

# Salem Scene

by Jack Zimmerman

## ELECTION OFFICIALS GLUM ABOUT VOTER REGISTRATION

Saturday, voter registration deadline is still a few days away and most Oregon election officials already are expressing disappointment in prospects for a big turnout at the polls May 23.

No one expects the May Primary to be a "ho-hum" thing. But despite factors such as a record number of candidates, the elusive youth vote and the fact it's a presidential year, few expect a significant surge of people casting ballots.

Asst. Sec. of State Jack Thompson points out voter participation in Oregon—and across the nation—is gradually declining from a percentage standpoint. He doesn't see anything in the immediate future that would reverse the trend. "Fewer people are participating in government," he said. And indicated voter apathy may be increasing faster than anything else.

Thompson and his boss, Sec. of State Clay Myers, are willing to bet voter registration will be high for the May Primary—and possibly even set a new Oregon record. But they see few indications that current reasons for increased voter participation are bearing real fruit.

Of particular disappointment to those closest to the issue is the absence of a discernible outpouring of registrations by newly enfranchised young people. And trends in this state seem to be holding up nationwide.

Not all Oregon election administrators share Thompson's pessimism, however. In the state's population center, Multnomah County Director of Elections John Weldon is greatly impressed by preliminary registration figures—especially among 18-to-20 year-olds.

"Of course," he said, "I'm noted for being overly optimistic." And election people usually are because they're so close to the fact the ballot box is the key to the political system's success.

Weldon figures more than half of the now-enfranchised young are registering. Preliminary figures show total Multnomah County registration may surpass 320,000—an appreciable gain over the record 299,106 registered prior to the 1970 off-year Primary. And, as Weldon pointed out, intensive voter registration campaigns in the metropolitan area really just got started over the weekend.

Thompson—without required preliminary reports from election officials in the state's 36 counties—likely is basing his more conservative beliefs on two factors. While Oregon records showed an all-time high of 1,018,017 registered voters for the 1970 Primary, the total dipped to 955,459 during the General Election that year.

This decrease is due to the fact voter rolls are purged following Primaries and weeding out the so-called "deadwood" is an indication Primary figures always are somewhat out of proportion with reality.

Thompson's other indicator may be total registration figures involving the special cigarette tax election conducted on January 18 this year. At that time statewide registration stood at 1,030,367, hardly more than 12,000 greater than the 1970 Primary total.

"Sure, there'll be an increase in registrations (for the Primary)," Thompson averred. But he maintained it will occur principally from the fact there are more people—and the figures likely won't signal a significant increase in voter participation.

Studying Oregon voter activity is fascinating and of intense interest to those close to the political scene. In the past two decades the state has switched from narrowly "Republican" to a positive Democrat registration majority. GOP voters always turn out in greater numbers at the polls on a percentage basis. And Demos have a tendency to vote Republican in large numbers when General Election chips are down.

The latter fact is obvious when one considers a preponderance of the state's holders of major office are members of the minority party.

When it comes to reading the effectiveness of Oregon's Primary Election, it's just as absorbing to note the relative infallibility of voters to ballot their party's national presidential choice. And only twice since 1932 has this state's electorate erred in masting ma-

ority ballots during General Elections—the actual presidential winner.

If current registration figures have real significance—and if early youth registration tallies are lumped into the same category—one surely must surmise the Democratic majority in Oregon is enjoying a steady increase.

In Multnomah County, where a third of the state's voters reside for instance, the disparity between major party registrations definitely is growing. Democrat registrations held a 60,000-voter edge over Republicans at the 1970 Primary. That margin dipped to 56,000 during the General Election that year but bounced back to a 64,000-voter majority during January's special election. And late last week Weldon reported 73,000 more Democrats than Republicans registered in his county.

At the same time he had tallied the 18-29 year-old registration. With 16,554 new young voters registered, the early trend is to sign up as Independents had withered and Democrats held a big lead—10,966 to 3,868 GOPs.

By coalition or sheer weight of numbers, Republicans traditionally have ruled the Oregon Statehouse. Democrats this year, as seldom before, are predicting a change. If Weldon's preliminary count holds up and if it's indicative of what's happening throughout the state, their prediction just might come true.

## OBITUARIES

### JACK WILLIAM FLOOK

Funeral services were held Tuesday, April 18, in Fairfield, California, for Jack William Flook, age 54, of 1041 Marilyn Street, Fairfield. Mr. Flook died Friday, April 14, of a heart ailment. He was a native of Oregon and a retired Air Force Senior Master Sergeant.

Surviving are his widow Dorothy of Fairfield, one son, George, and one daughter, Mrs. Pamela Shin. His mother, Mrs. Sara Flook and one brother, George, both of Mill City, one sister, Mrs. Gwendolyn Johnson of Eugene and one grandchild.

Interment was in Rockville Cemetery at Fairfield with Bryan-Braker Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

## MEHAMA

### Mrs. John Teeters

Mr. and Mrs. Boyd Norton returned home Wednesday, April 12, from a trip to Reno and Sparks. They visited with her nephew, Tom Bolter at Reno, and with her brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Merle Tompkins, and mother, Mrs. Gussie May, at Sparks.

