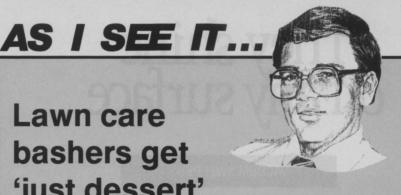
Lawn care bashers get

'just dessert'



When last we visited, you might remember, I had just read an article in the hometown newspaper that raised the hackles on the back of my neck. In the bylined article, the professional lawn care industry took some unkind and undeserving hits from a selfstyled "environmental activist."

Like a good industry steward, I responded via mail. The stamp

was slapped on the letter with some vehemence.

Barely a week later, I received a call from the editorial department at the newspaper. A kindly voice asked my permission to print my letter, en toto, in the paper's "Forum" department, and I

Shortly thereafter, a "Letter to the Editor" signed by an old acquaintance, Gary Chamberlain, a regional agronomist for

ChemLawn, appeared in the paper.

"I propose that we dismiss the demagogues of doom who hide under the banner of environmentalism and pay attention to the people who are doing something positive for our environment," Chamberlain wrote. "Too often, we let fear-feeding misinformation get by without challenge."

Two days later, when the paper used my piece, it was-surprisingly-virtually exactly as I had written it. The headline exclaimed, in large type, "Lawns won't bite." I submit to you its

conclusion:

"To put everything in perspective—and this is what the landscape and lawn care industries have believed all along—the risks associated with lawn pesticides are so minor as to be negligible if used according to label directions.

"It may be the (newspaper's) mission to uphold free speech principles for misplaced doomsayers. But it should also be its mission to see that the public is truthfully informed in a complete

and impartial manner.

I have yet to receive a phone call from the author of the original article. I don't suspect that I will. For he knew when he was writing the article, and knows today, that he was twisting the truth, playing on the public's emotions, and—most despicablynot telling the whole story.

There is a moral here. The mass media are indeed searching for real truths. They are neither our friends nor our enemies. They listen. But they need someone to listen to; and that's where we come in—if we are brave enough and intelligent enough to tell our

side of the story.

So the next time the lawn care bashers show their faces in your community, be brave and be intelligent. Don't let them get away with their half-truths and emotional appeals. If you don't defend yourself, no one else will.

Jerry Roche, executive editor

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