

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Perception isn't the same as knowledge

It has been interesting to see how a local school board election has some people excited, most of them over nothing except misperception.

A few people have objected to a flyer that was mailed to voters in the Vernonia School District (see Letters to the Editor) asking them to vote for four candidates – Jeff Blum, Schann Nelson, Leslie O'Leary and Cari Levenseller. The objectors said they couldn't tell who sent it and that made them uncomfortable; one person acted as though mailing the flyer without any more identification than the candidates' names was akin to committing a crime.

The fact that there was nothing illegal didn't matter. The fact that a name such as "Committee for Better Schools" wouldn't have told them who mailed it didn't matter. Skewed perception doesn't serve people well; it is intellectual, instead of optical, astigmatism.

In another case of misperception, one candidate feels there is a negative connotation to pointing out that his spouse is a teacher (see Letters), even though she was not identified as an employee of the local district. The reason for mentioning it is relevancy: He isn't running for fire board, he's running for school board. (Personal note: As the daughter, sister, wife and daughter-in-law of teachers, I recognize that I am biased in their favor. If I were a candidate for school board, I would have to mention it because it is *relevant*.)

There has been nothing in *The Independent* implying that marriage to a teacher makes a person either more qualified or less qualified to sit on a school board; that is the candidate's perception.

Don't complain, be there

The topic of energy took up a great deal of the time Rep. David Wu had to spend with local people during an informal rap session at the Scout Cabin in late February.

In Wu's first general appearance here (He was here to visit WOEC previously.), he appeared to be relaxed



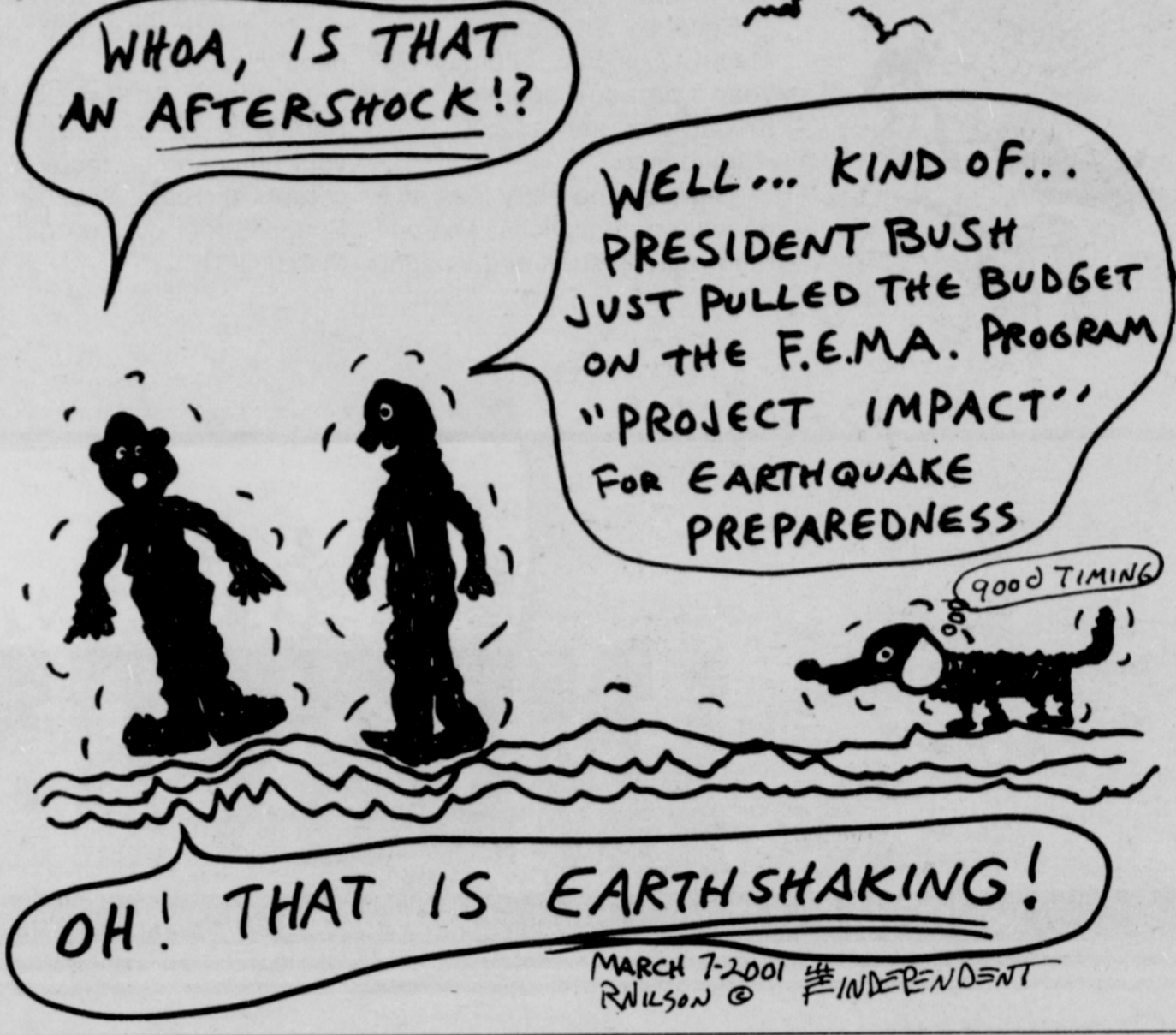
David Wu

and responsive. He was also in complete agreement with local people who expressed concerns that the energy shortage will get worse.

