

Dioxin: guilty until proven innocent

What has been long suspected has at last been confirmed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency. The herbicide 2, 4, 5-T — used by Oregon forest industries to kill forest undergrowth has been shown to cause cancer, birth defects and miscarriages in mammals.

The revelation came in an April 13 report by the EPA, and yet U.S. forestry officials have decided to allow the continued use of the herbicide — formerly known as Agent Orange in Vietnam defoliation — in Oregon's forests.

The report doesn't necessarily mean that the use of the chemical will cease; however, unless the 2, 4, 5-T users can produce evidence that the "benefits" outweigh the "disadvantages," a ban or more severe herbicide controls may be implemented.

The movement to ban the use of dioxin-containing herbicides has been underway in Oregon for several years. In spite of repeated pleas to ban the herbicide in Oregon, the state legislature and the courts have allowed the use of the chemical for one and only one reason: The forest industry lobby is so strong that the public health and welfare has taken second fiddle to timber profits.

It is indicative of the nature of the herbicide controversy that the EPA report is based on existing scientific studies. The EPA conducted no new research. Its conclusions are based on data that are already known — and some of them have been known for years.

The study also neglects the problems of dioxin penetration of the food chain. It does not explore the problems of dioxin concentration in soil and drinking water, nor does it consider the possibility of concentration of the chemicals in human tissues by dioxin buildup in the environment. It does not, in short, deal with the possible long-term effects of dioxin uses.

In spite of the evidence of harmful effects of dioxin, the chemical is still being touted by the forest industry as the best and most efficient way to control forest growth to allow better access to harvestable timber. The forest industry will undoubtedly rebutt the EPA study by trying to prove that the benefits of using the chemicals outweigh the potential harms.

At the last Oregon legislative session, the industry representatives cited a dioxin concentration of .05 parts per million as so miniscule as to present no harmful effects. But the EPA report says that even this concentration can cause tumors in mammals, a fact the anti-herbicide groups tried to use to support a herbicide ban during the last session. The attempt was unsuccessful. The legislature's stand was one which can be summed up in a nutshell: if you think dioxin is dangerous, prove it.

But the dioxin sprays should be considered guilty until proven innocent. To date, the evidence has shown more and more convincingly that the herbicides are guilty. The only acceptable action, then, is an outright ban of the chemicals. Danger to human health cannot be ignored because of the "benefits" to a special interest lobby.

Letters

Mallard's the one

We, the undersigned underappreciated undergraduates of the understaffed underpaid and often misunderstood department of Mathematics, located somewhere in Deady Hall, hereby declare after many hours of deliberation, consideration and coin-flipping, that Mallard Drake, the candidate for University Duck currently held by a certain Mr. Donald Duck, hailing from a certain large California amusement park, is henceforth and forthwith and otherwise from now on the official University Duck as far as the undersigned unofficial unpopular people are concerned. We urge the remaining nonundersigned nonunderpaid nonunderstaffed nonpeople to also support our campaign for Mallard. The reasons are clear:

given epsilon greater than zero, there exists a duck such that every other duck less than zero is contained in an open interval about the open

cover of Donald Duck.

Hence, we can clearly see that Mallard is the obvious choice.

Comments from other worthy departments are welcome, whereas comments from other unworthy underhanded underwater-basketweaving type departments such as psychology and physics are unwelcome.

Outspokenly Yours,
Roger Brown, Senior, Math
R.D. McAllister, Grad, Math
Theresa Leonard, Senior, Math
& Psych
Dinh Tan Nguyen, Junior, Math

A fucking dream

One of the Daily Emerald's most important contributions to contemporary culture is its verbatim rendition of the rich, beautiful language employed by student leaders in important public statements. Witness the comment of Ms Jan Oliver, former ASUO president and founder of the Women's

Letters — (Continued)

Symposium, anent that symposium: "This thing came out of my fucking mind." (April 11, page one, column three).

This phraseology reveals the relative weakness of the nevertheless justly acclaimed oratory of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, whose tragic demise of a decade ago we have all recently been mourning. How much more effective it would have been had he commenced his famous Washington address with: "I have a fucking dream!" But Dr. King, through no fault of his own, suffered the cultural deprivation of being forced to complete his education at Boston University, thus losing the benefit to his vocabulary which might have accrued from exposure to the Oregon environment.

Kenneth Wiggins Porter
 Professor Emeritus of History

The IFC circus

After attending an IFC meeting for the first time this year, I am utterly appalled at the behavior of several committee members — especially since they justify their antics as acts in the interest of the entire student body.

