



Four-year-old Abrie Lemmon of Sandy gets a helping hand from Debbie Lemmon in a search for Easter eggs in a stack of leaves. Hundreds of local children attended the annual Sandy Kiwanis egg hunt in Meinig Park Saturday.

Tax revolts brewing

Mountain residents see red over taxes

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

Residents in the Mt. Hood area mad about the increases in their property taxes are threatening to organize a property tax revolt against what they call "inappropriate assessments" by Clackamas County.

The idea for a revolt came from Brightwood homeowner Robert Stevens. He said that property owners have to begin fighting back before they are taxed right out of their homes.

In 1975, Stevens and his wife, Debbie, purchased five acres of land for \$12,000. Much of it is unbuildable because of high ground water. Today that same piece of property is appraised at \$58,400.

"Since 1975 my property taxes have gone up 500 per-

cent," said Stevens. "This is in only seven years. It's unbelievable."

Stevens said he built a 1,650-square-foot chalet and the total appraised value for the home and property is now \$143,000.

"Taxes are now one half of my house payment. The situation is more than unfair," he said.

The Stevens' neighbors, Gordon and Andrea Cabral, also complained that taxes levied against unbuildable land, such as much of their own, should not increase as much as they have been reassessed for.

The Cabrals further claim the county reassessed their garage, claiming that it is another house.

Sylvia McAfee, who inherited a piece of property and an old cabin that has been in her family for more

than 30 years, is undergoing her second appeal to the county's board of equalization. She objects to what she calls "improper taxation."

McAfee, a small business owner in Portland, has attempted to rebuild the cabin since the 1964 flood took out a wall, weakened the remaining walls, damaged the wiring and plumbing beyond repair and destroyed the wall. The flood also filled the building with six feet of silt.

The cabin, according to McAfee, after she replaced the wall, added a small room to the front and replaced the wiring, was reassessed at \$43,000.

She complained that the structure has no exterior siding, isn't finished on the interior, has a rough concrete floor with 10 percent floorspace as dirt, has not

plumbing and could not be valued at such a price.

When the assessor visited in January, he admitted there had been an error. What he thought was plumbing was actually a free-standing wash basin that had not been connected.

He reportedly also thought an unconnected clawfoot bathtub and toilet that only flushes with outside water was a full bathroom.

McAfee complained that her land value had increased by one third when the flood had eliminated half her property.

"The county agrees that the property is unbuildable, but they also

think it's very valuable," she said.

County appraiser Ray Hammersly said property in the Hoodland area is appraised to what the market value of similar property in the area is selling for.

He said that property selected would be similar in topography, access, utilities and surrounding area. Houses used for comparison are based on square feet, quality of materials and workmanship.

In between six-year physical appraisals, "trending increases" are made in the office, based on sales of comparable property.

Thompson criticizes taxing

"The tax assessors in Clackamas County must think they're in Beverly Hills."

That's the opinion of John Thompson, a Welches area businessman and candidate for Senate District 14.

"At a time when the economy is down, homes aren't selling and rural land is being down-zoned still further, some property owners have seen 50 to 300 percent increases in assessed valuation," he said.

Thompson plans to hold a whirlwind series of evening

meetings the week of April 26 in Welches, Sandy, Canby, Estacada and Molalla. For many people the deadline for filing an appeal is May 1 and, he said, appeal forms will be available at the meetings and can be submitted to the County en masse or individually.

"Lake Oswego, Milwaukie and Oregon City run this County," said Thompson, "but the big guys can take care of themselves. Individual landowners in the rural areas must band together in ap-

pealing their assessments if we are going to have an impact."

Asked if his actions are politically motivated, he said, "Absolutely. You can't win an election in a rural area with Madison Avenue billboards and pamphlets. You have to earn every vote and that's what I'm going to do now and after the election."

In urging area residents who believe their assessments are too high, Thompson said, "Together we stand. Divided we pay through the nose."

Woman joins Senate race

A retired Mehama educator has announced her candidacy for Oregon State Senate District 14.

Jean Roberts, who entered Western Oregon State College at age 50 and graduated in two and a half years, has lived in the North Santiam area since 1940.

She vows that she will fight new taxes, work to stop government harassment and encourage jobs by promoting Oregon jobs for Oregon residents.

Roberts has been a

Democratic commit-

teewoman for 10 years. She has been associated with the logging industry as a scaler and loading engineer.

After that she operated a cafe and post office, drove a school bus and wrote feature stories for the Salem Statesman.

She won three awards for her stories and was honored by the Associated Press. She is the author of "Elkhorn and Mehama."

She was an instructor at Tongue Point Job Corps

Center for eight and a half years and taught three terms at Clatsop Community College.

While she was at the Job Corps, she was named Oregon State Employee of the Year in 1973.

She has served as a 4-H Club leader, been a Grange lecturer and is a past noble grand in the Rebekah Lodge.

Active as a summer baseball coach, Roberts' field in Mehama is named after she and her husband.

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