

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Presidential candidates are not all the same

Ralph Nader has had some good ideas and many of them have been put into practice over the years. But aside from the focus of his campaign, environmentalism, he is little different from Gore or Bush. He is also a millionaire, something that is regularly glossed over, and he has used more negative campaigning, with less public notice, than all of the other candidates including Pat Buchanan.

George Bush and his running mate are both oil millionaires and they aren't concerned about ruining the Alaskan wilderness for more oil, but they had a hissy fit when President Clinton recently tapped the national reserves to bring oil prices down. Bush and Cheney both managed to avoid Vietnam, as did President Clinton; Bush went to the National Guard and Cheney had a college deferment. They shouldn't be treated like traitors because of that, but that's exactly how the Republican party treated Clinton when he was a candidate just eight years ago. My, how time flies.

Bush never saw an environmental control he liked and, under his leadership, Houston now leads the nation in air pollution. Should we let him do the same for the rest of the country? And those vaunted education improvements, taking the state from bad to mediocre, all started before Bush was elected.

Bush and Cheney both want to return poor women to back alley butchers for abortions; the well-to-do would simply fly to another country. Cheney opposes abortion even in cases of rape or incest! Abortion shouldn't be needed, but it is, and that option must remain both legal and safe.

Bush's, "I'm a little fuzzy on that concept" doesn't include tax cuts for the wealthy, he just doesn't mention that we would return to deficit spending in about three years of his program.

Gore is no saint; he has fund raising violations to account for and, though he "mis-speaks" less often than Bush, he's held more accountable because he should know better. That approach seems to imply that Bush is incapable of knowing better. Gore used to support tobacco subsidies, but he quit, as did many of us.

Gore enlisted in the U.S. Army during Vietnam; though he was not in a combat unit, he didn't use family status to avoid what he felt was duty. He does not have Clinton's zipper problem; he never had Bush's former drinking problem; he's still happily married to the same woman he wed right out of college. How's that for "bringing morality back to the White House!"?

Gore's proposed tax cut, even in combination with tax credits, won't cut as deeply as Bush's proposal and is far more likely to actually help lower to middle income families. He has experience in foreign policy, he does not believe in inserting government between a woman and her conscience, and he has one thing that Bush can't begin to match:

Gore has been an active partner in the strategies of the past eight years that are responsible for the longest sustained period of economic growth in the U.S. since 1947. Under this administration, inflation is down, unemployment is down, welfare is down, wages are up, job growth is up, profits are up.

Unless you really want to go back to deficit spending, unless you really miss increased interest rates for everyone, reduced profits, increased unemployment and increased welfare, it makes no sense at all to vote for anyone except Al Gore for president.

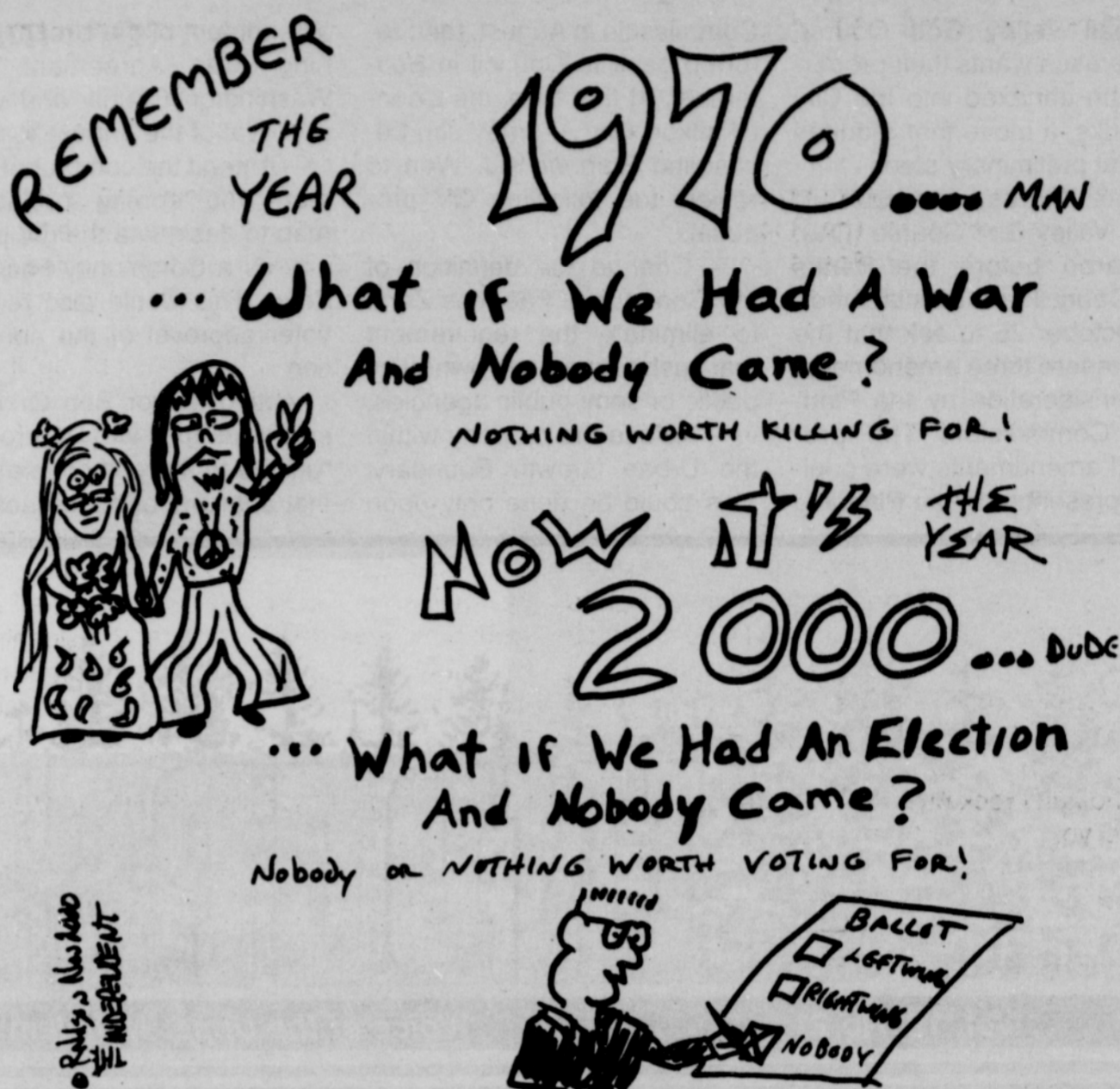
Think about your future, but don't think "fuzzy."

