

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Which philosophy will benefit Oregon?

Oregon has become accustomed to the benefits of having U.S. senators with a lot of seniority, a situation which will change when Sen. Mark Hatfield retires.

In the January primary to replace Sen. Bob Packwood, voters may opt for Ron Wyden, a six-term congressman, or for Gordon Smith, who is in his second term as a state senator.

Gordon Smith is conservative, though not radically so; perhaps he should be described as semi-conservative. He supports the Oregon Health Plan, but it's difficult to tell where he stands on issues of national importance because he has no national record.

It's obvious that he cares little about the environment, regardless of what his ads say. It isn't simply that pollution from his own frozen food factory killed all organisms (not just fish) in a small stream, it's his record of continued environmental violations, including some in 1995. Of course, he modified the major problem at his frozen food processing plant with an environmental improvement grant of nearly \$800,000. The grant means he doesn't have to pay back the taxpayers' money, but in his ads he tells how "he saved an Oregon business". No, folks, *your* tax dollars saved that business.

Smith's votes in the state senate have toed the line of big business, not surprisingly, since he benefits most from measures that benefit big business. There is no reason to think that will change in Washington, D.C. He certainly will support continuing subsidies to agriculture, especially subsidized irrigation water. If more salmon are killed, that's okay by Smith, but don't plan on your kids getting government-backed loans for college and forget about grants-in-aid for college students. Remember, grants for college students interfere with subsidies for millionaires.

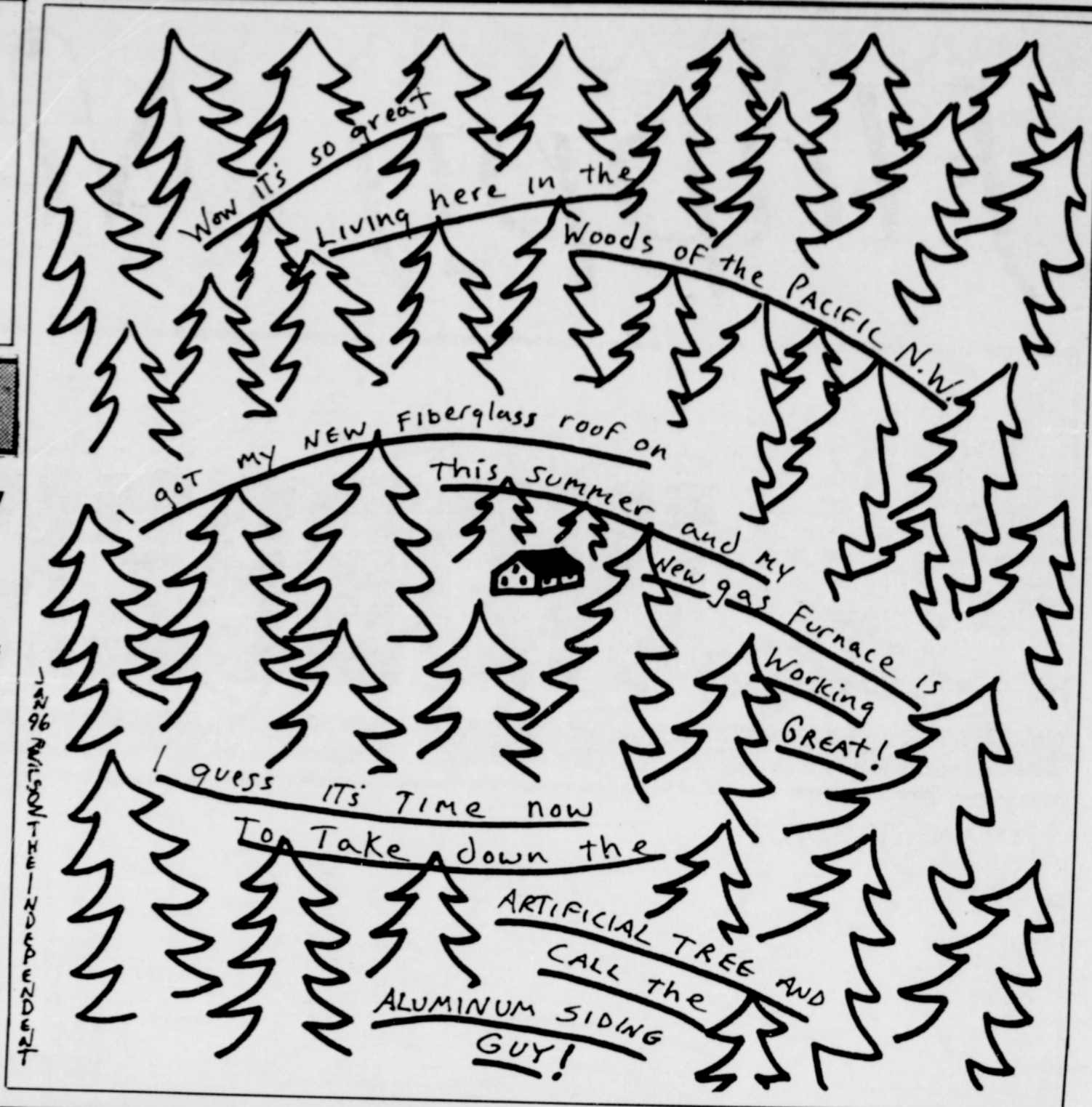
Ron Wyden is liberal, though not radically so, perhaps he is best described as semi-liberal. He's a strong supporter of necessary social programs, has voted for welfare reform that includes work requirements for able-bodied recipients and has worked hard to keep the Oregon Health Plan from being derailed at the federal level.

