

Bob's Corner

Not much to talk about this issue, especially because we don't have all that much room. However, we do have a lot more room in one part of a building, now that we've had our yard sale.

This room was so packed with stuff and junk that I didn't realize it had a floor. It was a tough Saturday, hauling all that crap... er, good stuff out for the sale.

It was so cold that morning that I had to retrieve a sweater from the sale stash and put it on. Plus a cap.

The editor has been involved in numerous yard sales and swap meets in his violent past. Will be glad to relate some of those experiences for your dining and dancing pleasure. But not this week.

No, you'll have to wait until next week for the good stuff. At least, that's what I told all those people at the yard sale. It was a difficult sale for El Jefe, as he is quite sentimental. But it was time to let my first-grade reader go; plus my collection of lint.

GREAT PUMPKINS
Family Tree Garden Center at 441 S. Junction Avenue will receive entries in a giant pumpkin contest on Saturday, Oct. 18. Seeds were given away free by Family Tree Garden Center in June. There will be three winners in each of four age categories in the free contest.

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Letters to the Editor

(Editor's Note: Views and commentary expressed in letters to the editor are strictly those of the letter-writers. ***

Typed, double-spaced letters are acceptable for consideration. Hand-written letters that are double-spaced and highly legible also can be considered for publication. Cards of thanks are not accepted as letters.) ***

'Risky business' Sheriff Dave Daniel Grants Pass

Josephine County is a \$108.5 million a year business. As taxpayers, we are all shareholders in this business. Shouldn't we demand of our Josephine County CEOs (the county commissioners) the same accountability and financial management we would demand of any other business we invest our money into?

Our current county charter designates the three full-time commissioners as having complete control over county operations and the budget.

Yet the only qualifications required to be a commissioner is being elected to the position. During the five years I have been in office, I have seen too many budget decisions made for political reasons rather than sound financial ones.

The situations I'm most familiar with is the funding for the sheriff's office. You elected me to be your sheriff because you trust me to continue to do the best job I can with the resources I'm given.

In July of 2000, I lost 41 positions from my department. I asked the citizens to help me by voting in a one-year levy to restore these positions. I didn't ask for more than that, because I know the county was going to receive approximately \$2.5 million more the following year that we received the year before. I trusted the commissioners to follow the priority our citizens have stated over and over again -- fund public safety. That didn't happen. It hasn't happened to this day.

I've seen my department shrink from 118 employees in 2000 to only 88 today. That is a loss of 30 employees in a three-year period. It costs an average of \$100,000 to hire, train,

Funny Quote

Nominated for Quote of the Year is the statement by Texas Congressman Dick Arme when asked, "If you had been in President Clinton's place would you have resigned?"

Arme's reply: "If I had been in the president's place I would not have gotten the chance to resign. I would have been lying in a pool of my own blood, looking up, and listening to my wife ask, 'How do you reload this son of a B?'"

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and get two years of service from each deputy. Once you multiply that \$100,000 cost times the 30 deputies this county has lost you will see that the staggering loss to the citizens is \$3 million.

One commissioner has consistently voted against every sheriff's office budget for the last five years. In several instances, he was able to talk one of the other commissioners into following his lead. It only takes two votes to destroy our protection.

This is not what I need to adequately provide safety and security to the residents of our county and I believe it is not what our residents want. However day-to-day decisions continue to be made based upon politics -- not professional management principles.

The "good ol' boy" system probably worked well in the last century, but this is the 21st century and we need a professional county administrator to oversee the day-to-day operations of Josephine County. The proposed charter accomplished that.

Another reason I support the new charter is because four of the new part-time commissioners will be elected from districts. I feel that those commissioners will be more responsible to their constituents when they serve a specific area. Two of the current commissioners live in the city of Grants Pass and the third lives just outside the city.

Do the residents of Illinois Valley, Williams, Wolf Creek, and other outlying areas get the same considerations as those closer to the city? Let's elect people to the JoCo Board of County Commissioners who want the position to serve their communities, not to get a paycheck.

I believe the proposed charter will result in an improved county government. I hope to be joined in voting "yes" for the new charter in November.

'Not the answer' From Don Smith, Siskiyou Project executive director

In a letter of Sept. 24, Jim Frick suggests that logging 2 billion board feet of trees off the Biscuit burn area is needed, and

that "if we harvest even 200 million board feet we could finance schools, benefit our community with jobs for locals and lessen our increasing tax burden."

Post-fire logging typically cost taxpayers a lot more than the government generates by selling burned trees at extremely low prices.

Logging Biscuit will not provide money to finance schools and will create only temporary jobs.

Under the provisions of Sen. Ron Wyden's "Secure County Payments Act," Josephine and Curry

counties will receive the same fixed sum from the federal government regardless of the amount of logging from Biscuit. Also, at a time when the timber market is flooded, dumping more logs will drive down prices even further, affecting small woodlot owners the most.

As Frick suggests, we need to create "defensible space around this valley" by thinning small trees and brush in areas where the community and forest overlap. Success will depend in part on the leadership from private property owners.

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