

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Taxpayers pay cost of recall election

The voters of Columbia County have spoken—shouted is a more apt description—and their message is loud and clear: Elected officials must have clear ethical standards; they must have integrity.

Too bad that vote couldn't reach across the United States and remove a few more "saviours of the people."

It is also too bad that county taxpayers will have to absorb the \$13-15,000 cost of the election that was needed to remove former Commissioner Bruce Hugo from office. Once having admitted his malfeasance, he could have demonstrated some honor by stepping down. That would not have been comfortable, but it would have been better than being recalled.

This is a sad chapter in Hugo's long career as an elected official.

Some lessons not found in text books

The Fresno (Calif.) *Bee* asks some interesting questions about the Supreme Court's decision upholding the power of public schools to subject student athletes to random drug testing, which, it says, "is an unfortunate reminder that the protection of the Constitution often stops at the schoolhouse door."

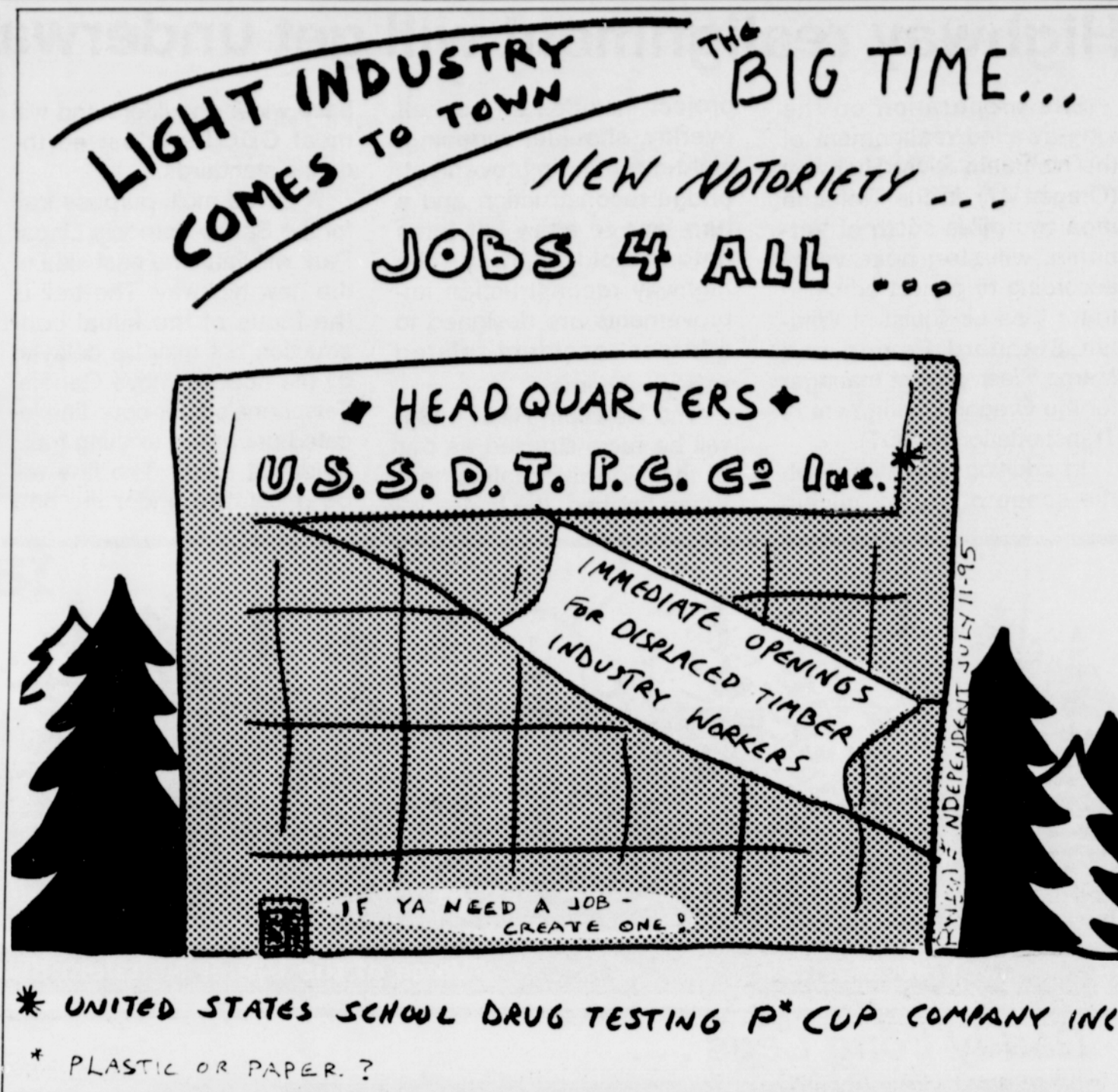
The *Bee's* questions include the following:

"If random drug testing is 'undertaken (in Justice Scalia's words) in furtherance of the government's responsibilities, under a public school system, as guardian and tutor of children entrusted to its care,' who else could it test and what else could it do?"

