

violations of voting rights protections since the mid-1960s. We are going to hear a great deal more about the way in which race played a part in the Florida outcome.

Some people blame the Electoral College for the election mess. Eliminating the Electoral College may or may not be a worthwhile goal but it will never happen because the smaller states can easily exert a veto over the amendment process to protect their own interests (16 states can defeat a Constitutional amendment). Some people want a proportional representation system by congressional districts. Yet a study aired over NPR concluded that the results in the Electoral College would have been just about the same using the proportional method.

There is one other aspect of the Florida results that might be of interest: if only 1% of the minuscule Ralph Nader vote in the state (Nader only took 1.6% of the Florida vote) had voted Democrat, we wouldn't be wringing our hands about the prospect of drilling in the Alaska Wildlife Refuge, rekindling the arms race with a new missile-defense system, or empowering an attorney general hostile to human rights. Understandably, Ralph's supporters may be reluctant to acknowledge the unpleasant math, but it's unlikely that angry progressives, working people and minorities in the Democratic Party and elsewhere will soon be rallying behind the Green Party.

PAUL C. VAN DER VELDT

(He is proprietor of Shallon Winery in Astoria.)

I am a registered Socialist. I am concerned about some of the ideas promoted by the incoming Presidential administration and wish to make a quiet statement — and maybe to be a devil's advocate and to give respectful memory to the late proprietor of Svenson's Blacksmith Shop, who was one of the few towering intellectuals of earlier Astoria, and whom I had the privilege of meeting when I was young.

Accordingly, Bush and others' idea of irresponsibly passing off charity and general welfare to private charitable organizations heads us back to the worst abuses in the history of general welfare.

Yes, people like to contribute to "worthy" causes which makes them feel better and somehow alleviates any residue of guilt they may have for having ripped off their fellow man during the year, and with the TV marketing of "worthy" causes, they can feel particularly good. But even if everyone tithed a decent amount, the distribution of this largesse would not be fair or equitable.

Although I was reared in the atmosphere of free enterprise, social responsibility to charity, etc., one of my first jobs in life showed me the reality of the system.

I stepped from the woods of Oregon into the center of L.A. at 22. (Everyone says that was a cultural shock. No it wasn't.) I went to work for the Los Angeles County Department of Charities, Bureau of Public Assistance, Confidential Index Section, Transportation Unit. I personally shipped 6,000 indigents out of the county in the three years before going into the Navy. I dealt with caseworkers in a great many district offices. The Confidential Index Section cleared and cross-referenced applications and tried to weed out multiple fraudulent applications for welfare (there are crooks who try to work the system at all socioeconomic levels). At the time L.A. County had to pass a civil service regulation that would not allow our pay scale to be less than the bottom welfare scale.

At that time there were more than 50 charitable organizations in L.A. County (such as Red Cross, Catholic Charities, Jewish Welfare, Salvation Army, etc.etc.). Confidential Index Section tried to weed out those fraudulent applications also — before the days of computers. We who worked for the county frequently alluded to the Red Cross, for example, as a "referral agency." Their caseworkers, who seemed to have a new station-wagon every year and had offices in a new air-conditioned building, would take applications and refer clients to a county office where the costs could be picked up by the taxpayers.

This all seemed to me then, as now, grossly inefficient and unfair. One large bureaucracy for this purpose would have its inefficiencies because of humans running it, but would certainly be more fair and just for everybody than the plethora of organization bureaucracies — each pursuing their own religious or ideological agenda and marketing themselves to draw every dollar from those who need to feel better about themselves since they don't have any basic compassion.