Sp/4 Rolland Longfellow arrived April 12 for a leave at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Longfellow. He has just finished a tour of duty in Vietnam and will be reporting to Ft. Lewis, when his leave is over.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dunbar of Senior Estates were recent guests at the home of Mrs. Jack Ryland. Mrs. Ryland spent the past weekend at the Dunbar home.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Monroe returned home Friday after spending several days at Reno. It snowed most of the time they were there but they had good weather on the way home.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Teeters went to Seattle Friday evening and were guests during the weekend of their sons, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Teeters and Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Teeters. They drove to Port Angeles on Saturday.

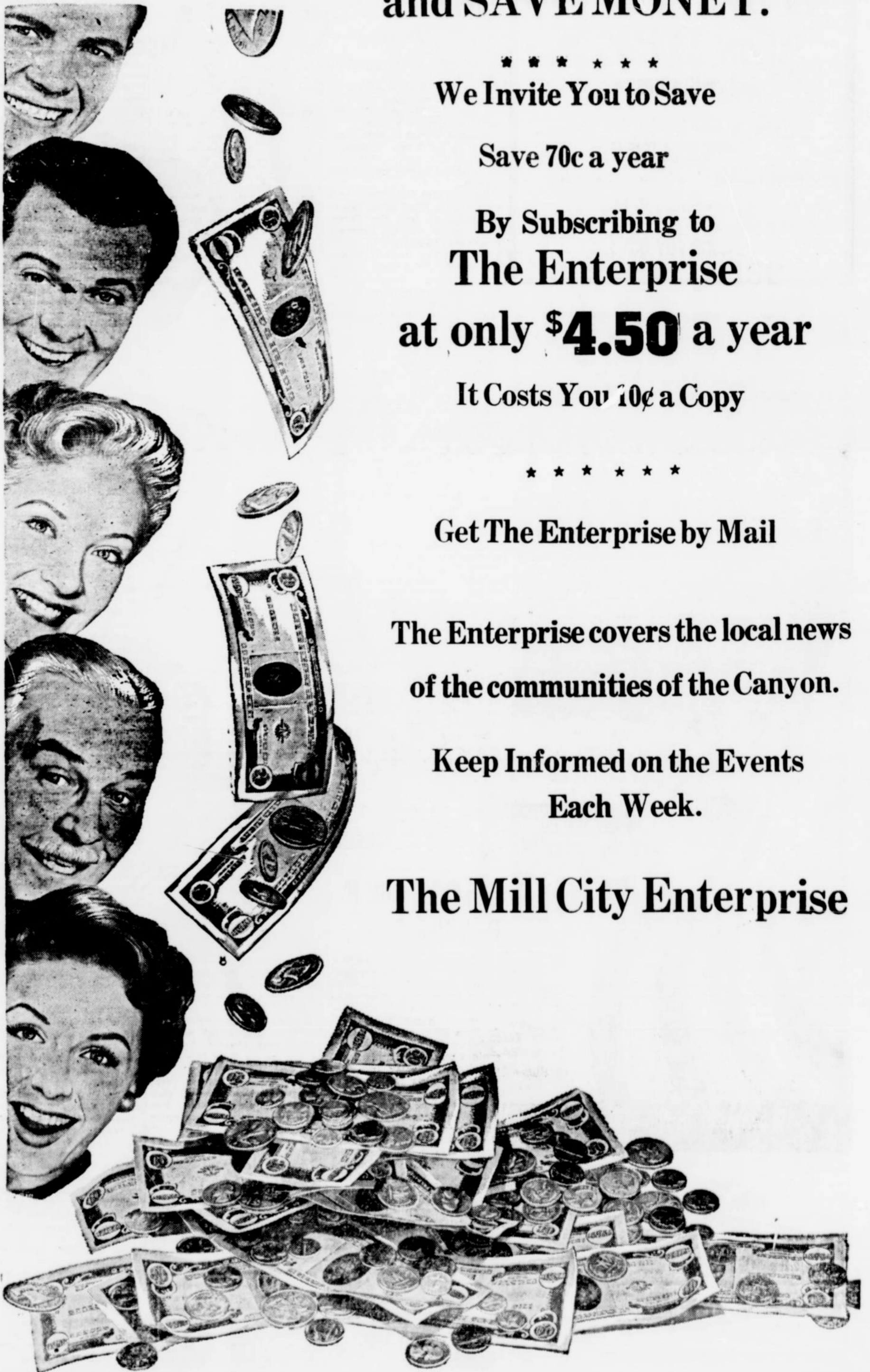
If the number following your name on The Enterprise label reads 4-72 it's time to send a check for renewal.

**VIKINGS RETREAT**  
Sauna and Massage  
Wanted: Your Body  
Female Masseuses  
SEE US AT  
4705 Liberty Rd. S. E.  
Salem, Oregon  
Phone 581-9671  
10 a.m.-1 a.m. 7 Days Weekly

# OUR NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING SAVES YOU SHOPPING TIME

OUR NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING

IS YOUR BEST BUYING GUIDE



Merchants Using The Enterprise Are inviting you to visit their stores. Why not take advantage of this invitation and **SAVE MONEY.**

\*\*\*\*\*  
We Invite You to Save

Save 70c a year

By Subscribing to The Enterprise at only **\$4.50** a year

It Costs You 10¢ a Copy

\*\*\*\*\*

Get The Enterprise by Mail

The Enterprise covers the local news of the communities of the Canyon.

Keep Informed on the Events Each Week.

The Mill City Enterprise