

# Readers Speak Out!

We like letters!

This newspaper welcomes expression of opinions of our readers that all letters be signed and addressed and that the author observe a 250-word limit.

Letters in excess of 250 words may be edited, but a maximum of 250 words is made to retain the author's main points and to not dilute the letter.

The Editor

## Zybach Complains

To the Editor:

The purpose of this letter is to complain about a poor and potentially misleading job done by one of your reporters, Sara Robins.

When she called my home twice on June 25 to request an interview with me concerning herbicides, I agreed — with one contingency: that she state clearly, and at the outset, of any article that she might write that she had called me for my opinion, rather than my having approached her. This was important to me as I definitely wanted to avoid the appearance of actively promoting herbicide usage.

Prior to beginning a discussion with her during my lunch hour at the News-Times office the next day, I again told her that I would give her my opinions only if she adhered to that contingency. Again, she readily agreed. 45 minutes or an hour later, as we finished our talk, I again outlined our agreement, with the added facets of declining to have my picture taken and asking that my wife's name not be used in any potential article as she wished to avoid any problems with our anti-spray friends and acquaintances. (I gave Miss Robins a document showing my wife as having taken part in a 1978 government study of 10 women in Oregon who were directly exposed to 2, 4, 5-T while pregnant). Again I was reassured that there would be no problem.

I wasn't really too disappointed when I noticed that she broke her word to me in her July 9 article about herbicides. I wasn't even too upset with the ridiculous quote "There is approximately 300,000 acres of managed forestland in Oregon which can be brought under control with intensive management and chemicals," as it was an obvious misquote or typographical error and would not be confused with some of the dubious statistics and "Facts" that the herbicide factions like to hurl at each other.

But I was very upset with the final paragraph, which was either taken entirely out of context, or was a manufactured statement. This is the kind of titillating "reporting" that has helped make the herbicide issue so emotional.

As an amateur statistician, I do not use the word "average" lightly. I usually only use gross generalities in

a humorous vein. Certainly, a lot of intelligent, sincere anti-spray supporters would be offended by this "quote" as I am.

When I stated that a major faction of the anti-spray people were supported by, and included, wealthy marijuana growers, I referred directly to a May 19 article in the U.S. News and World Report which contained the paragraphs:

"For many in this area, depressed by a slump in the lumber industry, "pot" is a simple matter of economics", and,

"Growers were a major factor in passage of a county ordinance forbidding aerial spraying of herbicide, which kills marijuana plants as well as the forest underbrush at which the chemical is aimed."

When I stated that other anti-spray government subsidies (other than money provided from the untaxed marijuana crop) included individuals being paid with CETA funds, I quickly corrected myself and provided Miss Robins with a seemingly accurate article stating that at least 1/2 or the 1979 operating budget of CATH (Citizens Against Toxic Herbicides) came from VISTA funds (not CETA).

When I said that "a lot" (not the "average") of anti-spray people seemed to be publicity seekers, I was stating the obvious.

The essence of what I was trying to convey to your reporter was to examine the motives of individuals that come out stridently (and occasionally hysterically) against sprays.

In 1976 I had a crew of 10 men (myself included) tested by OSHA for reactions to the chemical Thiram by giving blood samples over a time period and by taking physical examinations. In 1978 my wife, while pregnant with our youngest son, was working directly in sprayed logging units. She volunteered as one of less than 100 women in the U.S. to have her milk tested. Neither testing demonstrated any adverse reaction or showed any bodily retention.

My motive for supporting herbicide use in the forest is that I believe them to be safe (or only marginally detrimental), and immeasurably valuable in coastal timberland management. The trees will still be here when all the tourists have gone south. They are the most valuable resource Oregon (and Lincoln County) possesses.

Bob Zybach  
Eddyville