

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Ballot measure fails for the wrong reason

The INDEPENDENT opposed passage of the Columbia County ballot measure that would have raised \$750,000 over five years for a fund to support and expand county museums operated by the historical society. Well, the measure clearly lost, by more than two to one, but the results are disappointing, none-the-less.

If the measure had received a majority of Yes votes, it still would have failed because only 40 percent of eligible voters returned their ballots. When money is concerned, Oregon election law requires not just a majority decision by voters, but that a majority of registered voters cast their ballots. Forty percent is not a majority in anyone's calculations.

The amount sought in this measure was out of proportion with the needs and revenues of Columbia County, but a reasonable request should be on a future ballot, possibly in November. A sensible approach would scale down such grandiose ideas as traveling exhibits and a full-time professional director. The population of this county is still small though some of the needs are large; this must be considered before going to the voters for additional funds.

Ball park should not be priority for state

As Rep. Elaine Hopson reports, on page 3, the attempt to use lottery funds for a major league ball park was defeated. Since she wrote that, however, metro area supporters have come up with a new scheme: They want to use future income taxes from the big salaries that would be earned by professional ball players to pay back the state for a ball park.

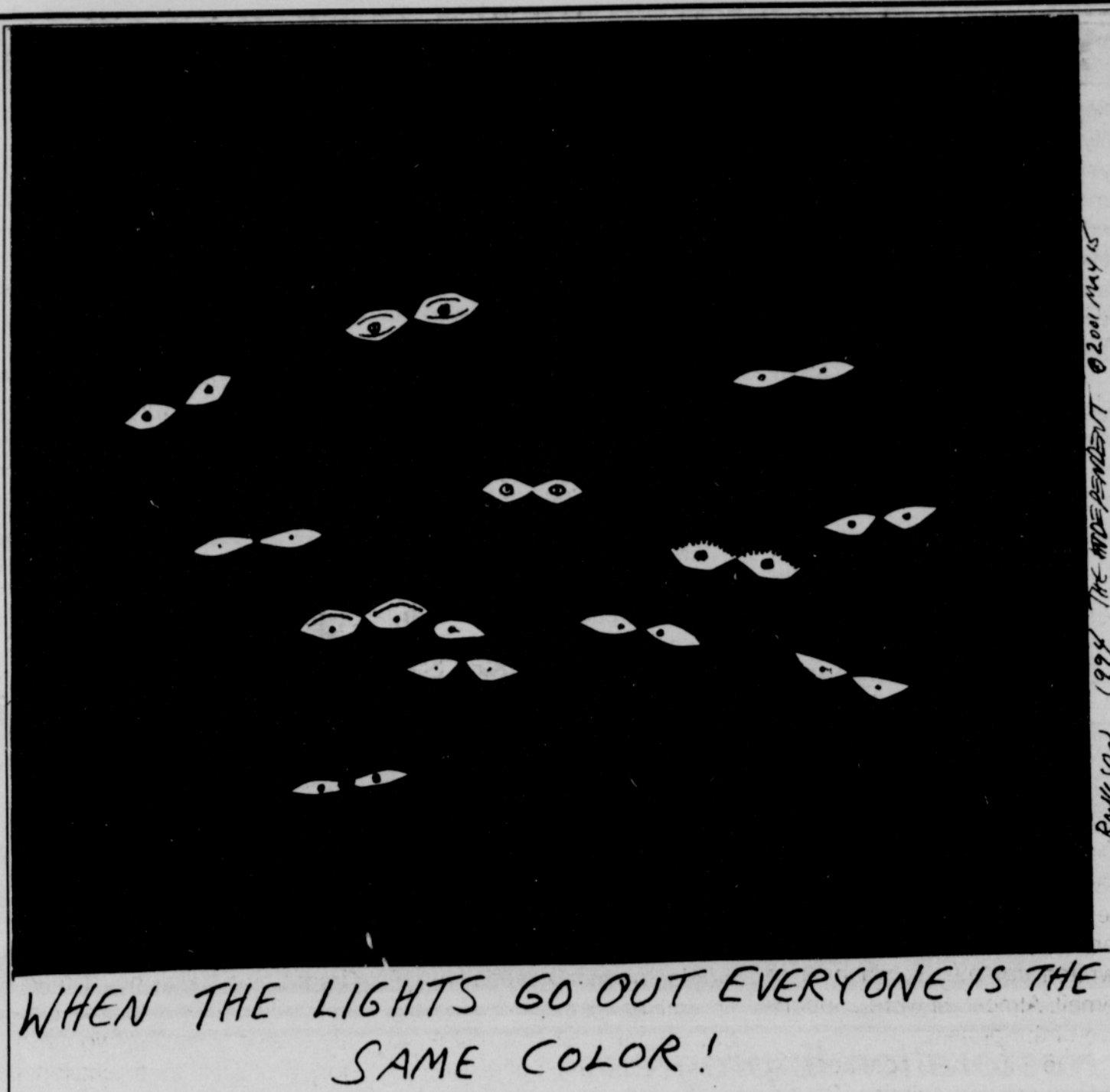
If you're willing to buy that...well, there's some great real estate for sale only 50 miles west of Cannon Beach.