Procedurally, saying the meeting resembled a circus would insult P.T. Barnum and would give the Committee incredible over-commendation.

Specifically, Janet Eggleston's behavior prevented constructive interaction between Committee members and with the audience. Eggleston aimlessly wandered throughout the Committee's meeting room while the meeting progressed. She bantered back and forth with the Committee and the audience, commenting out of turn on virtually every remark. Unfortunately, her comments were limited to mildly obscene remarks and insults. Rarely did she offer helpful or even valuable insight into the issues and often the comments contradicted remarks made only moments before. It appeared that Eggleston acted more out of a love for the sound of her voice than out of concern toward the Committee's tasks.

In such an atmosphere, valuable discussion was overcome by a total lack of order.

Substantively, the meeting fared no better. Proposing that the forensics budget be cut from the amount requested, member Jeff Warren set \$5,000 as an "appropriate" figure. When asked why \$5,000 was appropriate, Warren replied that the figure was totally arbitrary. The Committee, which eventually passed the Warren proposal, admitted that it had

made an arbitrary decision and that justification for its budget action could not be made. Several members even expressed their amusement over their authority to act with total capriciousness — with little recourse for the members of the audience or, more importantly, the student body at large.

In its kangaroo proceedings, the IFC gave credence to the old adage about the utter futility of student government. Unfortunately, the irresponsibility of several IFC members points out that not only does the Committee embody the very essence of such futility, but the results of this whimsical behavior lead to unrealistic and iniquitous allocation policies.

Kent Mortimore
 Senior, Journalism/Political Science

Drake, a bird brain

I could hardly believe my ears the other day when a little bird told me that there was a movement a-wing to replace Oregon's current mascot, Donald Duck, with the creature known as Mallard Drake. Now granted, an argument can be made that Donald is the creation of some guy named Disney, but then again Mallard could be easily arrested for the impersonation of another foul commonly called Daffy.

I also fear that Mallard is somewhat of a bird brain. Surely no one expects Donald to be teaching Psych 676 or Theory of Calculus but who can deny that our fine feathered friend hasn't served the University well these past few years. I think Mallard may be a very nice, duck, but he quite frankly lacks the suave sophistication we've come to look for in ducks. Mallard looks more like an advertisement for an oil slick than a University mascot.

In addition, the argument for Donald's case can be further substantiated by what he offers in the form of community relations. There must be thousands of Oregonians who identify with this noble bird and to cook his goose and replace him with Mallard would be an act that may de-feather our own nests. I think Mallard should remain in the occasional Emerald in which he appears. Losing Donald would be like losing our best friend. Please keep the big "D." If not, we'll end up with what should be sleeping bag stuffing as our bird of importance.

Ronald Fuchs
 Journalism, Senior

A question of rights

I take exception to automatically being included in the "heterosexual movement" of which Dan Jones wants to be self-proclaimed chairman. (Letters, April 17) He makes claims for his "movement" that, as a heterosexual, I do not share.

The issue of homosexual rights is misnamed. The question is one of human rights, and issue that has been raised many times since the founding of this country. By the decisions reached in this nation, all people have these rights until they do something to disqualify themselves from that privilege.

The question here is, does a gay lifestyle warrant disqualification? Biblical reasons for this disqualification fall by the wayside because the Bible is not recognized by the Consitution as a standard for determining human rights, nor should it be. Also, the Bible is applied so inconsistently in these matters that the argument of its users is negated. Those who say that gay teachers are likely to molest children had better start educating their children at home, for statistically, heterosexuals are more likely to be molesters. However, molesters are molesters, not gay or straight.

The fact that reason (both in the area of the Bible, and the issue of molesting) is here ignored tends to show that the issue is one of emotional prejudice. The fact the human rights still need to be asserted shows that a sick segment of the American society still wants to oppress minorities. They have done so in the past to Indians, blacks, Catholics, Jews, Scandinavians, and now, gays. Will they never learn that appealing to emotions is no basis on which to deny someone his/her human rights.

As a University that is seen as a liberal institution in the Northwest, we must show the rest of the country that we have learned.

Gary Brower
 Senior, Religious Studies

Letters policy

The Emerald will accept and try to print all letters and opinion columns containing fair comment on ideas and topics of concern or interest to the University community. Letters and opinions must be typewritten, using 65-character margins, and should be triple-spaced. Letters and opinions must be signed, with the author's year and field of study (or faculty status) noted. Letters and opinions will be run on a first-come, first-served basis.

