

This political year red hot and rollin'

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Last winter one of my politically-active friends said this was going to be a boring election year. 1978 lacks both issues and leadership, he said.

Well, then springtime hit and we found ourselves with all kinds of issues. The Big Daddy of the year is property tax limitation. Some Oregonians so fell in love with California's Proposition 13 that they stole the idea word for word and found more than enough people willing to sign their petitions to put the issue to the voters in November where it will be known as Ballot Measure 6.

Not only do Oregonians find themselves facing a proposition on property tax, but also ones on the death penalty, state-paid abortions, the formation of public utility districts, a denturists measure and one requiring a utility company's stockholders, as opposed to the ratepayers, to pay for new construction.

Everyone of these issues is emotional. Now, while most Oregonians are worried about when the rain will stop and the sun will come out, or when it will again turn into "liquid sunshine," the proponents and opponents of these propositions are preparing to charge forth on their white horses. Their armor, is bulging with facts and figures to convince you that they have found the Holy Grail.

It seems we are about to enter an era of government by ballot measure. How long has it been since we had a president who made us feel good. President Carter fails to inspire. A recent article in Rolling Stone magazine explores this point.

If Jerry Brown had been elected president instead of Carter, we might by now be trying wind mills for power or making a new kind of gas from sea water. Maybe Jerry Brown is capable of no greater leadership than Carter, but he does use his imagination.

John Kennedy had some of the same problems with Congress as President Carter is experiencing now. But he came up with some ideas which inspired Americans to do their best -- like the Peace Corps or the goal of putting a man on the moon by 1970. He put our imagination to work and lifted our spirits. When was the last time we really felt good about our elected leadership?

Who do we have to blame when an elected leader doesn't perform up to what we expect? Who, for example, is really responsible for Proposition 13 in California or Ballot Measure 6 in Oregon? Is it our elected leaders in the legislature or county commissions, city councils and school boards? Or is it we the voters who have stayed at home instead of becoming active in a political party, our union, the

PTA or neighborhood association? Are our elected officials out of touch because they have cotton in their ears or because we considered "Charlie's Angels" more important than attending the school budget committee hearing, or "Monday Night Baseball" won out over the city council meeting or because we forgot to vote?

One person I used to work with was always impressed by the individuals she would read about in "People" magazine. How do they do it? she would ask. Where do they get their energy? One doesn't have to thumb through "People" magazine to find active citizens. There are plenty everywhere. As volunteers, they are making the decisions regarding land use planning, the school district's budget, priorities in their neighborhood or convincing a candidate for legislative office of the importance of an issue close to their heart. And all the people I'm thinking of doing these things hold responsible jobs, raise families, keep their houses clean and enjoy a good social life.

The point is, this is not going to be a boring political year. Indeed, it looks to be a watershed year, one in which we in Oregon will make a critical decision about the role of government. This comes on top of elections for governor, U.S. Senator, Congress, the legislature and a host of other issues which will effect the way we live.

Effects of '6' told

SALEM -- An informal session of the Oregon Legislative Assembly will be held Aug. 19 to brief the solons on the effects of the passage of Ballot Measure 6, the so-called Whittenburg Amendment to the Oregon Constitution which would limit property tax levies.

OEPBS television will broadcast the session live.

Beginning in the Senate Chambers at 9:30 a.m., the legislators will be welcomed by Senate President Jason Boe and House Speaker Phil Lang. Following that, they will be given a description of the data available on the measure from legislative counsel Tom Clifford, legislative fiscal analyst Jay Gould and legislative revenue officer Richard Munn.

Following that, separate sessions will be held on how Ballot Measure 6 would affect present sources of state and local government revenue, present expenditure patterns of state and local government and present constitutional and statutory provisions. Each group will be repeated twice so that everyone will be able to visit each.

The legislative leaders said in their letter of invitation that they hope to have a district-by-district computer run of the effects of the passage of the measure.

The OSEA Board of Directors and the chairman of the statewide OSEA Government Relations Committee will be attending the Saturday meeting.

The OSEA Plan

The OSEA Employee Benefits Committee is seeking your ideas of ways to improve government -- both in terms of service to the public and employee working conditions. The committee calls it "The OSEA Plan." The outline below tells you what it's all about. The

committee believes that OSEA should be a leader in making government more efficient for the public and government work more meaningful for the public employee. So send your ideas, in care of the Employee Benefits Committee, to Salem OSEA headquarters.

What is the OSEA Plan?

- It is a program to gather, review and act upon ideas turned in by public employees to improve (1) the quality of working life in public government and (2) the operation of government.

Why is OSEA starting this plan?

- OSEA, in its 35-year history of working with public employees, has learned that many of them have good ideas to improve their jobs, government services, and the quality of working life in government.

- OSEA knows there presently is no way that most public employees who have such an idea can get action taken on that idea.

- OSEA was founded upon the principle of improving the welfare of government and its employees.

Why should you participate in this plan?

- As citizens, taxpayers, and public employees, you have a special stake in having government run as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

- Many public employees have ideas which should be shared and which would improve government.

- Public employees at all levels need to have a voice in making their government a better place in which to work.

What kinds of ideas can you submit?

- You can submit any ideas you have to improve the quality of working life in public employment and the operation of government.

- Suggestions could range all the way from those affecting your day-to-day work

activities to those affecting your work place or the entire government.

- Some of the subject areas that could be considered are: public contacts, work procedures, staffing, training, safety, vehicle use, supplies, forms, telephone use, maintenance, equipment, correspondence, work schedules, and office layout.

How do you get your ideas to OSEA?

- Write them down in your own words and send them to the Oregon State Employees Association, 1127 25th Street, S.E., Salem, Oregon 97302. Attn.: Employee Benefits Committee.

What will happen to your ideas at OSEA?

- All of them will be reviewed by a committee of your fellow public employees. Those found to be usable will be acted upon by OSEA in a variety of ways, and depending upon the type of idea. Some can be implemented through collective bargaining. Some will require action by the legislature. Still others may be put into effect after informal discussion with management.

How will usable ideas be recognized?

- All employees who turn in suggestions found to be usable will receive a certificate of recognition.

- In addition, those employees whose suggestions merit special recognition will receive a small cash award from OSEA.

- Both certificates and monetary awards are offered by OSEA in the spirit of appreciation for your participation.

- The ultimate recognition, of course, would be the satisfaction of seeing your idea in use.