

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

is a proud member of these green industry professional organizations:



Associated Landscape Contractors of America, 12200 Sunrise Valley Dr., Suite 150, Reston, VA; (703) 620-6363.



American Association of Nurserymen (National Landscape Association), 1250 I St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 789-2900.

American Sod Producers Association, 1855-A Hicks Rd., Rolling Meadows, IL 60008; (708) 705-9898.

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, 1421 Research Park Dr., Lawrence, KS 66049-3859; (913) 841-2240.

International Society of Arboriculture, P.O. Box 908, Urbana, IL 61801; (217) 328-2032.

International Turfgrass Society, Crop & Soil Environmental Sciences, VPI-SU, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0403; (703) 231-9796.



National Arborist Association, The Meeting Place Mall, P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031-1094; (603) 673-3311.

National Golf Foundation, 1150 South U.S. Highway One, Jupiter, FL 33477; (407) 744-6006.

Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, 2021 Coffey Rd., Columbus, OH 43210; (614) 292-2601.



Professional Grounds Management Society, 120 Cockeyville Rd., Suite 104, Hunt Valley, MD 21031; (410) 584-9754.



Professional Lawn Care Association of America, 1000 Johnson Ferry Rd., NE, Suite C-135, Marietta, GA 30068-2112; (404) 977-5222.

Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, 1155 15th St. NW, Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 872-3860.



Sports Turf Managers Association, 401 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611-4267; (312) 644-6610.

Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association, 8400 Normandale Lake Blvd., Suite 500, Bloomington, MN 55437; (612) 832-5000.

AS WE SEE IT

JERRY ROCHE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Golf continues as media's environmental whipping-boy

Last month, it was Paul Harvey; this month, it's the famed *Wall Street Journal*. Will it never end?

In case you didn't see the May 2nd issue of the WSJ, a large headline proclaimed "**Golf Courses Are Denounced as Health Hazards.**" The half-page article carried a cartoon of a golfer who was trying to putt while decked out in what appeared to be one of those "moon suits" like scientists from the Disease Control Center wore in the recent TV mini-series "The Stand."

The article, written by staff reporter Timothy Noah, was surprisingly well done. At least Noah bothered to get some comments from Jim Snow of the USGA Green Section and Rick Norton of the NGF. But the headline and cartoon were clearly exaggerations.

Just for the fun of it, being a professional writer and editor of sorts, I decided to re-arrange the article's structure and phrasing a bit. However, my headline rewrite says: "**Golf Courses Are Lauded as Environmentally Safe.**"

Here's how the beginning of my version of the article sounds. Remember, too, that I'm using essentially the same information that the original writer used elsewhere (much later) in his article:

Golf courses are a positive influence on the U.S. environment, say many proponents.

"Golf courses are increasingly showing that they can be very positive environmentally," says Rick Norton, vice president of operations for the National Golf Foundation. Standards of pesticide use and exposure, he says, have "evolved over the years as people have become more conscientious and more careful."

My version of the article, of course, carried with it a cartoon of birds merrily chirping away while they watched happy golfers on a putting green below.

Noah's article goes on to say that the

New York Department of Conservation has recorded 25 cases of bird deaths since 1971 that "it says" are related to golf course pesticides.

My version of the article goes on to say this:

Reports of alleged harm to wildlife and human health from particular golf courses, however, have been scattered. For instance, in the last 24 years, the New York Department of Conservation has recorded just 25 cases of bird deaths that, it contends, may have been related to golf course pesticides.

Besides the statements Noah made about the birds, there are many points of contention in the original article. These were addressed in letters to the editor which were written by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, and the Chemical Manufacturer's Association. By the time this column appears in print, you may have seen them in the *Journal*.

The point to my whole exercise, however, was to see exactly how far in one direction that cold hard facts and quotations could be skewed.

The journalism professors at Ohio University warned me years ago to avoid influencing reader opinion through sentence and story structure. I've long suspected that certain of the media have been preying on the public's eager curiosity, superficial though it is. But I never really saw proof that a headline writer or reporter could so drastically skew the tone of a story—until now.

Jerry Roche