

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

School budget cuts depend on priorities

Rumors are, as usual, running rampant about what classes will be cut from the curriculum for Vernonia schools, or what positions will be eliminated. What the rumor-mongers don't mention is: The budget committee hasn't yet started considerations and the only time they've met was to start familiarizing new committee members with the process that will be used.

Anyone who is interested enough to express concern about the district's budget priorities should also be concerned enough to attend the budget meetings.

The budget message, a legally required document, will be presented at the first meeting of the budget committee, April 22 at 6:00 p.m. This year will be particularly painful, with approximately \$500,000 to be pared from a budget that has been reduced for four years in a row. Programs will be cut, people will be cut, and students will be the losers.

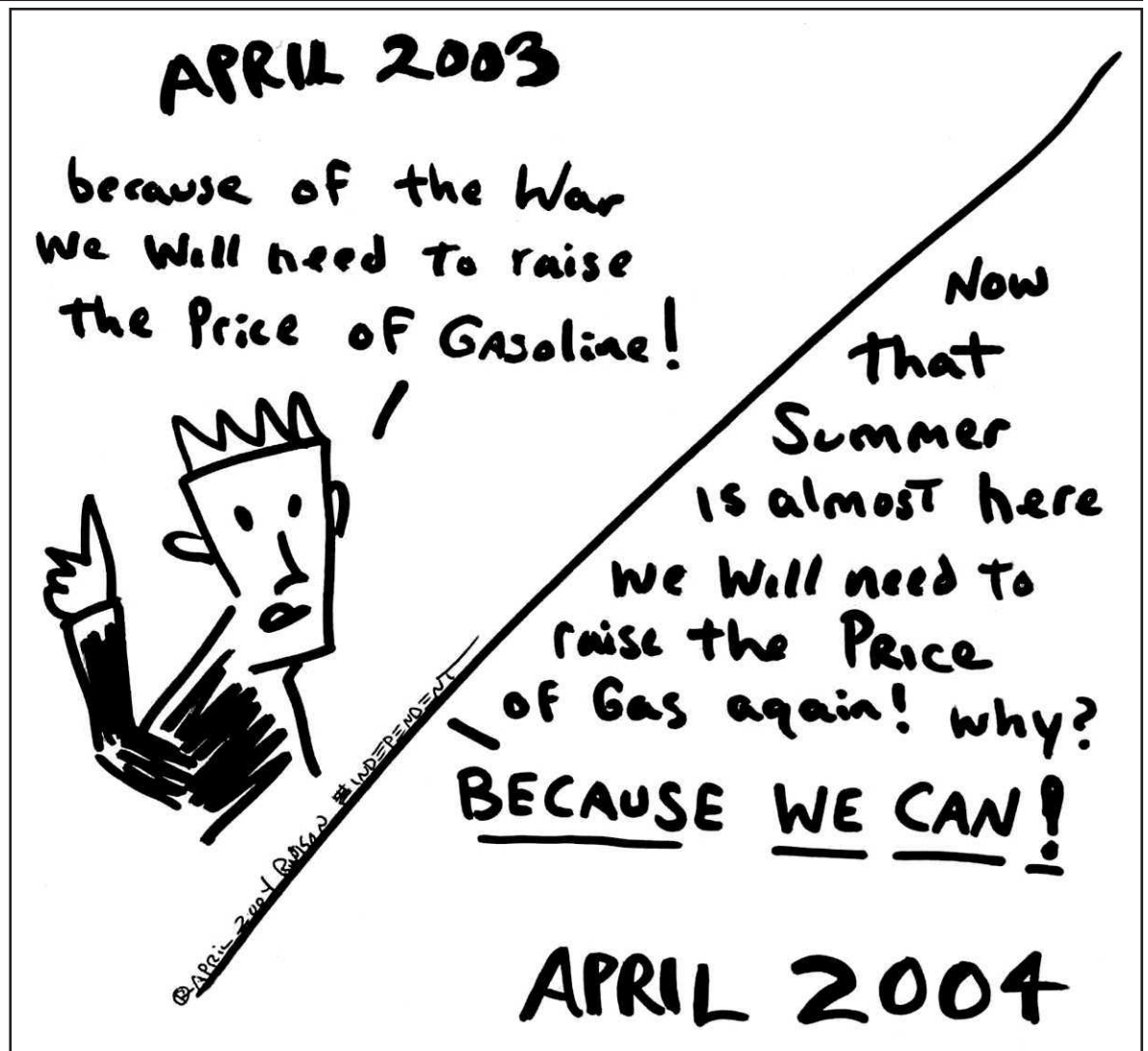
At 5:00 p.m., before the budget committee meeting, there will be a presentation on the borrowing to build proposal reported on in this issue of The Independent (story starts on page 1). That meeting is also open to the public.

