

ducks, rabbits and a large organic garden. We drink milk from our goats, eat cheese made from the milk and eat the fruit and vegetables from our garden. Giustina Land and Timber Company want to aerial spray a clearcut next to my house. They want to spray Escort (banned, in most of the EU countries), Oust, Polaris, Accord, Garlon 3A and 4, and Milestone VM. They are thinking of spraying one or all of these herbicides starting this month. Some of these chemicals stay present for many years.

Giustina thinks that if they aerial spray it won't hurt anyone in our valley. However, I am worried that after they spray in the air, it will drift, get to our goats, our milk, our vegetables ... us. These herbicides can also get into our well water and we would drink them. It seems unfair that they can aerial spray herbicides that are potentially harmful to so many people, so many animals and last for a long long time. To me, it seems like they should only be allowed to spray from the ground so there won't be excess herbicides in our valley.

Zoë Sing Hoff
Eugene

OVERZEALOUS REPORTING

In response to Ian Rapp's "Unsupervised" letter (9/8). A quick heads-up for Eugene parents who may not be in the know: You may have more to fear from an overzealous mandated reporter targeting your family than actual child abusers!

I worked in the field of child welfare for 8-plus years. Unfortunately, neglect is not as simple to diagnose as a 6-year-old in a park. Mr. Rapp would know this if he were trained as a child welfare worker (one year) with a master's degree in social work (two years), rather than simply as a mandated reporter (an afternoon).

I walked eight blocks alone to school when I was 6. Neglect? Most would argue "no." Those of us who have worked in this field know that recognizing neglect requires looking at the whole picture. This is why DHS actually uses trained professionals to do investigations, rather than taking the word of every caller. The large majority of calls to DHS are unfounded.

And, more importantly, where is your compassion, Mr. Rapp? For someone allegedly concerned about children and families, I worry that you have so little consideration for parents attempting to raise children in a society with shifting norms!

P.S. It is absolutely *never* OK for a mandated reporter to compromise an investigation by questioning the child, parents and neighbors. Please let the professionals at DHS do the investigating! And mandated reporters — please keep reporting! DHS truly depends on your eyes and ears to keep kids safe!

Laura Lawver, MSW
Eugene

HARMFUL IDEAS

In response to Ian Rapp's letter "Unsupervised" (9/8):

As a parent of a 6-year-old who takes his dog on short walks and plays at the park near our house (sometimes with friends, a parent, or his elder brother; sometimes solo), I reject the self-proclaimed moral authority of Mr. Rapp over my parenting.

From a good and natural desire to keep our children safe, so many of us have accepted irrational fear as responsible thought. Without reflection, many overstated and unlikely threats seem real and immediate, and unwittingly, we can teach our children some truly harmful ideas, about the world and about themselves: There are dangers lurking around every corner, and you cannot handle it.

As recently as 1979, the navigation of an eight-block path to and from school, a park, or a friend's house was considered an age-appropriate milestone for kids entering the first grade. In a single generation, we have gone from being a society that expects this behavior of children to one that reports it to authorities and publicly calls out parents as negligent. Children have not lost some special skill in that time; they have not become less capable. And the world has not become more dangerous.

Like now, the future will present major problems that need solutions. It will call for people who are hopeful enough to think it is worth it, and capable enough to act. How in the world will they learn to do this if we don't let them out of our sight for an instant?

To set the record straight: the school buses allow first-graders to get off the bus and walk home without a guardian. It is not illegal, it is not immoral, it is certainly not neglectful.

And just to say it: Having cared for their pets in childhood, I have faith that my children will have both the ability and conscience to handle what this world throws at them. How about you, Mr. Rapp?

Amary Taylor
Eugene

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