

Camps are fun, challenge

By TAMARA SWENSON
Of the Emerald

"Coming back is like a reunion," says Kathy Smith. "Coming to music camp is a challenge and a great experience."

Smith, a student from Summer Lake, Oregon, is attending the High School Music conference, one of 72 conferences scheduled for the University campus this summer.

The reasons for attending the University for a week or two are as varied as the conferences. The Haney Basketball camps, Beaver Boys State (a high school political conference),

theater, music, cosmetology, Oregon Education Association, nurses, the Sweet Adelines (all women barbershop quartets), postal workers, cheerleaders, forensics, drill teams, Calvinists and real estate appraisers, along with a host of other groups, have planned conferences at the University.

"The reason we do the conferences at all is three-fold," says Marjory Ramey, housing coordinator for the summer conferences. "First, income. All profit from the conferences goes into the general operating fund. This helps to keep the board and room for nine-month students at the lowest rate.

"Second, it keeps the staff

employed over the summer, and the conferences also provide work, since we in effect run a hotel. Third, public relations. Conferences help recruit for the University. Students and parents see the University at its best — in the summer."

For many of the students attending conferences this is their first exposure to higher education, an exposure that can help students decide if they want to go on to college.

"I like the independence you have to have," says Laura Snibley, a music student. "It's a lot better than high school, something that definitely encourages me to go to college."



Emerald photo

University summer conferences range from basketball camps to real estate appraisal. The camps are good exposure for the University and visitors see the campus at its best, says Marjory Ramey, housing coordinator. Some students attending conferences return to the University during the academic year.

Spray ruling may be 'political'

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

The strawberry harvest is in full swing and the absence of 10- and 11-year-old berry pickers may be causing more than just anger among Oregon berry growers. It may be causing confusion among government agencies about the decision to keep the kids out of the fields this summer.

That decision by the Labor Department may have been motivated more by politics than by concern for the young pickers' safety, says Michael Watson of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) office in Seattle.

Watson, whose agency gathered the evidence presented to a Seattle federal judge that two fungicides sprayed on Northwest strawberry fields — Captan and Benamyl — were dangerous to children who have not yet entered puberty, says the Department of Labor could have "exaggerated" the danger to force growers to hire older children during the harvest.

"I'd say the decision was about 60 percent political and only 40 percent real concern for the children's safety," Watson says. "I think the original testimony about the chemicals (given before a Congressional committee studying the problem several years ago) has been blown out of proportion by the Labor Department."

"It pays to be cautious, and that's the direction I think the Labor Department is going. But in the past the EPA has set the re-entry standards and why the Labor Department did it this time is something I don't know."

Two weeks ago a San Francisco federal judge overturned a Seattle judge's ruling that younger children could harvest strawberries in fields that had been sprayed with Captan and Benamyl. That ruling left some berry growers without any way to harvest their already ripe crops, says Beth Caster, a representative of the Oregon

Farm Bureau.

Without the young pickers, who are the mainstay of the season's harvesters, some Oregon berry crops would be ruined, which could mean a loss of nearly \$4 million to berry growers, Caster says.

The ruling was based on evidence presented by both the EPA and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) about the possible dangers of over-exposure to the fungicides.

The tests showed that although Captan and Benamyl were not toxic, they did have "mutagenic properties" that could possibly cause mutations and cancer in young children, Watson says.

The strongest evidence the two agencies presented was the similarity between Captan and thalidomide, a prescription drug given to pregnant women during the late 1950s that caused birth defects, Watson says. Exposure to Captan over a long period of time could have the same effect on children as thalidomide, he explains.

"The issue becomes one of the chronic effects that our present testing won't allow us to test accurately right now," he says.

Without those tests, the Labor Department could not be certain what age children would be

affected by the chemicals, Watson says. To allow 12-year-old children to harvest may be just as dangerous, he explains.

The EPA was also concerned with the amount of mercury in Captan, which is often used to replace the natural mercury that is lost during the winter.

But no matter what the evidence, some farmers still believe the ruling to keep the 10- and 11-year-olds out of the fields was wrong.

"I hear the complaints all the time, so I'm beginning to believe them myself," says William Buhl, regional administrator for the Labor Department's Employment Standards Division in Seattle. Buhl's agency assisted in the ruling and has since drawn considerable criticism because of the age limit on pickers.

That limit was set by law nearly four years ago, Buhl says, and it took the Captan ruling to enforce the age guidelines.

"Back in 1975 there was an amendment to a law stating that no child could harvest the berries or work under conditions that weren't safe," he explains. "We felt that we had to place a limitation on the age of the strawberry pickers. We wanted it set at 16, but we compromised at 12."



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