He's certainly no darling of the environmental community — though he may be endorsed by some environmental organizations as being the lesser of two evils. He has not signed on to repeal the salvage-logging rider that allows clearcutting of healthy trees along with dead and dying trees, nor has he given any indication that he intends to do so.

Wyden supports increased financial aid to education, including more loan and grant programs for college students. He has voted for a balanced budget (again, in spite of what Smith's ads say), just not for the political game-playing that Hatfield couldn't stomach, either.

With the loss of seniority for Oregon in the senate, Wyden's experience in Washington, D.C. will certainly be of more use to the state than Smith could be for several years.

When it comes to philosophy, do we need to subsidize millionaires? No; Ron Wyden is a better choice.



Ike Says

By David Michael Jones, member Izaak Walton League, Nehalem Valley Chapter

Oregon has five species of salmon that are native to the coastal waters; the chinook, coho, sockeye, chum and pink. Anglers have long known of the coho, or silver salmon, as a great sport fish that comes into our streams with the fall rains. I grew up on a stream that had a run of native coho that supplied our family with some much-needed protein while I was growing up. Coho jack salmon (jacks are early returning males) provided many an hour of angling pleasure and a number of meals for a large, growing family on the Oregon coast. We called the fish silvers and I took my first one, a jack, on a red and white daredevil, while I was in grade school. The stream I grew up on did not have a chinook run; I had to wait until I was much older to take my first chinook down on the Elk River by Port Orford.

The Elk has a run of chinook that comes in the month of December and I know of fresh fish coming into the system in the month of January. This is quite different than, say, the fall chinook of the Sandy River or of Tillamook streams, which are usually October fish. This is an example of the genetic diversity that makes many of our river systems and fishes unique. The fall chinook come into the river systems and are ready to spawn almost immediately, unlike the spring chinook that come into the system in April, May and June and lay over to spawn in September and October.

The oils and body fats that the "springers" have in their bodies help them survive through the summer months and are also the reason they make such good eating. One run of Columbia River springers that is lost for all time are the fabled "June Hogs" that were reported up to sixty pounds. When the Grand Coulee Dam was built without fish passage, they were unable to get to their spawning grounds. The fish we have spawning in the Nehalem and Rock Creek in the fall are considered spring chinook. These chinook and the fall chinook are main stem spawners, that is, they spawn in the big streams while the coho usually spawn in the smaller streams.

In the Tenmile Lake and Creek system, that

I grew up on down in Coos County, the creek was only a few miles long from where it drained out of the lake and into the Pacific Ocean and there was not a rock in it that I know of. So how did the coho spawn and reproduce their young, you might ask? They would go up Tenmile Creek and Eel Creek and into the lakes and seek small tributary streams that drained into the lakes from the surrounding forests. In those small streams the coho, or silver salmon, would spawn in the fall, and later the other species of fish using the system, the steelhead and the coastal cutthroat, would spawn.

In the late 1970s I organized a citizens' group down in Lakeside to try to do something about the weed problem in the system. There was so much concern among the local people for the declining coho runs that the weeds were not the main issue. One positive thing that came out of those meetings was a local involvement in the Salmon Trout Enhancement Program and citizen awareness of the decline of our salmon populations. Now, years later, the coho are in serious trouble statewide and a lot of the coastal towns in Oregon that depend on the tourist trade and the coho summer ocean fishing have had serious drops in visitors.

One good book on the salmon is *Field Guide to the Pacific Salmon*, by Robert Steelquist, published by Sasquatch Books at 1008 Western Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104. The phone number is (206) 467-4300. I picked up my copy at Powell's in downtown Portland. The book is actually a viewing guide and also has a lot of information on the biology of the fishes and is written in such a manner that it is an easy and enjoyable read. Another book that is well worth reading is *Cosmos*, by Carl Sagan, and for those of you who are tired of hearing about fish, it will be a refreshing change, for it is about much larger things.

Izaak Walton League meetings are the third Wednesday of each month, Vernonia Public Library at 7:00 p.m. The public is welcome