvey’s standard operating procedure is all too evident — and after my years in the daily newspaper world, all too familiar. Holed up in his Chicago office, he pulls a couple stories together and proceeds to lambaste a profession he clearly knows nothing about. He doesn’t make calls. He doesn’t check facts. He doesn’t engage in substantive discussion. He doesn’t bore his listeners with research and data. He doesn’t invite differing viewpoints. He doesn’t challenge his audience to think for themselves. He doesn’t speak to our fears or our dreams. He doesn’t do his homework. He doesn’t go to primary sources. He doesn’t write from the heart. He doesn’t allow time for debate. He doesn’t do his job.

But it’s the fact that he’s a man I admired even as a child. I heard this report from an independent source, and I’ve never heard him mention their name or their location. Harvey’s standard operating procedure is all too evident — and after my years in the daily newspaper world, all too familiar. Haled up in his Chicago office, he pulls a couple stories together and proceeds to lambaste a profession he clearly knows nothing about. He doesn’t make calls. He doesn’t check facts. He doesn’t engage in substantive discussion. He doesn’t bore his listeners with research and data. He doesn’t invite differing viewpoints. He doesn’t challenge his audience to think for themselves. He doesn’t speak to our fears or our dreams. He doesn’t do his homework. He doesn’t allow time for debate. He doesn’t do his job. But it’s the fact that he’s a man I admired even as a child. I heard this report from an independent source, and I’ve never heard him mention their name or their location.

Harvey’s insinuation that architects and environmentalists “will not behave unless there are new laws to keep them in check” is a classic case of ignoring context to suit your editorial purposes. The truth according to the latest science. No chemical company management is supporting these studies. So the “I predict this will continue to swirl” in the dustbin (or solid waste transfer station), thank you. These scientists will begin their research with no foregone conclusions in mind. So the word “biased” can be erased from the enviro-speakers’ character defamation, libel, and other projects are refreshing and exciting. Add to them the Clay County Parks Department course outside St. Louis (see CCM April 1, page 25), with its catch basins testing leachate from all 18 greens... and you’ve got high expectations and anticipation.

Count the days to the release of data from these facilities and you can count the days when a little, dangerous knowledge will be replaced by substantive science.
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Being environmentally aware: A complex challenge for turf managers

three different products for the same level of control.

LOW ENVIRONMENTAL RISK

In addition to low-rate effectiveness and application flexibility, the newer herbicides often also offer the important environmental benefit of low soil mobility. Many of these newer chemicals bind tightly to soil, and water and horizontal movement into surface water. Although groundwater and surface water concerns are influencing turf management decisions nationwide, water protection is an especially hot topic in the Midwest and Northeast, where lakes and streams are common. Choosing pesticides with minimal soil mobility is one of several steps that turf managers in those regions are taking to protect the environment.

Another measure taken to avoid contaminating water supplies is to leave "buffer zones" adjacent to lakes and streams. This is especially important where turf managers plan to use insecticides, which often have high horizontal mobility. Rather than applying pesticides up to the edges of lakes or streams, a strip of turf is established where no pesticides are applied. The buffer zone helps prevent horizontal movement of pesticides. Among the least expensive and most effective ways for golf course managers to reduce water contamination from pesticides is to avoid upwind application close to lakes and streams. (Pesticides should never be applied in winds that exceed 5 miles per hour.)

SAFETY TRAINING AVAILABLE

Environmental protection is an important objective, but with the low-risk weed control products available today, maintaining healthy turf need not be a difficult challenge — no matter who’s examining your turf management practices.

Phillips comment

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together the context: Poor Tom Marzolf, an architect with Fazio Golf Course Design, was trying to explain how the sheer number of fine courses in North Carolina make it competitively impossible to take an environmental stand. He was encouraging the state to set standards for every course, in order that a few aren’t penalized for doing the right thing.

And nobody interviewed can figure out where Harvey came up with the bird song reference. According to Todd Miller, executive director of the NCCF, the subject did not come up in any detail during the conference. The issue wasn’t mentioned in either the Morning Star or the News & Observer. It would be easy to blame the local newspapers or the Associated Press for Harvey’s misrepresentations. However, this was clearly Harvey’s baby. In fact, the Morning Star praised the golf industry for its cooperation at the symposium in an editorial published March 31. Paul: Forget the rest of the story. We’ll get it elsewhere.

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SAFETY TRAINING AVAILABLE

Environmental protection and worker safety are important objectives in any industry, and pesticide manufacturers and golf course managers continue to be proactive in these vital areas. Manufacturers and sales teams commonly offer golf course managers and their employees training in the use of low-risk products and proper application procedures. Advice on developing an environmentally conscientious approach to herbicide use is only a phone call away.

For more information about maintaining healthy turf with minimal environmental and applicator risk, contact your manufacturer’s sales representative or pesticide supplier and ask for instructional materials and training programs.

Environmental protection is an important objective, but with the low-risk weed control products available today, maintaining healthy turf need not be a difficult challenge — no matter who’s examining your turf management practices.