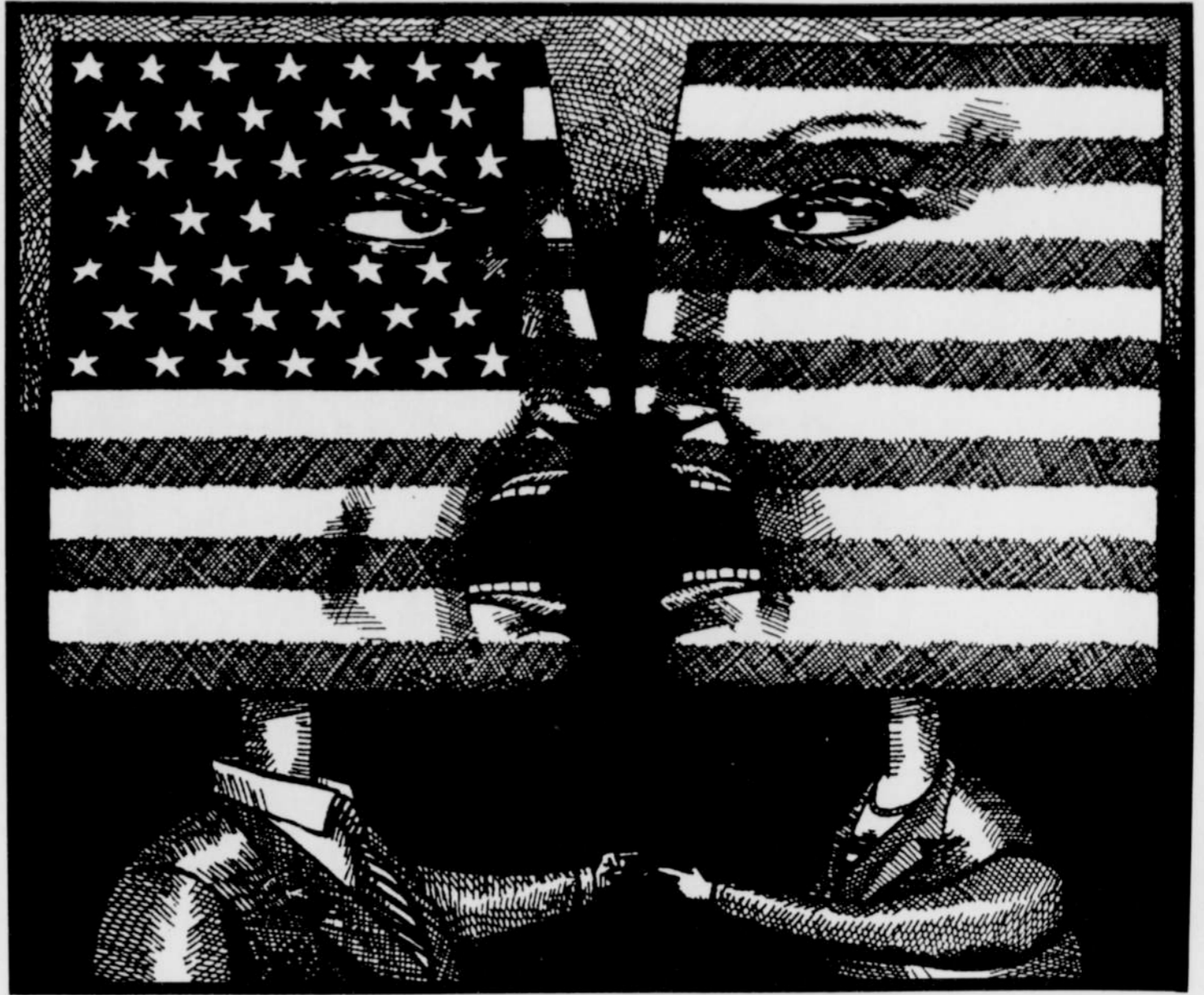
PHIL KEIM

(He is a forester and a singer. He sang the National Anthem at a Portland Blazers basketball game.)

Being a registered independent, I often get accused of being wishy-washy about what I truly believe and that I just hold my finger up in the air to see which way the wind is blowing. I tend to not choose sides. But I was very upset that the election had to go to the Supreme Court. I feel it is unfortunate things went the way they did. It's obvious from the debacle we have gone through that we need serious voting reform. We need absolute consistency to the voting system to avoid future problems of what we have experienced.

It would have to be a system that would not allow for there to be any question what candidate a person voted for on the ballot. This would be a type of ballot consistent in every state. Keeping all this in mind, I feel that for the benefit of our country and its future progress, we need to give George W. Bush every opportunity to work in a bipartisan fashion with Congress to reach some reasonable and logical effective solutions to some of the many problems facing our country.

I am not getting caught up in the bitterness and resentment from this election. The bottom line is that our country faces some very difficult issues and bitterness and resentment are never avenues to progress.