"Could a school that believes it has a serious problem with safety or classroom order subject all students to drug tests or to random body searches? Could the court, reversing earlier decisions, prevent students from wearing buttons or armbands bearing messages that the school principal, acting *in loco parentis*, regarded as objectionable? Could students who refused to submit to schoolwide testing be excluded from school altogether?"

It continues "What seems clear is that the decision will be an invitation to other districts to start similar or even broader programs; with each, students are reminded that the brave constitutional words they read in their government and history classes don't really apply to themselves or to the schools they attend."

"Teaching about the Bill of Rights—as practice and not just textbook theory—is not the main concern of the courts, but, as they contemplate their new authority, it surely ought to be a major consideration of the schools."



Ike Says

By Dale Webb, member
Izaak Walton League, Nehalem Valley Chapter

A few years ago I wrote an article about the beginnings of the closure of local timberlands to public access. My worst fears have now become a reality. A drive along public roads now reveals a variety of colors for gates that have now sealed the local forest from the public. Cavenham Forest Industries' gates are yellow, Longview Fibre's are blue, Evenson Timber Company's are orange and Stimson Lumber Company's are yellow.

Gone are the days when you could jump in the rig and go for a timberland drive, late evenings at the favorite beaver pond and free rambling during hunting seasons. These freedoms are gone forever, because of the societal change called progress. What a contradiction this word progress is! Along with the new jobs, new businesses and new people throughout northwest Oregon, came the problems that finally overwhelmed the local timber companies. The solution was simple—close the land to public access. Many do not agree with the issues involved in having corporate giants close land to the public, but it is difficult to deny that garbage dumping, vandalism and other forms of misconduct aren't good reasons for doing so!

Some of the local timber companies are trying to be as sensitive to public needs as is possible. These companies are entering into cooperative management programs offered by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Two examples of this are the Benson Point and Lost Lake travel management areas. In these areas, the main roads are left open while side spurs are closed to vehicular traffic. Enhanced enforcement is provided by sportsmen through license fees. This type of management provides sportsmen with access to game animals while easing some of the concerns of the landowners. This type of access management is expensive, though, and there are not enough dollars to create or administer such a program throughout all the private lands in the state.

All of the local timber companies have public access policies for their lands (where they are not under cooperative agreements), which sometimes leads to confusion. On a recent fishing trip to upper Rock Creek, I thought the

gates would be open to allow access. I was half right. Longview Fibre's gate was open, but Stimson's gate was locked, even though there were four signs stating that the land was open for fishing for three days. A phone call the following week revealed that it was open for walk-in only. Next year bring your bicycle.

I figured other people must be as confused as I am about the different access policies, so I got on the phone and got some answers. Following are the latest access policies of the major private timberland owners in the local area.

Evenson Timber Company, phone 728-2411: Evenson's lands are open for "walk-in only", year around until fire season has been declared, then they are closed to public entry. Some vehicular access may be allowed during the walk-in period, but only by written permit. Evenson also allows vehicular access during big game seasons on some of their land (Benson Point travel management area), but this is contingent on weather conditions because of fire danger. "Operational areas" are closed to public entry at all times. All areas are subject to closure at any time and are patrolled. Evenson provides an after-hours phone message and recording service for the public, regarding access. It may be obtained by calling their business number listed above. A good rule of thumb is, if in doubt, call before entering.

Cavenham Forest Industries, phone 429-6102: Cavenham's policies have moderated in recent years and they now allow "walk-in" access to their land unless it is posted otherwise, i.e., fire danger closure. The rule of thumb during rifle big game season is, if the gate is open and it is not posted otherwise, the road is open to the public. Roads that Cavenham will open to the public should have a sign stating so, along with the dates they will be open. Cavenham has security patrols and offers phone information only during business hours. All active logging sites are closed to the public. This policy is only for their Vernonia area tree farm.

Stimson Lumber Company, phone 357-2131: Stimson's policies are the most restrictive of the local timberland owners. Stimson lands are closed to public entry except during the rifle big game seasons (subject to weather) and during the opening weekend of stream

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