

Bob's Corner

Now that we're in a new decade with the beginning of 2010, I am willing to reveal that I made no New Year resolutions. Well, one. But I'm not at liberty to discuss it here. However, it's a good one.

As a younger guy I always made New Year pledges. None of them lasted longer than maybe a week or so. They usually involved matters such as: promising to study harder to earn better grades; planning to eat fewer cheeseburgers, deep-fried fish sandwiches and French fries; resolving that I'd stop driving too fast and drag racing; and being determined to have a money vault like Scrooge McDuck.

Yeah, well, I was a strange kid. Haven't improved much (you already knew that) since my ducktail hair days either. Honest. I used to have long hair all over my skull. I really thought it was my best feature (the hair, not the skull). But as it's said, hair today/gone tomorrow. And someone told me not long ago, "Hey, your hair is getting thin." My response: "So who wants fat hair?"

And another guy told me that split hair is a problem. My response: "Right. My hair split years ago."

Heard about a man who sat in a barbershop chair, and the barber asked, "How do you want it?" The customer says, "Well, I want it with my waves up top, light on the left side, bushy on the right side, and then make it all out of shape and sticking up." The barber said, "Why do you want your hair cut like that?" And the guy says, "That's how you cut it last time!"

Which reminds me of a time when I was, oh, maybe 12 or 13 years old. Back when we thought that hair was our crowning glory, so to speak. Was in a barber's chair in El Paso, Texas in mid-summer. As the barber was using the clippers on my cabeza, a drop of sweat (mine) caused me to jerk my melon. This resulted in the clippers digging into my "do" and the barber uttering a few vulgar words. And a "haircut" that kept me housebound for weeks. No way was I going to let anyone besides family see me.

Yeah, weird. And a few "vulgar" words of my own come to mind. Not that I used them at the time, but these are among those that applied at the time:

Fiasco, debacle, dud, farce, and calamity. Not to mention catastrophe.

Thank goodness I'm mostly bald now. Call it "thin on top" or what you will. I'm quite happy being hairless.

Tax measures 66 & 67 set for Jan. 26 ballot

By **SCOTT JORGENSEN**
IVN Staff Writer

Voter Pamphlets for Oregon's Jan. 26 special election were mailed last week, as both sides of the tax debate prepare for the final stretch of the campaign.

Measures 66 and 67 resulted from \$733 million in tax increases passed by the Legislature last year to fill growing budget gaps. Immediately after the session adjourned, business groups throughout the state worked with Conservative-leaning organizations to gather enough signatures to refer the hikes to voters.

If passed, Measure 66 would raise the tax on incomes at or above \$250,000 for households and \$125,000 for individuals. It also would eliminate income taxes on the first \$2,400 of unemployment benefits received in 2009 and raise an estimated \$472 million in revenues for the state during its first year.

Measure 67 would raise the corporate minimum tax from \$10 to \$150. It would increase the tax rate that some corporations pay on profits by 1.3 percentage points and increases certain business filing fees. An estimated \$255 million would be raised in the first year of implementation.

Area Groups Get Organized

At the local level, members of the Illinois Valley-based Social Justice Alliance (SJA) plan to ramp up their efforts relatively soon. SJA's Barry Snitkin said that the group will engage in phone banking to encourage support for the measures, but will not conduct any door-to-door canvassing.

He added that canvassing in rural areas is difficult.

Bill Ertel, Josephine County Republican Party chairman, said his group's "big thrust" right now is to help support phone banking efforts in Medford to oppose the measures. Tax opponents have set up eight call centers throughout the state.

"Were trying to organize our precinct committee people and volunteers from the (John) McCain campaign to support that effort," Ertel stated. He added that canvassing will kick off around the second week of January.

Statewide Campaign Efforts Also Planned

At the state level, Scott Moore, spokesman for Defend Oregon, said that his group has "certainly been in full campaign mode for a while now.

"Were taking every opportunity to talk to Oregon voters about what's at stake in this election," Moore said.

He added that volunteers have been out "just about every night making phone calls and knocking on doors" to bolster support for the measures. Pro-tax groups also have been sending literature

directly to mailboxes during recent weeks, and have ads on television.

Pat McCormick, spokesman for Oregonians Against Job Killing Taxes (OAJKT), said that group began its advertising after the Thanksgiving holiday. It did not, however, run any TV commercials around Christmas.

"We decided early on that Christmas week was not a week that we needed to be distracting voters from their families and other activities to talk about the campaign," McCormick said.