PAUL LACHINE

DEBRA CONNAWAY

(She is a teacher and progressive social change activist)

I don't think George W. Bush is smart enough to steal the election but those who stand to profit from his Presidency stole it for him.

Greed and the lust for power are the ultimate corruption. The election was a complete breakdown of process and demoralization of the electorate. What faith I had in the political system is gone.

It's going to set back women's rights about twenty years. I think it will further widen the rift between the haves and the have-nots.

I don't think anybody can predict the dire consequences of this hopefully single term in office.

CHUCK STUART

(He is a former firefighter, a skydiver and a cross-country motorcyclist.)

I distrust a man who accepts the Presidency who truly knows he didn't earn it. It speaks of a lack of integrity.

I believe if the Supreme Court had allowed Florida to continue the vote counting that Gore would have secured the necessary electoral votes.

So we have five Supreme Court justices who decided to take matters into their own hands and appoint a President for us.

There was no reason for the Supreme Court to halt the vote count.

The consequences are already beginning to shake out. Our health foreign aid has the caveat of refusing aid to countries that provide for abortions whether our money funds it or not. 'W' canceled many of the last minute protections of public lands from development and logging. One grace of an incoming President is not to arbitrarily cancel the work of the outgoing President — and the outgoing President was elected. But to quote 'W': "Perhaps I underestimated him."

If 'W' can even maintain the economy boost of the last four years it will indeed be an accomplishment. My view, which is not too far off, is that the economy might be slowing as a result of fear of his administration.

Greenspan and Clinton have done a wonderful job the past four years — I don't think Greenspan will stick it out the next four years.

I think 'W' is an uneducated hick who is in over his head. But perhaps 'W' is right. I am "misunderstanding" him. However, I wish he would stop taking English lessons from Dan Quayle.

Specializing in Forest Inventory
& Reforestation

PHILLIP KEIM
Forestry Technician



Office (503) 325-2690 • Cell (503) 338-9691
1505 Irving Avenue • Astoria, Oregon 97103-3721

SUSAN SCHROEDER

(She is a former Astoria City Councilwoman.)

I certainly think it is going to be an interesting four years. The fact the vote is so close means that the country is divided. People are either going to have to come together around the center to get something done or it will be stale.

I think people will get more involved — but I hope we don't end up in a war.

STACY SMITH

(She lives in Astoria and is an artist.)

I don't really put any faith in the government. I think it's just a bunch of people on a power trip. I don't think there are very many who think about the little people. Politics is just a popularity contest.

ROBERT WILSON

(He is a commercial fisherman and a marine biologist. He started the Vietnam Veterans Against the War chapter in Astoria.)

Does my opinion count? My vote didn't!

JERRY FORSYTH

(aka 'Stick Boy' as a result of standing 6 feet 8 inches off the ground. He lives in Astoria, is just married and to be a father.)

Watching the inauguration, the best sign I saw was one that said 'Re-elect Gore in 4'. I thought it was cool. It's really obvious the Supreme Court made our President. Everybody knows it. The people who wanted Bush thought it was the right thing to do.

I think it will be obvious as time goes on that there was not much choice. Either way, we would have got one of Them as President.

I think more people learned more about the electoral process than ever before — everybody on the planet learned about our election process. It's sad it turned out the way it did. It makes a mockery of our electoral process but I think we've only got four years to worry about it.

It bodes well at least that many people will get involved. I was impressed about the amount of people who did get involved.

GINA FORSYTH

(I'm Jerry's wife," she says. She's about to have a baby.)

The outcome of this election will lead people to make a more conscientious vote in the next election. Like Jerry said, more people know the process and will more likely vote their heart next time.

I'm sorry more people didn't vote for the Green Party, but with the closeness of the vote and everything more balanced in Congress, I think more people will vote for the Green Party and more real candidates.

I don't think Bush's intentions are so golden. He's not the happy man we see. I think he's got some things up his sleeve and we will soon see what they are.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



GODFATHER'S BOOKS AND ESPRESSO BAR

1108 Commercial • Astoria, OR 97103
Phone: (503) 325-8143

Terry Hahn

THE AUTO PARTS CO.

Where Your Satisfaction
is Our Biggest Concern!

325-1612



BRAND NEW LOCATION AT 730 BOND STREET, ASTORIA, OREGON