

The Heppner
GAZETTE-TIMES
VIEWPOINT

Salem Scene

BY Jack Zimmerman

An exclusive to Oregon's weekly newspapers

Emotion-laden ballot measures get credit for the record numbers of Oregonians who registered to vote in this week's General Election.

But while voters were absorbed with the issues, relatively few understood their contributions to the every-other-year numbers game that follows statewide elections in Salem.

In the course of settling those issues, voters also balloted for Governor, Labor Commissioner, Superintendent of Public Instruction their Legislators, Members of Congress and many other local candidates and issues. Without demeaning any other office or issue, votes for members of the State Legislature were most important to the Salem numbers game.

Some voters doubtless were prompted primarily by the chance to help decide the gubernatorial race. Others by the opportunity to elect a county commissioner, mayor or city council member. And many turned out to re-elect a state lawmaker or install a newcomer in the incumbent's seat.

Nonetheless, only a relative handful were motivated by the opportunity to influence the partisan structure that will guide the course of the 60th regular biennial session of the Legislature that convenes in the Capital City on Monday, Jan. 8.

It's not so much this numbers game is reserved for political sophisticates as it is the fact individual voters really can't influence the numbers. The whole thing resembles a colossal game of chance.

Regardless, subsequent elections conducted in the next few days among 90 privileged individuals will have much to do with the vast body of new law destined to be enacted in Salem during the first six months of next year.

By rule, tradition and law, this power revolves around two individuals elected to preside over the Senate and House of Representatives. Presiding officers have the authority to shape legislation by appointing committees and assigning bills to those committees. Senate President and House Speaker are generally elected during a caucus of their partisan peers—whenever clear cut partisan majorities evolve from the General Election.

A partisan majority in the 30-member Senate consists of 16. In the 60-member House, the magic number is 31.

Democrats have sustained a

partisan majority in the Senate since 1965. And since only half the Senate is elected to four-year terms every two years, it was numerically impossible for Republicans to significantly alter last session's 24-6 Democrat majority this year.

The House of Representatives is something else. Twice as many members—each elected for only two-year terms—means the odds for change are greater each election.

Democrats have sustained House majorities since 1972. And though election forecasts suspected the previous 37-23 Democrat superiority might be eroded, even the most ardent Republican doubted his party would regain a solid majority.

Philosophical strife among House Democrats last session wrought havoc with House traditions. And that same strife will play a part when a Speaker is chosen this year. That strife—coupled with any Republican gains—could pave the way for coalition leadership in the House. In other words, a combination of dissident Democrats and Republicans could wrest leadership control from regular Democrats.

This type of activity is more common in the Senate than the House of Representatives. And it often leads to delays and wounds that are slow to heal.

The 1987 session was delayed 15 days before Senators elected Boyd Overhulse President. And the 1971 session failed to achieve organization for 12 days until a coalition installed John Burns.

Twice the Oregon Legislature failed to organize and went home without conducting its normal functions. Senators were unable to elect a leader in 1860 and House members couldn't agree on a Speaker in 1897.

Few observers believe either chamber will be leaderless during the session to come, however. The Senate is expected to name its President this week and House Democrats will try to elect a Speaker shortly after.

So while you're still absorbed with numbers voting for and against candidates and issues last Tuesday, keep the Salem numbers game in mind and those magic figures. They are 16 like-minded Senators and 31 like-minded representatives.

And most interesting of all is whether the 16 and 31 are members of the same political party.



The best behaved class she's ever taught. That's the way teacher Nan Nelson described this classroom. Her students played the practical joke of filling their chairs with dummies on the Friday of parent-teacher conferences.

LETTERS

Rail system rapped by Portland writer

Editor:

This is important to you, citizens of Morrow County! Did you know that Tri-Met (Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington Counties) transportation system is proposing a 14-mile light rail system from Portland to Gresham. The total cost in 1978 dollars is \$161 million and the part you will pay through your Oregon State income tax is \$17.5 million. Now, admittedly by Tri-Met, this \$161 million light rail is called "an experiment." The only way you can stop this is to contact your legislator and let him know how you feel. Transportation is necessary but it should not come from your taxes to the State or Federal Government to support this light rail. It appears the politicians approve this trail balloon, but the citizens in the Tri-Met area are not in concert. Just think of the expense alone for 14 miles of monumentalized rail!

Contact your legislator if you do not want your taxes to pay for Portland's Light Rail.

Yours Truly,
Tom Armstrong
Portland

Why no timber sales in Pine beetle damage areas

Editor:

I wonder if something can't be done to encourage the Forest Service to offer for sale our lodgepole pine, as it is all dying, and I think will be all dead in two years, causing a serious fire hazard.

If there should be \$4 million worth of this pine, \$1 million, or one-fourth is Morrow County's share and we have a tax strike now.

Three years ago, Mr. Rudolph, superintendent of the Umatilla National Forest, told me that we would lose every pine tree in Morrow County, and has so told me twice since, and yet to my knowledge, there is no proposed major sale coming up next year.

