

# Dr. Kross asks Harvey for "Accurate" Report

By Monroe S. Miller

Dr. Burton C. Kross, principal investigator in the GCSAA Mortality Study, has written radio broadcaster Paul Harvey a letter in which he asks Harvey for some truth in broadcasting. It was written in response to Harvey's February 9, 1994 morning broadcast in which he inaccurately reports results from Dr. Burton's work. The text of Harvey's report follows Dr. Burton's letter.

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

February 10, 1994

Mr. Paul Harvey  
333 North Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Dear Mr. Harvey,

Last evening I received a telephone call from my brother-in-law, a farmer in western Iowa. He heard your radio report this week describing our mortality study of golf course superintendents. He asked me how did our study determine that pesticides were killing birds and humans on golf courses. I knew something was wrong, so I obtained a transcript of your commentary.

Your commentary is inaccurate and misleading with respect to our study. Our study did not collect any data

about pesticides and birds. Moreover, as clearly stated in our press release (copy enclosed), our statistical mortality study was not capable of supporting or refuting a cause and effect relationship between pesticides and cancer. Indeed, my recommendations about smoking cessation and minimizing pesticide exposures are prudent public health strategies for golf course superintendents and the general public.

Mr. Harvey, I am very concerned about your misrepresentation of our study. The public does need to be informed about important environmental and occupational health issues. The media are important partners in disseminating accurate results of research studies. I request that you broadcast a corrected version of your commentary about our study. Thank you.

Sincerely,

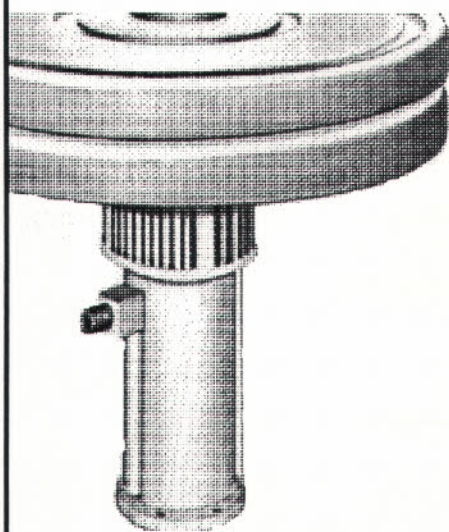
Burton C. Kross, PhD, PE

Principal Investigator and Associate Professor

## TEXT OF FEBRUARY 9, 1994 PAUL HARVEY NEWS REPORT

Reporter Paul Harvey: "Two years ago you and I talked about the pesticides which were poisoning so many birds that our golf courses faced a silent spring. I received some

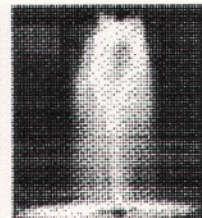
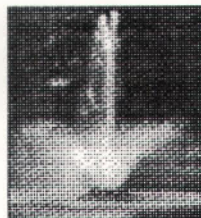
# Troubled waters



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indignant responses from greenskeepers and their association and from pesticide manufacturers. They were adamant in their insistence that the stuff they were spraying on fairways and greens was not toxic. It was and it still is. Today the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America is holding its annual meeting in Dallas. And a study commissioned by that organization of superintendents is reporting that not only are golf course pesticides killing the birds, but they're killing golf course superintendents also. Golf course superintendents have a higher incidence of cancer. The association has to know that this is going to open the door to lawsuits by golf course workers against their employers for exposing themselves to cancer causing chemicals. A statistical mortality study found among golf course superintendents more lung cancer, more brain cancer, more cancers of the large intestine and the prostate, especially however, lung cancer. Doctor Burton Kross, University of Iowa, one of the researchers on this project, recommends further studies and recommends, meanwhile, that golf course workers minimize, however, possible, their exposure to pesticides. There's a moral here which demands to be underscored, "We and the beautiful wild things live in harmony together or we perish together."

### We Must Forge Ahead

Despite the inaccurate "news" reporting of Harvey and others that are sure to follow, the GCSAA must move forward with this study. It was right and prudent and responsible for GCSAA to initiate this study. Officers, directors and staff involved to this point must ignore the unfairness poured on by those biased media, like Paul Harvey obviously is, and press the case to the next level.

We all understood that Dr. Kross' work to this point was preliminary. We needed those kinds of statistics to direct future studies. Rather wring our hands, offer apologies or hang our heads in hope no one will notice, we need to get the next series of health research projects underway.

And stand tall with pride that we had the courage to tackle the unknown and get some answers the profession needs.

My applause go to those forward thinking leaders in our industry and on our GCSAA staff who have done so well with this delicate issue. I especially appreciate the fact that a competent investigator like Burt Kross is leading the research. His experience as associate director of the University of Iowa's Institute of Agricultural Medicine and Occupational Health will be invaluable to us. ♣

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## Derek Van Damme Receives 1994 NOR-AM Scholarship

NOR-AM Chemical Company recently presented its annual turf scholarship to University of Wisconsin-Madison senior Derek Van Damme. The presentation was made at the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Green Industry EXPO 94 in held in Madison. Don Maske, District Manager for NOR-AM, awarded Derek a \$1,000 check for his academic achievement and leadership. Van Damme has financed his education through grants and summer internships at Blackhawk Country Club in Madison. Dr. Wayne R. Kussow is his undergraduate advisor.

NOR-AM congratulates both Derek and the University of Wisconsin-Madison for continuing commitment within the turfgrass industry. ♣

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## THE GRASS ROOTS JUDGED "BEST" IN ITS CATEGORY

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*THE GRASS ROOTS* received the award for "best" in its category for 1993 at the Chapter Editors' Seminar in Dallas in February. The award is made even more significant by the fact that the award is made in a peer judging exercise during the seminar.

There are three categories in the competition, and our chapter journal falls into the "volunteer, unpaid, golf course superintendent editor" category. There are a lot of outstanding chapter publications produced around the country, and this makes the award especially meaningful to this editor.

Two elements are critical to a successful magazine—the contents and the presentation. The good reading found in each issue comes from our group of volunteer writers who share their thoughts and advice about the profession with such style. The attractive look of our journal is due to the care and professionalism of the staff at Kramer Printing, especially Sherri and Pam in the Art Department. And this year we must thank a young art major at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for her skillful artwork on the cover. Jennifer Eberhardt has made a real difference for us.

So to my colleagues in the world of chapter publications, I extend a great big "thank you" for the honor extended to Wisconsin. To everyone else, sentimental and heartfelt gratitude from an editor who knows how serious you take the task. ♣



Don Maske (L) presents UW student Derek Van Damme the NOR-AM scholarship.