It is easy to spread rumors and it is easy to complain about how tax money is spent. One thing is certain, however. If you want your point of view to be considered, spreading rumors and complaining won't be effective. What is effective is to attend meetings and express your ideas during the times allocated for public comment. Your elected officials do hear you when you follow the same rules they must follow.

Primary election date is May 18th

There's more going on than presidential nominations in the May primary election. There will be some contested County positions, as well as the 9-1-1 Levy for Columbia County and a Library Levy for Washington County. The Independent will review the candidates and measures in the May 6 issue.

In the meantime, if you want to be a contributing part of the democracy we brag about, the last day for voters to register is April 27.



School board considers construction

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recently completed a building, similar to what is needed in Vernonia, with construction managed at considerable saving as a project of the Willamette Educational Service District (WESD). Representatives of WESD indicated to Krahn and Funderburg that they might be able to do the same in Vernonia.

According to Funderburg, the board can borrow up to one-million dollars by resolution, without voter approval, and include the loan repayment as part of the budget. He recommended that the district borrow money to build a new multi-use facility and to restore the high school gym roof (see below). There was no discussion of the total amount needed. Funderburg said this is a "golden opportunity" to take advantage of low interest rates and the expertise of WESD. Deputy clerk Dawn Plews told the board that moving the cafeteria out of the basement would help get food service operating in the black. Currently the district must budget about \$40,000 per year to balance the food service budget. Plews also pointed

out that the board would realize significant saving on architectural costs by purchasing plans from Scio.

Plews and board member Randy Hansen joined Funderburg in a visit to Scio last Friday. They also visited Lebanon to see how a similar central building extends to include a new grade school. A potential budget for a new multi-use building and information on the Scio visit will be presented tonight at a board workshop. Funderburg told the board that, if the resolutions were included on the workshop agenda, they could take action at the workshop rather than calling a special meeting or waiting for the May 13 meeting. Krahn said emphatically, "If anybody has a problem with building [the multi-use facility] have them call me!"

VHS gym roof "failing"

Steve Ingram, of Tremco/W.T.I. a roofing manufacturer and consultation company, summarized his findings about the condition and cost of repairing the high school gym roof. The first decision, he said, is whether or not they want to keep the building. If the district

wants to retain use of the building, the roof should be replaced because it "is in the process of failing." Moisture will enter the building and cause damage next winter if the roof is not repaired, Ingram explained and, in this case, repair really means replacement because of required seismic upgrades.

Ingram explained that two elements were needed for the roof to meet seismic standards. First, the shiplap decking should be replaced with plywood in order to limit twisting. Second, in the fifties when the gym was built, roofs were not well attached to the buildings beneath them, and depended primarily on gravity to hold them in place. It is now known that this allows parts of the building to move in different directions during an earthquake. Ingram told the board that blocking would be inserted between roof trusses and connections established between the roof and the walls.

He also recommended that the roof of the band room be replaced - after being used as a platform for construction of a new gym roof - and that the

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