

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Citizens respond and thugs threaten harm

From the response of a few people to the March 20, 2003, editorial opinion, one might think that I, a small town newspaper editor, is single-handedly destroying the United States. I would like to ask a few of them if it makes them feel really, really brave to threaten a 69-year-old woman with both physical and economic harm...but they forgot to leave their names.

The people who wrote letters in response to the editorial are appreciated. They understand that freedom of speech is for everyone; they care enough to state their opinions and they're not afraid to sign their names.

What is troubling, is that the editorial was about economics; how this administration used the tragedy of 9/11 – and now war – to divert people's attention from the continuing loss of jobs, out-of-control health care costs, reduced appropriations for housing, food, energy assistance and other basic human needs. It was about how the Bush budget seeks reductions in Head Start, school lunches, education, senior services and, yes, *even veterans and survivors benefits*, while most of the country is distracted, watching a war on television.

It was also about the abuse of power; how American citizens can be jailed on suspicion, with no charges filed and no legal representation. If you think that can't happen here, you're wrong. Jose Padilla, an American, has been in prison since June, 2002, on suspicion of links to terrorism. He has not been charged with a crime and his attorneys have not been allowed to see him. If there isn't enough evidence to charge him, he should be released; If there is, he should be charged and allowed to talk with his attorneys.

So far as the war is concerned, we must support the men and women of our military – anything else would be wrong – but that doesn't mean we have lost the right to criticize our government and the president.

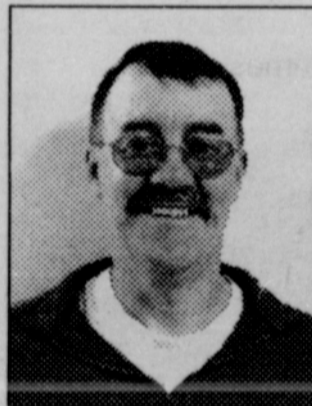
As a congressman, Abraham Lincoln harshly and repeatedly criticized President James Polk for the war with Mexico. Theodore Roosevelt supported the right of citizens to severely criticize the president, even on a personal level.

The Constitution did not establish an untouchable presidency. It did establish freedom of speech.



Iko Says...

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



I was glad to see the picture in the last *Independent* of the kayaker surfing the wave at the Rock Creek swimming pool dam site. I surf this wave myself and we may have an untapped recreational resource. Kayakers come in several different breeds:

Recreational – those who like mellow waters and paddle mostly for relaxation; Creekers – those who like paddling steep, narrow streams while covering distance, and; Park and Play – kayakers who like to find certain water features which they play on, staying in one place. There are, of course, a lot of variations of all these paddlers. The feature that Matt Chesley was playing on was a wave caused by the concrete apron of the summer time dam.

While this wave is not a giant, at certain water levels it does provide good surfing for the beginner kayaker. With a few modifications it could also provide a playground for veteran Park and Play kayakers. I envision, with minor stream disturbance, the ability to create a wave in the middle of the stream that can be adjusted to the flow and create the ideal wave. During times of flood, the wave apparatus would lay down, reducing river back up. I also believe this can be done with minimal cost. It is amazing to see how far kayakers will drive to find the perfect wave to play on and, being as close to the valley as we are, we would draw large numbers of kayakers who

would bring revenue to town.

Kayakers are also a very defensive group of people. Recently, the whitewater organization that I belong to posted a story about proposed changes in livestock grazing rules, by the Bureau of Land Management, which would allow permit holders to lock BLM gates temporarily. The kayaking community's concern about the proposal is that the public would be denied access to rivers. Hunters should also be very concerned about this proposal; there are already numerous reports of ranchers locking public gates during hunting season. It seems that public agencies continually attempt to degrade the public's use of their own lands, either by denying access or charging fees. We need to let the government know that this is not acceptable.

Posted also on my kayaking web site was an article about the proposed plan to circumvent the navigability act in Oregon. When the State of Oregon joined the union on Valentine's day in 1859, it was given title to all navigable streams. All that had to be done was to declare them navigable. Sounds simple, but because of ineptness the State is now in a quagmire. To try and break this impasse the state is proposing a pilot program that would allow public access to:

- A river and its beds to float, anchor, swim, eat, wade, and sleep in a boat;
- The banks of a river to portage and deal with an emergency;
- The banks of a river within 10 feet of the water line or the line of ordinary high water, whichever is closer, for the purpose of any lawful recreational use associated with the water (activities need not be accompanied by a boat), in-

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