

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Independence as an American tradition

When Americans celebrate Independence Day, it is generally with stories and remembrances of noble and/or patriotic deeds. But carping and complaining bitterly about politicians, bureaucrats and government, in general, is also in the American tradition of independence, as the following stories illustrate.

THEY CALLED HIM DEBAUCHED— As president, George Washington was accused of stealing from the Treasury and of legalized corruption, ostentation, treachery, and being "the dishclout" of "dirty speculation." Benjamin Franklin Bache, the grandson of Benjamin Franklin, wrote: "If ever a nation was debauched by a man, the American nation has been debauched by Washington." The beleaguered Washington complained of attacks in "such exaggerated and indecent terms as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, a notorious defaulter, or even to a common pickpocket." He declined a third term most vehemently.

THE MISSING MISTRESSES— Opponents of President John Adams circulated a story that Adams had sent General Pinckney to England in a U.S. frigate to procure four pretty girls as mistresses, two for Pinckney and two for Adams. When the story reached Adams, he wrote: "I do declare upon my honor if this be true General Pinckney has kept them all himself and cheated me out of my two."

HE MARRIED A MARRIED WOMAN— "Ought a convicted adultress and her paramour husband be placed in the highest office of this free and Christian land?" was the provocative question Andrew Jackson's opponents asked the public. The reference was to the fact that he had inadvertently married Rachel Donelson before her divorce came through and had to go through the ceremony a second time.

The presidents, too, sometimes made independent, and less than flattering, statements about the office of the presidency.

GEORGE WASHINGTON— "My movements to the chair of Government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to his place of execution."

JAMES BUCHANAN TO INCOMING PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN— "If you are as happy, my dear sir, on entering this house as I am in leaving it and returning home, you are the happiest man in this country."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN— Being president is like "the man who was tarred and feathered and ridden out of town on a rail... A man in the crowd asked how he liked it, and his reply was that if it wasn't for the honor of the thing, he would much rather walk."

RUTHERFORD B. HAYES— "I am heartily tired of this life of bondage, responsibility, and toil (spoken when refusing a second term)."

JAMES A. GARFIELD— "My God! What is there in this place that a man should ever want to get in to it?"

WOODROW WILSON— "The office of President requires the constitution of an athlete, the patience of a mother, the endurance of an early Christian."

HARRY TRUMAN— "Being a President is like riding a tiger. A man has to keep on riding or be swallowed."

OVER-HEARD FROM A VETERAN
THIS PAST MEMORIAL DAY



I WISH PEOPLE
WOULD REMEMBER
THE TRUE MEANING
OF Holidays ...

... The Sacrifices, Hardships, Times,
Victories AND Losses That
Have Taken place For our
FREEDOM ...

... And Not Some CARPET, Furniture
OR CAR SALES Promotion!!
★ HAPPY 4TH OF JULY ★

The INDEPENDENT July 1, 1998

City Scene

By Julius Dalzell
Vernonia City Councilor

A Missing Piece, Possibly

Vernonia is now well underway with a number of important improvements that have been described and referenced in several articles and columns. Made possible in part by grants, the activities are being coordinated as a composite under the oversight of a broad-based community level committee. Participation includes the Planning Commission, a new Parks Committee and a number of organizations and individuals having various responsibilities and interests.

The activities include the following:

- design and construction of a new City Hall and a Library. An added feature will be a pocket park with consideration being given to the opening of Bear Creek on the grade.
- rehabilitation of the City's water system.
- pursuit of a Master Plan study entailing streets, water, sewer, storm-water management and parks.
- facilitation of a Transportation System Plan having a 20 year horizon and encompassing streets, bicycle and pedestrian routes and pathways.

• a downtown revitalization study.
• streetscape improvements.

The overriding objective of all these activities is to improve Vernonia, capture its potential and provide a basis for economic opportunity. As we have stated many times before, it is all combined by the phrase, "livability" — a better place to live, opportunities to work and enjoy an enviable lifestyle.

This vision was again spoken to by Gordon Zimmerman, the City Administrator, at a recent workday held June 19 (see article, page 4). The session was sponsored by the Vernonia Community Development Corporation (CDC) and elements of the Oregon Rural Development Council. The focus of the function was guidance and assistance for downtown businesses. At several times the focus of discussion considered the importance of a favorable environment in which commercial retail can be nurtured, will be successful and grow.

A point of dialogue, and indeed debate, that surfaced at the work session had to do with customers, visitors — essentially how many. Too few and businesses do not thrive. Too many and we have congestion. Ann Berblinger, our U.S.

Economic Development Administration contact, offered the intriguing observation that not all shoppers are equal. One hundred individuals spending \$100 each while visiting will accomplish the same level of trade as one thousand customers spending \$10 each. The point is, yes, we need to increase trade in the downtown. But possibly we need to be selective in what we make available as goods and services. We want our merchants to prosper, however, we don't want to lose sight of the need to protect livability. Congestion is something that will detract from the rural ambiance.

So what's the answer? One possible response is for the business community-at-large to think about how we want to present Vernonia to the outside world. Do we want to be known as a theme village, an example being Leavenworth, Wash., and its Bavarian village presentation. This type of consideration gets sequestered under the heading of market considerations. Involved is assessment, strategic decision-making and implementation to accomplish defined objectives.

In a structured and more formal context, this type of analysis is often described as a systematic evaluation of past trends, current conditions and future expectations about types of businesses and real estate activity within a defined trade area. In this instance, that trade area is downtown and, more generally, the area around Vernonia. The key phrase in this definition is "system evaluation".

What nature of entity or organization conducts this type of analysis? Typically it is the chamber of commerce or a downtown business association. That organization works with the city, businesses, investors, etc., to ensure full participation. In our situation, either the Chamber of Commerce or the CDC could fulfill the role.

Equally important to facilitating the task, is timing. In fact, this type of analysis and consideration should be carried out prior to, or concurrent with, activities to plan and improve the downtown. The product of the market work becomes an important input to those parties, i.e., the oversight committee concerned with streetscaping and downtown design. In many ways, it establishes the community's "tag line". Vernonia, the community that offers _____.

It is a missing piece and one that all of us have some role in ensuring fulfillment.

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