

Harvey's super speaks out

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Harvey, Fierst said: "I don't hold any ill will because I know he is addressing his audience. If he or any other broadcast personality would choose to address the concern of the materials that are applied to corn fields, home lawns and the unregulated areas of the country, it might be different.

"Keep in mind, golf courses are easy targets. Most of the people who play golf are regarded as somewhat elitist, playing a 'wealthy man's' sport, if you will."

An adjunct faculty instructor in turfgrasses management at Triton College in River Grove, Fierst defended golf course superintendents, saying: "Yes, we spray plant protectants, including chemicals. But there is a golf course manager (I hate the name 'superintendent') at your course who, if anything, is a conservator of the environment and the watchdog of a very valuable piece of property.

"That person is not randomly distributing materials, regardless of a protocol, that are going to be damaging to the applicator let alone to the golf course (his source of income), the environment, or the people who come out and play the course... That is just not going to happen."

Adding that "Mr. Harvey's comments don't threaten me in the least," Fierst said: "I talk to people around the country who say, 'Paul Harvey's a member at your course? That must be hell.' No, actually it's very pleasant. He's a very nice man. He is a strong supporter of golf and loves to play the game. He's a gentleman who takes great pride in his ability to reach a wide segment of the population."

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In his Dec. 2 broadcast, Harvey, speaking of the unseasonably warm temperatures in the Midwest, mentioned that Fierst was mowing Oak Park's greens for the first time ever in December. Fierst was deluged with phone calls from friends and colleagues, he said. But it wasn't the first time.

Harvey has spoken of Fierst's dog Wiley, who chases geese on the course, and about Fierst tree-trimming with Husqvarna equipment, an advertiser on the broadcast.

How did the bird comment make the airwaves?

While playing golf one day on the Donald Ross-designed course, Harvey asked Fierst why there were no birds on the golf course. "It was high noon and I told him the birds were nesting and taking their noon

siesta," Fierst recalled. "I told him to come out in early morning or late afternoon and he'd hear a racket he wouldn't believe. A couple weeks later he asked me the same thing and said, 'And don't tell me to come out here at 6 o'clock in the morning.'"

But Harvey apparently knows

the truth. As Fierst said, "He loves to ask about the red-tailed hawks that are on the property. And he likes the bluebird houses we have. We have chickadees nesting, and cardinals and robins and bluejays and all sorts of creatures and critters on the golf course.

"And the golf course is indeed a very comfortable place for Mr. Harvey and anybody else to play the game of golf."

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY HONORS BEARDS

EAST LANSING, Mich. — To honor Dr. James and Harriet Beard, Michigan State University's Department of Crop and Soil Sciences has established an endowment that will be used to support students who are pursuing doctorates in turfgrass research and management. Beard retired in 1992 after 30 years of teaching and research at MSU and Texas A&M. He is considered one of the nation's pioneers in bolstering turfgrass research and development and authored three textbooks on turfgrass research, production and management. For information about making a contribution to the James B. and Harriet Bear Endowment Fund, write to James Obeare, associate director of development, 101 Agriculture Hall, MSU, East Lansing, Mich. 48824; or call 517-432-5179.



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