

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Whose democracy is more important?

One definition of democracy is that it is a political system wherein the majority can impose their will upon the minority.

Using this definition, we have a large population in the Portland metropolitan area seeking to dump their garbage, democratically of course, upon a minority living in northwest Washington and southwest Columbia Counties.

The majority to be considered in this instance should be the majority of those living in the area that would be affected by a garbage dump, rather than a majority living in the region or state.

DEQ has carefully orchestrated the show by developing a PR program designed to overwhelm any complaints, fears and anxieties among the indigenous population in the vicinity of the Bacona site. They haven't provided answers to significant questions.

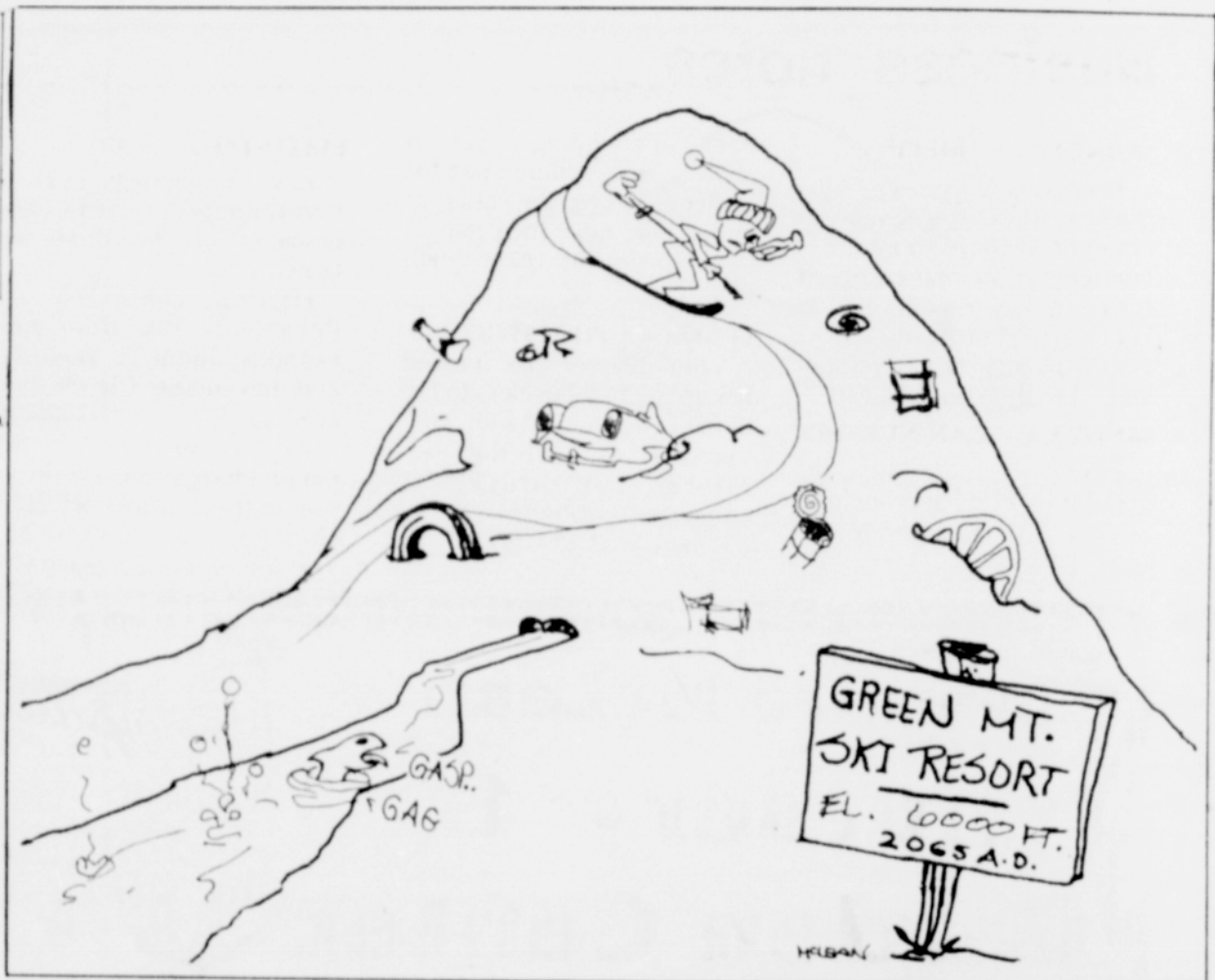
Of the specious responses they have provided, many are hypothetical, some are patently contradictory, some are downright false - and each question and answer session ends with the disclaimer: "Of course, we can't guarantee that!"