Other topics included transportation, COLA, campaign reform and national forest fees.

Sen. Ron Wyden was here in January, and Rep. Wu in February. Many people complain about not being heard, but guess what, the worst complainers didn't bother to go all the way to the Scout Cabin to make their voices heard.

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Ike Says...

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

My reaction to the appointment of Lindsay Ball as interim director at ODF&W was two back flips and a cartwheel. Ball, a long term ODF&W employee, was appointed as interim to replace the apparently forced out Jim Greer. The reason for my reaction to Mr. Ball's appointment is two-fold. First, I personally know Lindsay Ball and second, he is, by profession, an Oregon State Police officer.

My first contact with Lindsay was back in the late seventies, when he was a game officer in our area. We had many lively discussions on poaching and wildlife management in our area, and it was not uncommon for him to stop by the house and chat with my folks and me. Lindsay used to work in the John Day area and he was familiar with the Murderer's Creek area where Dad and I hunted. Lindsay has quite the gift for straight-faced bullshit; he almost had me thoroughly convinced that there was a tunnel underneath Aldrich mountain to the Murderer's Creek Ranch.

Lindsay was also a go-getter when it came to wildlife law enforcement in our area. I remember two instances when he put the hair up on the back of a couple of local poachers. The first involved one who no longer lives here, but whose family was known to kill spikes and then use branched antlered bull heads to bring out the carcasses. We were up in Clear Creek, watching from a high vantage point on the second day of the first season, when we observed a pickup coming out of the upper main fork of Clear Creek, just a little after daylight. I thought this was a little odd and so did Lindsay, who raced over and intercepted the individual. Lindsay came back later and reported that the individual was feeling sick and was going back home. He also mentioned that the suspect's hands looked cold, as if they had been in cold water, and that he had a tool box in the truck bed with a padlock on it. When our party started hunting a few days later, during the second season, my uncle Gene [Weller] discovered a dead cow elk just a couple hundred yards up the hill from where Lindsay had noticed fresh vehicle tracks on the side of the road the morning of the earlier encounter. The hams and backstrap were all that had been removed from the cow. I had heard that the individual had been at a local bar until closing on opening day of elk season. I surmised that he killed the cow elk on opening day, returned in the dark of early morning and packed out the meat;

then washed his hands in the nearby creek and locked the tool box so a search warrant would be necessary. Due to the time between the incident and the discovery of the evidence, a case could not be made, but rest assured, this individual knew he had come very close to being nailed and that he hadn't gotten away with it scott free, since I put the word out to his peers on the street about what had happened.

The second instance involved a prominent local, who still lives here, in the killing of a large bull elk, which was tagged by the man's wife. The suspect, his wife and a son were driving together up the main fork of Clear Creek when they saw the bull standing just off the road in a small swamp. It is surmised that the man shot the bull elk, though he did not have a tag for the first season, and that the son ran over it to make sure it was finished. Enter Lindsay Ball. A few days later, I expressed my concern to Lindsay about what apparently had happened. To my amazement, he said he had talked to the suspects that day, but only the husband and wife were in the pickup eating lunch (in the very spot the bull had been killed). I remember chuckling to Lindsay that there was a dead bull elk less than 100 yards from him as he talked to these locals. The son must have been hiding in the bushes, since he most likely had a gun with him and no tag. If the wife had really killed the bull, they would have been very happy and would have shared this with Lindsay. Instead, they must have been sweating bullets as they tried to act calm, eating their lunch. Confirmation of the illegal act finally came to the surface as the "wife's" bull became the husband's many years later, when he showed his guests the mounted head.

You may think that Lindsay was not a very adept police officer, being unable to make a bust in either of these cases. The fact is that he could not legally do much about these individuals unless he caught them red handed. My reason for mentioning these cases is that Lindsay valued having a local ear to the ground to find out the full story of what was happening in his patrol area. This is a lesson I am sure he will carry with him as the director of ODF&W. He may be the professional, but an informed general public knows the rest of the story needed to complete the whole picture of wildlife management.

Another element Lindsay brings to top management at ODF&W is the perspective of game enforcement. Let's face it, there is very little that our biologists do, or can do, to increase wildlife.

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