

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

What will these changes contribute to the future?

"Improvement" is an interesting word, but it has different meanings for different people.

The city is making improvements by removing blackberry bushes and installing lights around Vernonia Lake. Previous improvements have included a paved walkway, handicapped accessible fishing piers and a primitive camping area. More parking is planned, too.

The school district has made improvements by cutting down a 35 year-old grove of overcrowded conifers, adding parking and installing chainlink fences. Almost all of the towering old Douglas fir trees have now been removed, too.

A couple of years ago, the fire district improved a vacant lot by removing the trees and making a gravel parking lot.

With all of these improvements, what will Vernonia look like in the future?

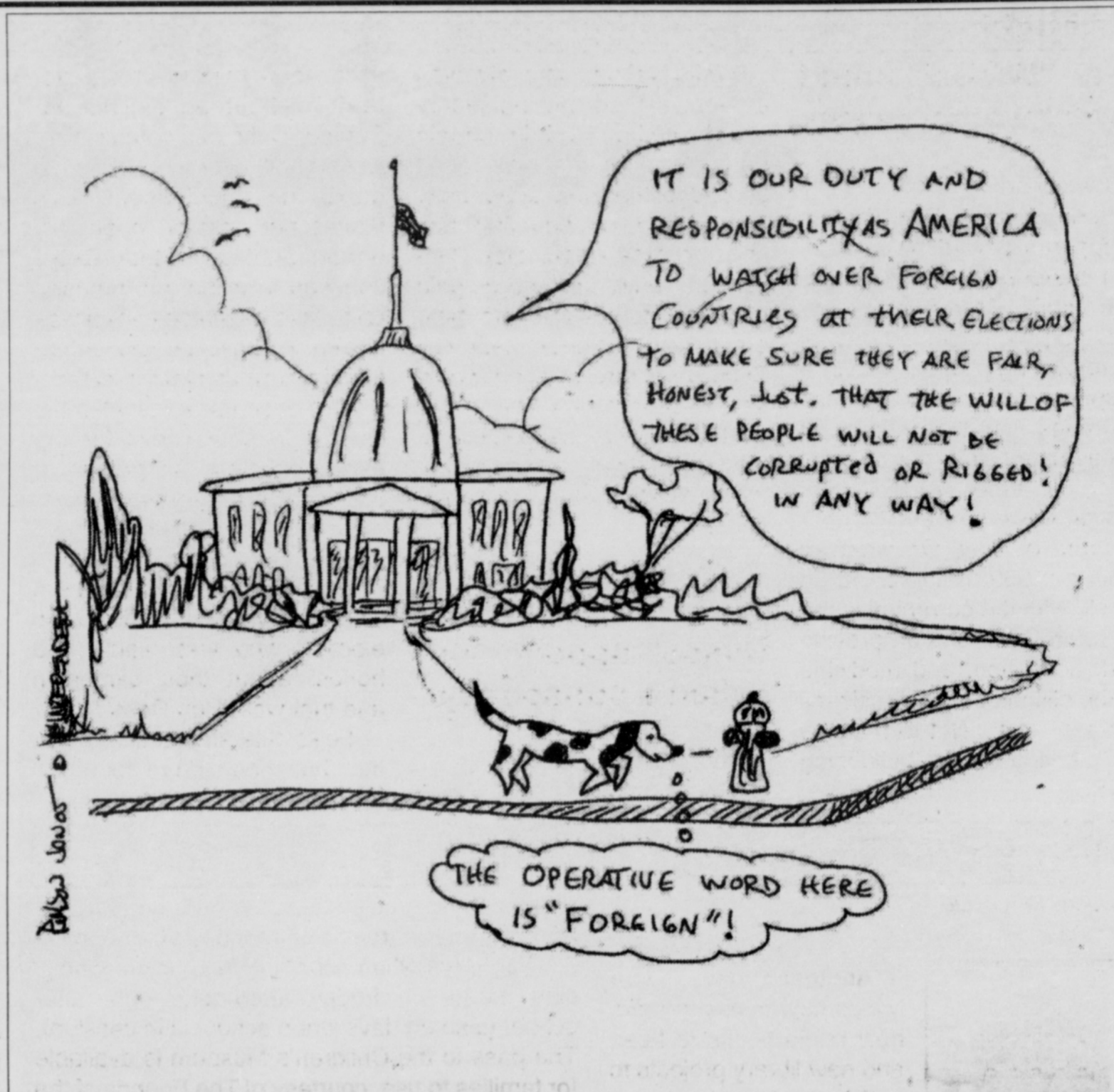
Should the lake and Webb Way be improved so much that they look like a suburban park? There is legitimate concern that too many lights, too few large trees and too little ground cover will result in fewer birds and wild animals. Vernonia is a rare place, where a visit to the lake may be shared with bald eagles, great blue herons, osprey, red-winged blackbirds, banded kingfishers, Canada geese, many types of ducks and small birds, plus otters, beavers, deer, rabbits, raccoons, coyotes, even occasional bobcats.

Trees grow easily here, but big trees still need time. Should native big leaf maples or red alders be replaced with hybrids that are neater? Should there be an ordinance that requires oversight of tree removal, as is done in many Oregon towns?

If Vernonia Lake and Webb Way become like any suburban path, what will we gain, and what will we lose? Is nature's landscape, with mossy tree trunks and branches, wild elderberry, wild strawberries and wild flowers less appealing than neatly trimmed hybrids that don't lose their shape? Do we want to look like Beaverton?

If we add a little more blacktop and chainlink fence, our schools can even look like any inner-city campus. Is this what we want?

Is it time for another look at Vernonia's future?



Who was the first president of the United States?

If you aren't already sufficiently confused by U.S. history, here are a few obscure facts to thoroughly cloud your understanding:

Was the George Washington the first president of the United States? Technically, the answer is no. Washington served from 1789 to 1797.

The United States of America was actually formed on March 1, 1781 with the adoption of The Articles of Confederation by Maryland, whose delegates delayed its ratification over a western border dispute with Virginia and New York. Upon the March 1 ratification, the President of the Continental Congress officially became President of the United States in Congress Assembled.

To make matters even more perplexing some historians claim that John Hanson was the first President of the United States as he was the first person to serve the full one-year term (1781-82), under the ratified Articles of Confederation. This again is incorrect.

The ratification occurred during the term of Samuel Huntington who served as President from September 28, 1779 to July 6, 1781. Consequently, Samuel

Huntington was the first President of the United States in Congress Assembled.

From 1781 to 1782 John Hanson was "President of the United States in Congress Assembled" under the Articles of Confederation. As the presiding officer of Congress, Hanson was responsible for initiating a number of programs that helped America gain a world position. During his tenure the first consular service was established, a post office department was initiated, a national bank was chartered, progress was made towards taking the first census, and a uniform system of coinage was adopted. As "President," Hanson also signed a treaty with Holland affirming the indebtedness of the United States for a loan from that country. In addition, he signed all laws, regulations, official papers, and letters. In that office President Hanson gave Washington the thanks of congress for the victory at Yorktown. After 1782 feeble health compelled him to retire from public life.

The question now is:

Who served from 1782 until Washington was elected in 1789?