Questions about air and water pollution, fire protection, disposition of leachate, traffic congestion, and rerouting of garbage transfer trucks through Vernonia during emergencies on Hwy. 26 or the lower portion of Hwy 47, are all significant. They require significant answers and since no such answers are forthcoming, we must assume the questions are unanswerable and the PR program is designed to lull our fears and dull our mentalities.

The selection of the Bacona site, at 1600-1800 feet above sea level on Green Mountain, has negated any appearance of objectivity on DEQ's part. They obviously favor expediency, i.e., the best site is the one that arouses the smallest numerical protest, knowing full well that remoteness, in itself, is a totally inadequate criterion for such a choice.

This, coupled with the ridiculous "options" that DEQ pretends are answers, but which offer no guarantees, is absurd. Additionally, the metropolitan areas have made little effort to reduce their garbage volume, though their rhetoric about "waste stream reduction" could generate a windstorm.

However simplistic the solution may be, the majority in the Metropolitan Services District no doubt would feel it quite democratic to vote unanimously to dump their garbage in our community. After all, they have so many votes, and there are so few voters in this "remote area." DEQ feels the same way.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

We All Win

As The Oregonian editors wrote, "The 'losers' (those unhappy about the final site locale) will be winners, when the dump eventually will be filled, for DEQ is proposing to leave the site better than it found it. Some community may find itself with a new park, or golf course, or some other community amenity."

(From DEQ's third landfill report.)

Letters to the Editor

To The Editor:

I'm writing this letter to call attention to a very visible problem that seems to have been ignored by our county and city.

Everytime I drive to or from Vernonia, I am appalled by the amount of garbage along Hwy 47. I've noticed it mainly consists of fast-food beverage and food containers. There are sometimes a few bottles or aluminum cans, but they are usually picked up and turned in for the deposit refund.

My question is - why won't people use garbage cans? Can't they wait until they get home to dispose of their garbage?

What can we, as a community, do about this problem?

Don't people realize how this reflects on them as individuals? It says to the community - "We don't care about the environment or the appearance of our highways."

We need to find a solution to this problem - and fast!

Mary Sohler
Vernonia

To the Editor:

I would like to express my thanks to all who worked so hard on our last school play. It was great! You showed us again just how great you can be. It is so rewarding to see students involved with extra-curricular activities, working three times as hard to fill their double roles. Parental support was super. Congratulations on a job well done!

I would also like to thank the students who made the cast party at our house a wonderful experience. I would be proud to work with you again. Good luck on your next production.

The people who were unable to attend really missed an enjoyable evening.

Sincerely,
Cathy Crabtree

To The Editor:

1986 was a very exciting and successful year for the Women's Resource Center of Columbia County. Our agency received over 1100 crisis calls and walk-ins, and served 1500 women, children and

men needing assistance, information and/or referrals.

Along with operating a 24-hour crisis line, WRC provided counseling, transportation and safe housing; we also referred clients to professional counseling, medical, legal and financial aid.

Our Speakers Bureau has spoken to more than 1000 individuals in Columbia County communities, organizations, schools and businesses. We have successful Child Assault Prevention Program for preschoolers and an active Court Watch program which is staffed by trained volunteers from WRC. During 1986, the center had 8,364 donated volunteer hours.

WRC's volunteers, board of directors and staff would like to thank all of the organizations and individuals who have contributed their time, energy and other resources to benefit the Women's Resource Center. We look forward to providing continuing services to the residents of Columbia County.

Sincerely,
Patricia A. Anderson
Volunteer Coordinator