

**I** was chatting with a veteran superintendent four or five years ago when he related the following: "I'm fed up with hearing about 'integrated pest management,'" he said. "When I started in this business, we practiced 'disintegrated pest management.'

We'd just load up some chlordane and go out and *disintegrate* every pest on the golf course."

I saw him again a few weeks ago. He's now one of the profession's poster boys for environmental responsibility. He has won several awards and is fielding job offers from the rapidly increasing number of facilities that believe that eco-golf is smart and marketable.

"My compensation has doubled in three years, and I'm starting to consult on the side," he said. "I'm like Kermit the Frog ... it's not easy being green, but it sure as hell is lucrative."

Need we say more about why the environmental "problem" is probably the best thing that has ever happened to superintendents?

## Bird watching

Apparently, my old pal Paul Harvey was right — sort of. Those who remember his crusade against golf course pesticides a few years ago will recall that he believed songbirds were disappearing.

According to several new studies, songbird populations in North America are down about 20 percent across the board. The culprit, however, is deforestation and loss of habitat to the north and south of us — not pesticides. Perhaps Paul will now deliver "the rest of the story" — and a big, fat apology to superintendents.

## Missing in action

The third annual "Golf & the Environment" conference was held in December in Orlando. The event is an offshoot of the process started by *Golf Digest* in 1994. *Digest's* publishers threw some money at the idea because they felt that no one was doing anything about environmental issues in golf — a conclusion that came as something of a shock to the USGA, GCSAA, ASGCA, Audubon International and others.

A tense conference was held at Pebble Beach in January 1995 in which a shaky "consensus" was reached that the golf industry should have some sort of environmental guidelines. A year later, the "Environmental Principles for Golf

# Kermit the Frog And Paul Harvey

BY PAT JONES



The author with broadcaster and self-proclaimed ornithologist Paul Harvey in 1995.

The author had more hair but Harvey, who's apparently made of wax, looks the same today.

Courses in the United States" were endorsed by more than 20 environmental and golf groups at the second conference in Pinehurst, N.C. Victory was declared, and we adjourned to

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the bar assuming that the initiative was dead.

Wrong. The process has been kept on life support (fed by an IV drip of funding from EPA, some golf groups and a handful of turf equipment companies). The Orlando meeting appeared to be an attempt to breathe life back into it. I left the meeting with two questions:

- Who was missing from the expert panel that discussed pesticides? Let's see, there was a neurologist who believes pesticides are unhealthy, the head of the biggest anti-pesticide group in the country, an EPA guy and a superintendent. Gee, you think maybe a scientist from one of the chemical manufacturers might have had a few intelligent ideas on the subject?

- Why isn't Audubon International a big part of this? Because some of the environmentalists don't like Ron Dodson, who works from within to create change rather than filing suits or picketing. Second, Ron is too busy actually doing something positive to bother with this.

Don't get me wrong: This is a positive effort. But if this effort to encourage sustainable golf is to be sustained, *everyone* should be at the table.

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