

The INDEPENDENT

Serving the upper Nehalem River valley. Published twice monthly, on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, by Public Opinion Laboratory Ltd., 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064, as a free newspaper. Editors and Publishers, Dirk & Noni Andersen. Phone/Fax: 503-429-9410, e-mail: noni@vernonia.com

Opinion

Easy to talk about saving \$\$; hard to do

Commissioner Joe Corsiglia is frustrated with *The INDEPENDENT* because we paraphrased his ideas about saving money instead of printing them verbatim. He's not alone.

For someone who wants to save money, however, his response was puzzling. The letter that you see in the adjacent column (actually, we shortened that a little bit, too) was written on a Monday, then typed, copied and collated with county labor and materials (about 80 copies x 3 pages, which included his original letter).

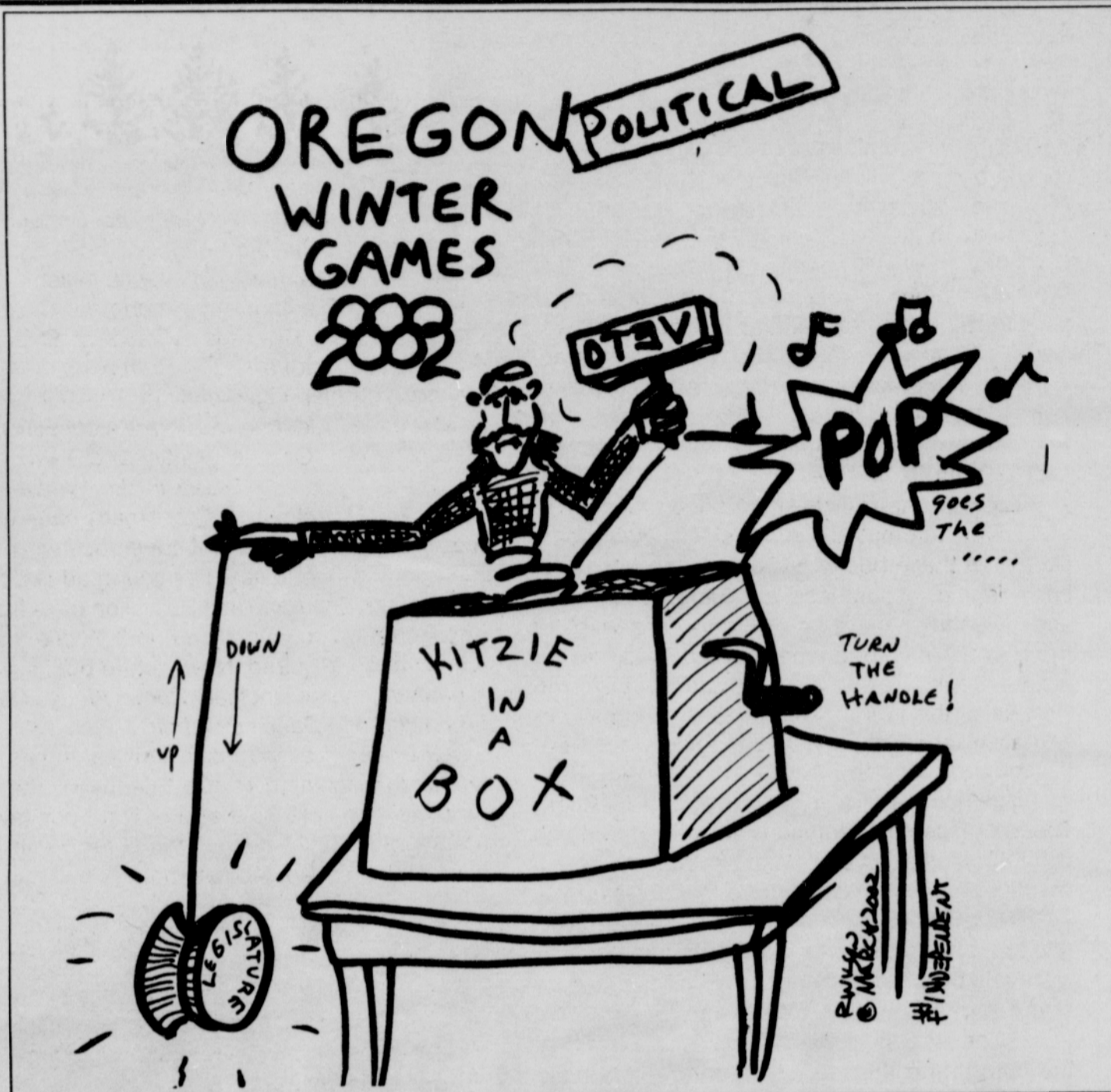
The commissioner then drove to Vernonia, where he spent a day knocking on doors and going in stores to hand out this three-page packet. That didn't save tax money and didn't promote taxpayers' interests.

