

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

The candidates do matter

There are many, too many, uncontested candidates in the May 16 primary election and there is no need to either endorse or oppose uncontested candidates. Only contested positions will be considered here.

Columbia County Commissioner, Pos. 1:

Democrat Mike Avent is the closest this area can come to a local candidate. He is a local property owner but, more importantly, he is here fairly often and really does understand the strengths and weaknesses of the area—he doesn't have to pretend.

Republican Colleen DeShazer has learned a great deal about county government since her unsuccessful candidacy a few years ago. At that time, her lack of knowledge hindered her, but she has worked to develop a more comprehensive understanding of county government.

Representative in Congress, 1st District:

Republican Alice Schlenker represents the type of Republican we have seen too seldom the past few years; she is fiscally conservative and socially moderate. In other words, she is the Republican party's best hope for winning this position from Democratic control, because the voters of this district have made it abundantly clear that they will reject an ultraconservative candidate for congress.

Secretary of State:

Republican Lynn Lundquist has shown the ability to work with all groups and, because this position affects elections, he is the better candidate. His opponent seems like a really poor choice to be in charge of elections since, as former speaker of the Oregon house, she regularly ignored the majority, not allowing votes on some issues. Lundquist understands Democracy.

Judge of the Supreme Court, Pos. 2:

Charley Merten has remarkably broad support for a nonpartisan office. He has been endorsed by a huge number of jurists and attorneys and is the only candidate to receive a rating of "highly qualified" from the state bar association board of governors.

Ballot Measure 81

In the last issue of The Independent, our position on the ballot measures was explained. This is only a reminder about Ballot Measure 81 which would amend the state Constitution to allow the legislature to set limits on damages in civil litigation.

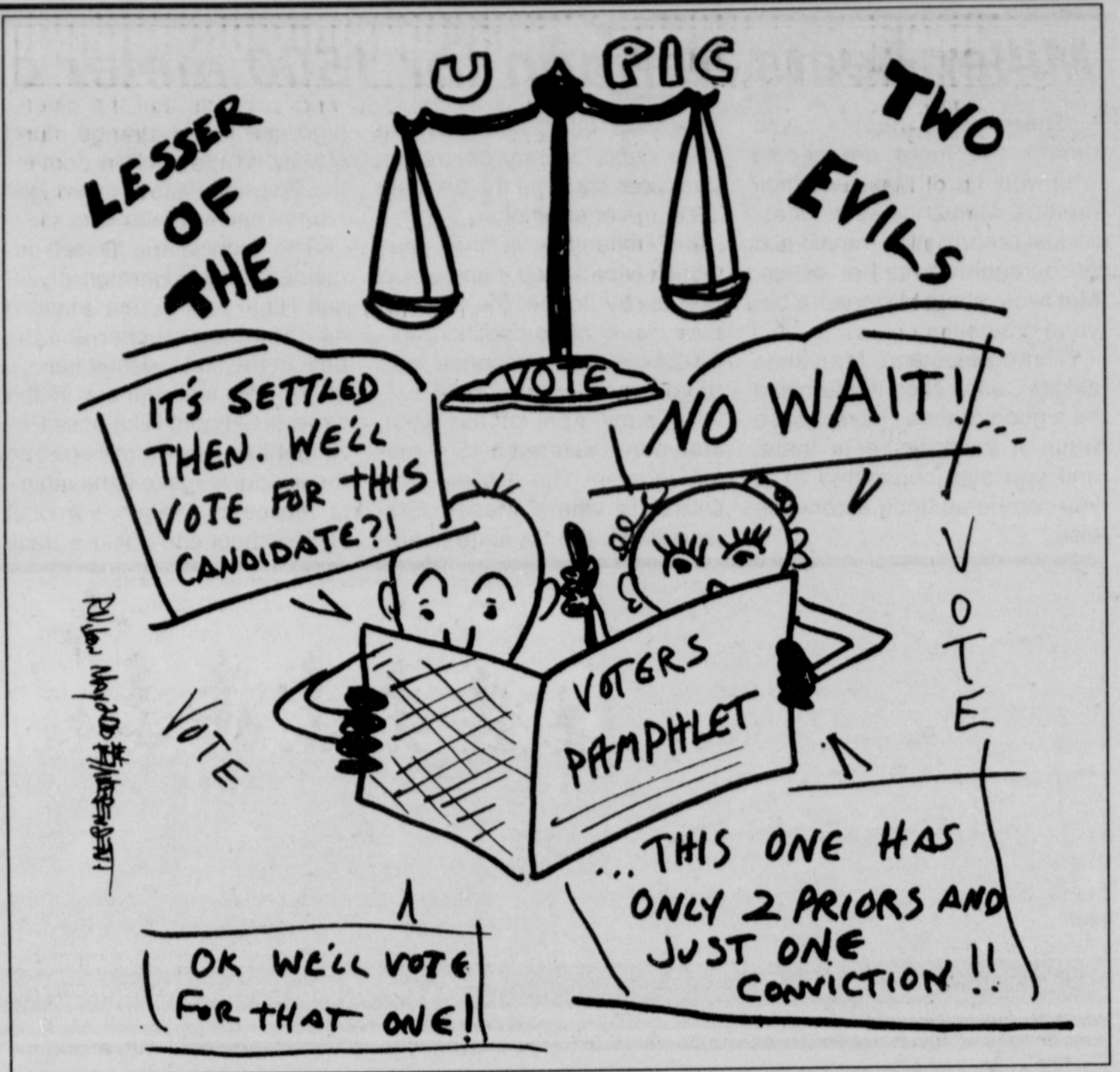
If the legislature had held public hearings on this measure when it was proposed by insurance company and health care lobbyists, they probably wouldn't have referred it to the electorate.

