Venerated newsmen ignores 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 opinion 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 Comment"—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 make idle comments in context. He gives his opinion, then goes back to the wire machine looking for more fodder.

Appalled, he needn't bother to defend or explain his actions, either. He didn't return my repeated phone calls from this newspaper...

It's interesting to examine Harvey's comments after piecing together the events of this golf conference in Wilmington.

He wasn't there. He didn't talk to anyone from the North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) or the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, the conference hosts. He didn't call the local newspapers for additional, contextual information. (I know, because I called them. In fact, Carol Frey, the day/news editor at the Raleigh News & Observer, laughed out loud when I told her the reason for my call. "I've been involved in a zillion stories that have ended up on Paul Harvey's show, and I have never spoken to him," she said.)

This sort of research is basic stuff.

Harvey gathers all the information he thinks he needs from local newspaper stories, which are often the direct sources for A.P. reports. For example, the Wilmington Morning Star reported that, "More than 50 different chemicals are used on golf courses to kill bugs, weeds and rodents, according to experts at the symposium."

Sound familiar? Paul? That's just what you said, minus the attribution, of course.

Harvey embellished this statement by adding, "and regulation of the use of these chemicals is almost non-existent." Has this guy ever heard of the Environmental Protection Agency? How Phillips?

Harvey was so doubly referring to the fact that additional state regulations regarding pesticide use on the North Carolina coast, a point made clearly by the "information" reporter. Facts often cloud a dramatic statement, don't they, Paul.

Harvey's conclusion that architects and superintendents "will not behave unless there are new laws to require it," is a classic case of ignoring context to suit his editorial purposes. After reading numerous newspaper clips and talking to conference attendees, I pieced together a full picture of the situation:

Harvey's needs to be educated.

To the editor: I've been involved in a zillion stories that have ended up on Paul Harvey's show, and I have never spoken to him," said Carol Frey, the day/news editor at the Raleigh News & Observer. Harvey's comment was not only illogical, but also factually incorrect. He made a statement that the Golf Course News is a "fisheye" magazine, focused on "frogs' eyes". However, the Golf Course News is a reputable publication that covers golf course management in-depth. Harvey's comment was not only illogical, but also factually incorrect. It was Thursday, March 25, at noon, when I took time out of a hectic spring schedule to sit down for a few minutes, eat a sandwich, and listen to a man on the radio named Paul Harvey. For years I have admired this man and admired his consistent, balanced broadcast of his "News and Comment". Mr. Harvey is a wise and intelligent man, and has an interesting, conservative viewpoint. As a person who loves golf and has written extensively about the sport, I feel strongly about the way golf is portrayed in the media.

The above letter was written to the Greenie Side, the superintendent association newsletter for New Jersey. It has been reprinted here with permission of the editor.

Venerable newsmen ignores the basics, again

days

Gary E. Nokes Golf Course Superintendent Beye Lea Municipal GC Tom's River, N.J.