We have asked Commissioner Corsiglia how much is being spent on administration for the regional programs and how much it has cost Columbia County. He says he can't get the figures, then, when reminded that they are public information, says he doesn't have time. Time could be a factor but, when he is tarring a statewide program for wasting money, he should provide something more substantial than feathers; verifiable numbers would be a good place to start.

Commissioner Corsiglia should use his undeniable energy and expressed desire to save money by applying some oversight to problems within county government. For instance, the commissioners know that very little is being done on county roads and that county parks are closed a lot of the time. These are areas that need both attention and creative administration.

At one time, Commissioners had individual responsibility for specific county departments. Several years ago, they turned that responsibility over to department heads...a method that could work with adequate oversight. Over the years, however, the commissioners have been less and less involved in administration, and it shows.

Perhaps it is time for the Board of Commissioners to return to the old method of running county government. Under that method, when something goes wrong in a department, the commissioner in charge takes heat. Now that's a real incentive to operate in a responsible fashion.



Letters to the Editor

Corsiglia says views misrepresented

To the Editor:

I find it interesting that you would not print my letter as submitted to the Governor's hearing, then you restate and reshape it in your own words. The press is very good at twisting things. I ask that you print my letter in full text along with this letter to the editor.

You may not agree with me on this issue but many do and deserve better reporting. First, the Commissioners write letters on county letterhead on a constant basis. Tony Hyde testifies in Salem, in front of committee quite often as well, yet you see no need to seek further information on those testimonies or other letters from this office. We tend to allow each other latitude unless we state that we are speaking on behalf of the County Board. We also talk to citizen groups in the same manner.

I agree with you that all the projects you listed have been helped by regional funding and I have no intent to see that level of funding discontinue. What I am speaking to involves the

total accumulation of overhead that is involved in the Regional Strategies program. This involves a statewide machine of bureaucrats, administrators, offices, meetings, mileage, lunches and lost time for all those who must travel, all charged off to the taxpayer and lottery funds before any money ever hits Columbia County. The decisions on who are awarded grants and funding is done with very little citizen input.

If all that money were prorated to the counties involved, and I don't mean metropolitan counties, there might well be twice as much money available to rural investment. That is the type of fat that Oregon needs to cut from its budget as I suggest.

The public is tired of seeing tax money funneled through bureaucracy before half of it comes back. I totally support money coming to Columbia County without all the bureaucracy. The \$470,000 you reflect in your article is representative of many years of allotment yet you don't say it that way or show the cumulative cost in tax and lottery dollars it takes to deliver it. There is no reason

why counties would not be able to deliver the same monies without the state taking their big cut to operate these programs. This is not the only program that continues to create bureaucracy in the State of Oregon.

Perhaps the message in my letter of testimony could be clearer.

I will continue to oppose government bureaucracy and inefficiency. I will also continue to promote direct allocation to counties to avoid that bureaucracy. The State is broke and it does need fixing.

Sincerely,
Joe Corsiglia
Columbia County
Commissioner

Ed. note: This is how Commissioner Corsiglia's view was presented in the Feb. 20, 2002, *INDEPENDENT*: "Corsiglia based his suggestion on what he feels is unnecessary overhead..." (page 1). "...a recommendation by Columbia County Commissioner Joe Corsiglia that the Regional Strategies/Rural Investment program be eliminated and the money sent directly to each county. Corsiglia thinks this would save money by eliminating administrative costs." (Opinion, page 2).