Ballots don't need to be mailed, can be dropped off at City library

If you haven't yet mailed your ballot back to the county courthouse, you have the option of leaving it in a ballot box at the Vernonia Library.

The ballot box will be accessible November 2 and 3 from Noon to 5:00 p.m.; Nov. 6 from Noon to 5:00 p.m. and Nov. 7 from Noon to 8:00 p.m.

If you are unaware of the change in mail handling, please note that mail is no longer routed from Vernonia to St. Helens in one day. It now goes from Vernonia to Portland, then back to St. Helens, in three or more days.



Ike Says . . .

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

This year's run of Summer Chinook salmon appears quite good. We will know just how good once the spawning counts for this year are complete. You may have noticed government vehicles prowling the river with what looks like a small TV antenna sticking out the window. No, these are not government agents spying on the public, they're spying on salmon.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has a big study underway in the Nehalem River that is designed, hopefully, to get a firm handle on the population, timing of the run and distribution of the Chinook salmon that use our river as home. What appears to be a TV antenna is actually a directional radio receiver that is used to track radio-tagged fish.

The study works like this: The fish are caught in entanglement nets in tidewater above the town of Nehalem. Every fish caught is marked with a spaghetti tag and every tenth fish gets a radio tag inserted into its stomach. Then the researchers start tracking the radio-tagged salmon while they migrate up the river and its tributaries. Once the salmon start their spawning process, the researchers start conducting spawning surveys in randomly selected areas of the river. By noting the ratio of marked fish, a population can be estimated. The more fish that are marked, the more accurate the population estimate will be. This study should answer many questions about the Chinook salmon that call the Nehalem River home.

Rumor control! No, the timber companies are not going to close all the gates before elk season. I talked with representatives of both Longview Fibre and Olympic Resource Management and both companies stated that their gates would be open through the end of rifle bull season. Longview Fibre's Vernonia tree farm manager, Tom Budge, did say that Clear Creek would remain locked up due to the extensive work that is ongoing in that area for next year's World Logging Congress, which is expected to draw close to 20,000 people. Tom indicated that the area would return to open access for vehicles next year after the show. Clear Creek is open to all non-motorized traffic this year.

Budge also indicated that, since the company's withdrawal from the travel management program sponsored by ODF&W, they actually have more roads open this year than last year. Two exceptions, other than Clear Creek, are Beaver Ridge and the Peterson tract, both due to active logging operations. Hunters should regard all active logging operations as closed areas. Longview Fibre's Columbia River mainline is off limits during the week (24 hours a day), but is open on the weekends. Budge also said that, so far this year, vandalism and hunter-related problems have been few; this is good news for hunters.

ODF&W is still up to their usual tricks. I read in the paper the other day that they finally snuck in the new rule where hunters may now buy two elk tags. As I read the article, this would apply only to left-over controlled hunt tags. For the life of me, I just cannot figure out why we would want to start something as greedy as this. First, most elk hunters are not getting to hunt *where* they want to hunt each year and, second, they are not getting to hunt *what* they want to hunt each year (spike only hunts). Success rates are usually under 20 percent - four out of five hunters go home empty handed - so why would we want to start giving some people extra advantages and causing direct competition with hunters who are already having trouble finding a bull. Oh, I almost forgot, could it be the \$29.50 for each tag?

There was one surprising element in this, though. The legislature (prompted by?) passed a law allowing a person to receive more than one elk tag at up to four times the going price. In spite of this, the ODF&W commissioners set the additional tag price at the current rate. I guess they didn't want to be too greedy.

Actions like this give me pause and make me wonder if hunting for the average Joe is going to have a future. We are repeating history as people of money and power slowly erode public ownership of wildlife and, once again, are making it a sport of Kings.

Izaak Walton League meetings are on the third Thursday of each month, 7:00 p.m. The public is welcome. For meeting location, call (503) 429-7193.