A few of us with private timber are trying to save it by harvesting it, and are getting from \$22.50 to \$40 per thousand (board feet). And these dead trees are selling for \$1.00 per thousand—a difference of 4,000 per cent. I have sold about 2,000,000 feet with a cost of less than \$1,000 for roads and etc. Why can't these trees be harvested with a minimum of roads and costs, so the people will get a little cash from these sales?

O.W. Cutsforth

Veteran's program can benefit area employers

An on-the-job training program for veterans whereby private businesses may re-employ up to 50 per cent of the trainee's wage is now available through the State of Oregon Employment Division.

Called HIRE II, any private business firm may employ a veteran where the individual will learn a skill and have continued employment. To the

employer it means an opportunity to receive financial assistance for extraordinary costs involved in training the employee. Financial assistance could amount to as much as 50 per cent of the wage.

Under the program the trainee must be a veteran or eligible for veterans' preference. Special emphasis will be placed on employing the

disabled veteran, minority veteran and Vietnam veteran.

Trainees requiring some job-related education to further training for the position may apply for such assistance under this or other Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.

As in any tax-supported training program, there are commitments and restrictions—all fully explained in the contract.

For more information, contact the Veterans' Employment Representative, Carol Biddle, at 276-9054 in Pendleton.

Sifting through the TIMES



Sixty years ago this week, a town holiday was declared by Heppner's Mayor Smead, after telegraph messages were received that Germany had signed a truce ending combat in World War I.

At 4 p.m. on Nov. 7, 1918, Smead ordered the town's fire sirens and church bells to commence ringing. Townspeople responded by firing guns, pounding anvils, and making noise in any way possible.

"All the people of the town and all the automobiles that could be gotten into were assembled on Main Street," reported the Gazette-Times. "No less than a thousand people were marching and riding up and down, shouting, rejoicing and having the joy of their lives. It is learned that there was general celebrating all over the country."

Ten years later, in 1928, Heppner residents celebrated the Armistice with an auto race, parade and football game.

According to the Gazette-Times, the car race was limited to "two-lunged flivvers," worth less than \$100, in order to "preclude any late models from stepping in and copping prizes." Carl Cason and Herb Instone were the winners, averaging "a break-neck speed of 20 miles an hour."

"In spite of all the daredevilry, recklessness and danger connected with auto racing, and the ferocity of a football game, the only casualty recorded from the day's events was Harvey Bauman," the Gazette-Times stated. "Bauman's horse fell with him while leading the parade and he suffered some scratched up knuckles. That was the extent of the day's bloodshed."

Fifteen years ago this week, Kinzua resident Bob Slinkard bagged a near 1,000 pound bull elk while hunting three miles from his home one afternoon following work. The bull's rack was almost perfectly balanced, with the horns measuring 48 inches across and standing 43 inches high.

Winter feeding started a bit early for Morrow County cattlemen five years ago this week, when more than seven inches of snow piled up on the Heppner area.

County schoolchildren got an unexpected vacation, and area wheat growers who had completed seed drilling were pleased with the new precipitation. Up to 20 inches of snow blanketed the Cutsforth Park vicinity.

Last year this week, the Morrow County Search and Rescue Posse spent a day scouring the upper Mallory Creek area for a lost Portland elk hunter.

The hunter, Anton Hager, was found about 10 miles from where he had last been seen. The Portlander had spent most of the night walking, since he had no means by which to build a fire.

Ione played Arlington during a homecoming downpour in Ione this week last year. It was a poor day for the Cards, as the Honkers soaked them for a 44-0 loss.

...have something to say?

The Gazette-Times welcomes letters from readers on any subject of general interest...letters should be not more than 250 words

Where to write Federal

Following is a list of Oregon and Eastern Oregon public officials for the information of readers who want to communicate with them:

U.S. Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, Russell Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510. Member of Appropriations Committee, Interior Committee, Rules Committee and Indian Policy Review Commission. Portland office, Pioneer Courthouse, Rm. 107, 520 SW Morrison, Portland, Ore. 97204, phone 221-3386.

U.S. Sen. Bob Packwood, Dirksen Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510. Member of Finance Committee and Commerce Committee. Portland office, 1002 NE Halladay, Rm. 700, (P.O. Box 3621), Portland, Ore. 97208, phone 233-4471.

U.S. Rep. Al Ullman, of the Second District, House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. Member of Ways and Means Committee. Salem office, 530 Center St. N.E., Rm. 330, (P.O. Box 247) Salem, Ore., 97308, phone 399-5724.

DEADLINES

General News & Society	Friday, 5 p.m.
Sports & Weekend Events	Monday, 5 p.m.
Late-breaking News	Tuesday, 12 noon
Classified Advertising	Monday, 5 p.m.
Display Advertising	Monday, 5 p.m.

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Rick Steelhammer, News Editor	Eileen Saling, Office Manager	Justine Weatherford, Local Columnist
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	Ron Jordan, Printer	

PENDLETON TREE SERVICE

- TOPPING
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- REMOVAL
- STUMP REMOVAL

We will be in the Heppner-Lexington-Ione area the last of October.

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