That is the point.

When the legislature keeps the public away from the process, listens only to a few lobbyists, then hurries to do their bidding, bad law will invariably occur.

With this example before us, we should fear the results of Measure 81, for the same process could be repeated when insurance companies want to limit any damages they may have to pay. It will not reduce insurance premiums, but it could reduce insurance companies' responsibilities.

Vote NO on Measure 81



Ike Says . . .

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

On recent kayak trips, it has become readily apparent that some people haven't read their fishing synopsis. Trout fishing in local streams does not open until May 27. Trout may not be retained and you must use artificial flies or lures only. Several proposed regulation changes going before the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife commissioners this year may allow a very limited consumptive fishery in the future.

I have a correction to make on the increases in fishing and hunting fees: Pioneers will not have to pay full price for their elk tags. The cost is \$15.50, an increase of \$12 over last year, yet still less than the full price of \$29.50 for the general population.

I have tried to stay away from the topic of gun control because people on both sides of the subject get very emotional, but I feel it is time to air this matter. In the last *INDEPENDENT*, on the front page, was an article about one of our high school students who had inadvertently brought a gun to school. Upon driving onto school property, the youth had violated the zero tolerance law about bringing weapons to school. He did not remove it from his vehicle or make any threatening remarks to classmates. There was no intent or malice on the student's behalf. The gun, basically, was an inert piece of wood and steel, not unlike most of the vehicles in the parking lot. While I do not advocate bringing weapons to school, I also feel that we must use common sense in dealing with these momentary lapses of judgement. Luckily our school board had some common sense and realized there

is a difference between students that have intent and those who do not. We must remember that many of these students are part of the "gun culture" as stated by President Clinton.

I was watching CNN the day that our leader labeled a lot of us as belonging to the "gun culture." I have never felt so alienated in my life. All through my life, I have felt like I was a mainstream all American boy, when I suddenly found out that I belonged to the "gun culture." I felt divided from my fellow citizens and almost like I belonged to a cult group, an unwelcome group at that. That day was the divining moment that I fully understood that our president of the United States wanted to ban all guns. He may say that is not the case, but please don't ask me to believe a known liar.

Gun control is a hot topic these days because of the actions of a very small part of our society. The school shootings are abhorrent and we must work to solve this problem, and the zero tolerance law on bringing weapons to school is a step in the right direction. But the fact still remains that this law will do absolutely nothing to stop an intended school shooting. In fact this law, in a way, makes schools an easier target. There is much publicity about gun shows and the ease of buying guns. We could regulate the gun shows, yet the criminals will still get guns. We can mandate gun locks and storage, yet criminals will still get guns and still commit crimes. This may sound more like an anti-gun slogan rather than a gun defender slogan. It is, instead, the realization of the truth. In order to stop gun crime, all guns would have to be removed from society and this, my friends, is illegal under

our current constitution as many of us see it. Besides, if all guns are removed, crime as a whole will increase, not decrease. Many people will scoff at this notion, but all they have to do is look at the statistics that are coming out of Australia after their partial gun ban. Crime has dramatically increased and home invasion crimes are becoming rampant. I can think of no other crime that is so hideous as to be attacked in your own home without the resources to defend yourself, yet that is exactly what is happening in Australia and the blood is on the hands of that government and the anti-gun people.

A lot of people believe that, by controlling gun shows and mandating smart guns and safety locks, crime will be reduced. I have to question this thinking in light of how the last gun legislation affected society. Under the Brady Act, an estimated 500,000 people have been denied guns by licensed gun dealers. These people were denied guns because of their criminal records. By trying to purchase a gun, these very same 500,000 people committed a felony offense. Guess how many of them were prosecuted under the Brady Act. Only a handful. When the NRA attacked the president for this administrative failing, many people felt that they had gone too far. But they were right, and yes, Mr. President, you do have blood on your hands because you, of all people, could have mandated enforcement of the Brady Act, but you intentionally allowed these criminals to go free, and yes, many of them acquired guns through other means and probably committed crimes, and you could have stopped them. We must then ask ourselves why

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