This great bargain would require taxpayers to provide funds for half the cost of the ballpark, with private investors funding the remainder. The phantom income taxes that would put the money back in state coffers would materialize at some unspecified future date, when or if a major league ball club moved to Portland. Oregon has enough problem gamblers without our legislature betting the rent money on a ball game.

The only people who make money on a tax supported stadium are the team owners and players. The owners do especially well when they move in to a new ballpark paid for by taxpayers, build a following and sell for *really* big bucks.

Oregon schools are in bad shape; the state needs to pay the money it owes federal retirees; senior services should not be reduced; rural transportation and infrastructure desperately need funds; the Oregon Health Plan needs to be expanded; more people than ever need emergency food and shelter; educators cannot meet additional mandates without additional funds; ballot counting equipment in some counties needs to be replaced.

These are needs. A ball park is a rich man's subsidy.



After nine years, cartoonist gets people's attention

By Robb Wilson

One of my fears was quelled with my most recent cartoon rendering for *The Independent's* May 2 issue. For nine years now, I have drawn the political cartoon for the paper, not knowing if people even look at it. I can count, on one hand, the number of responses I have had—a couple of positive replies and three less pleased remarks. Not much input for almost a decade of sketching.

But, things changed recently when, only minutes after *The Independent* hit the stands, I received two inquiries about the meaning of my cartoon. I didn't think much about it at the moment, then asked the person on the other end of the phone, "What was your take on it?"

The reply was "It seems racist!" "What?" I thought, "Where did they come up with that?" Then I thought back to a few days before, when I drew it. The first person to see it stated "DIVERSITY." I didn't think much about it until the calls came in.

My second question to people who asked about it was, "Do you read the paper? The Letters to the Editor?" Most people said, "No."

Evidently, people do look at the cartoons! Good! But many look at the cartoon and breeze through the rest of the paper, not reading the "meat". People seem to see things the way they want to, and reach conclusions without understanding the facts.

Many people asked me about this particular cartoon so I looked at it from a different perspective. I can see how the point I tried to make was unclear to anyone who had not read that letter to the editor. Those who didn't read it would, and did, have a different take on/from it!

I had a specific idea in mind when I drew it and it was not even remotely close to the thought that so many of you lookers (not readers) thought it meant.

The primary intent of the cartoon was taken from a letter to the editor in the April 18 *Independent*, from Alice Brock, a parent who was charged with trespassing, lost in court and whose access to the grade school is restricted. Don't ask me for details, I don't know them.

Her letter and a few other for-instances resting in the back of my mind surfaced, conjuring up the idea for this particular cartoon. One of the other thoughts was about a youngster here who isn't well liked by other boys and, in his adolescence, is a little awkward and uncoordinated. He, like other lads, wants to play baseball, the game he loves. But, his application (not at school, but for summer baseball) was sent back

to him and he was told he would not be allowed to play because the other boys don't think he is any good!! Can you believe it?

This sort of thing is not new, mind you. It has gone on in this town for 40 years, at least! Why are people shunned, dislocated, put down, by others? I was thinking along these lines when drawing the cartoon. I was going to make all the fish the same, as the boy is the same as the other boys on the baseball team, in looks, color, stature, etc. But Alice is known for her long hair, so I made the fish with long "hair"; maybe I should have put it in handcuffs or strung a guitar on it. A simple line or two can change the whole idea or meaning. The fish coincidentally looked like a tropical fish, but the cartoon has nothing to do with the new tropical fish store in the Bridge Street Mall or with the proprietor. One person thought it might have something to do with the salmon runs and dams.

Political cartoons should make people think. And this one did! Finally, I raised some eyebrows, provoked some thought...but not the way or context I wanted.

It caught me off guard when people brought in the racist issue and I started looking at how it might be construed. One stroke of the pen could have made it say/show something else. Shading and tone have effects, too. The reason the bottom fish was dark was that this paper prints in black and white and the purple fish came out dark. The contrast was intentional, so it would stand out from the other fish in the school!

If this cartoon made people think, good! That's the idea. Whatever issue you associate it with is in your own mind. Most people I talked with didn't know where I was going. If only they had read the letters to the editor...

A few high school students I talked with didn't see it as pointing fingers at anyone, but thought it conveyed the idea that we, as humans, need to look in our own lives at issues dealing with diversity. Things and people who are different, whether color, race, religion, politics, etc., are not to be put down just because they are different!

I find those youths' ideas refreshing. Especially since I hear that there is a lot of negative talk of this nature among students here, and many are uncomfortable with it.

Maybe I brought out, unknowingly, a point that needs to see the light of day.

I rendered this week's cartoon many years ago and never felt the time or feeling was right. The time is right now!

The news is full of stories about people and diversity/differences. I wonder which fish or "school" we belong to.