Crunching the Numbers

Both sides are using statistics to try and bring voters to their side.

According to figures released by Defend Oregon, approximately 1,617,145 people statewide file taxes. Of those, less than 40,000 would be affected by the tax hikes, Defend Oregon said.

There are approximately 33,727 tax filers in Josephine County, Defend Oregon said, and only 447 would be affected by the measures.

McCormick said that around 137,000 private sector jobs have been lost in Oregon since the recession began in November 2007. During that same time, he said, state government employment increased 12.8 percent.

"In good times and bad times, they continually increased spending," McCormick said. "At some point, that kind of spending is not sustainable."

Defend Oregon has another set of statistics showing how many residents in each county depend on state services. Those figures show that approximately 11,136 children attend public schools in Josephine County. There also are 12,017 county residents served by Oregon Health Plan, 882 receiving long-term care and 864 supervised criminal offenders, Defend Oregon said.

The Money Trail

Running a statewide campaign can be expensive, and both sides of the tax debate are spending and receiving large sums of money to fund their efforts.

According to the Oregon Secretary of State's Website, Vote Yes for Oregon netted \$3.4 million in contributions as of Dec. 29. It posted \$2.2 million in expenditures, with a \$1.2 million cash balance remaining.

During December, Vote Yes for Oregon received two contributions from the Oregon Education Association (OEA) totaling \$800,000. The national America Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) contributed \$500,000. Oregon AFSCME Council 75 made two contributions totaling \$250,000, an amount matched by Service Employees International Union.

(Continued on page 3)

Letters to the Editor

(Editor's Note: Views and commentary, including statements made as fact, are strictly those of the letter-writers.)

Typed, double-spaced letters are considered for publication. Hand-written letters that are double-spaced and legible also can be considered. "Thank you" submissions are not accepted as letters.

'New life in sobriety' From Crystal Costa Tucson, Ariz.

I just want to apologize to the whole valley for my past actions, and want all to know that I am starting a new life in sobriety.

P.S. "Mister" is just fine.

Brown background From Mary Brown Grants Pass

To review: Jack Brown's family has been in Josephine County since 1934, working and raising children to become sincere Christians and politically active U.S. citizens.

Jack became involved in politics when the Legislature passed Senate Bill 100 in the 1970s, creating statewide land-use planning, and has been active in opposing encroaching socialism since.

He has belonged to both major political parties. As a Democrat, he was elected to several terms as a precinct committeeman in the Josephine County Central Committee. He sought the Democratic nomination for Josephine County commissioner in 1976, U.S. senator in '78, and state senator, District 25, in '80.

Jack switched to the more conservative Republican Party, serving several elected terms as precinct committeeman, and was elected chairman of the Josephine County Republican Party Central Committee. He sought the Republican nomination for state representative, District 49, in '92.

Jack became involved in the American Party of Oregon in '94 and received its nomination for state representative. He continued in that party as Josephine County chairman as well as other

positions of responsibility. When Ross Perot took over the party in '96, Jack declined further nominations and left the party.

(Editor's Note: The letter-writer is the wife of the candidate.)

Say "No" to 66 & 67 Jim & Melanie Tehan Selma

It is time to put on the brakes. Hundreds of volunteers have worked tirelessly to gather signatures for a referendum to allow the voters of Oregon to decide whether we are willing to let the newest tax imposed by our state government to stand.

With such high unemployment, why aren't our representatives working harder to help Oregonians get back to work? We are blindly headed toward the same great pit of tax-and-spend as our neighbor, California. The further away from local government, the less control we have about where the spending goes.

If we allow Measures 66 and 67 to stand as passed by our state legislature, without a vote of opposition by its citizens, Oregon will have the largest personal income tax of any state in our nation—retroactive to Jan. 1, 2009.

Corporations, large or small, for profit or not, will of course pass on to consumers any additional tax they face; that is, if they can continue doing business in Oregon at all. Must Oregon's private businesses continue to be penalized in order to support the expansion of the public sector? Have you noticed lately the number of businesses closing

their doors, the empty storefronts? Some corporations will pay the minimum tax of \$150, but others that are large enough to be providing jobs will be taxed based on their gross receipts—whether or not they realize a net profit, a real penalty to a growing business.

It's time to put on the brakes!

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(Classified ads & uncomplicated display ads can be accepted until noon Fridays with an additional charge.)

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fa.smithbarney.com/nelsonmaler
nelson.r.maler@smithbarney.com

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