

The INDEPENDENT

Published on the first and third Thursdays of each month by The Independent, LLC, 725 Bridge St., Vernonia, OR 97064. Phone/Fax: 503-429-9410. Publisher Clark McGaugh, clark@the-independent.net Editor Rebecca McGaugh, rebecca@the-independent.net Mentor Noni Andersen

Printed on recycled paper with vegetable based dyes

Opinion

Thanks for clean campaign

We want to thank Tony Hyde, and others, for running a "clean" campaign. We didn't see any Hyde advertisements that put his opponent down or slung mud at anybody. It was a welcome change from so many of the electoral contests this year.

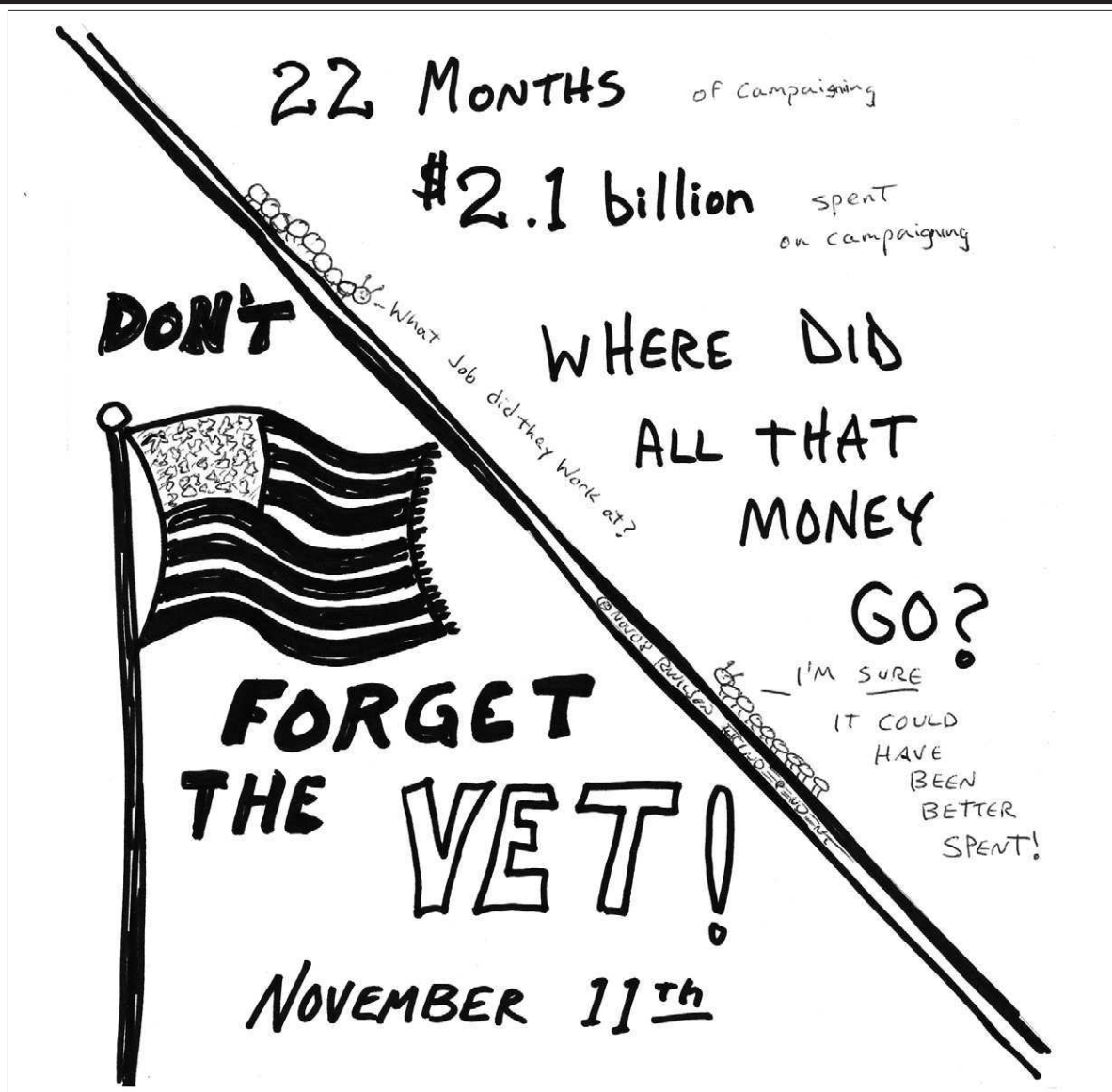
Two more years of same?

Sally Harrison ran unopposed and won two more years as Vernonia's Mayor. We hope her memory works better the next two years than it did the last two. Remember, Harrison is the one who didn't remember signing, or approving, the \$119,000+ check (until we showed her a copy) using the loan reserves to pay off another loan and sticking all of Vernonia with the \$11.50 loan repayment fee on our utility bills (until December). In fact, she was recently still blaming others for this situation. Her latest memory lapse was signing an endorsement for Senator Gordon Smith and then endorsing his opponent, Jeff Merkley. Then saying she 'forgot' she endorsed Smith.

On the other hand, the whole council voted to raise the park fee from \$1 to \$2 and then starting talking about needing new playground equipment at Hawkins Park. Meanwhile, they have allowed weeds and mud to take over the playground at Vernonia Lake, even tearing out equipment rather than repairing or replacing it.

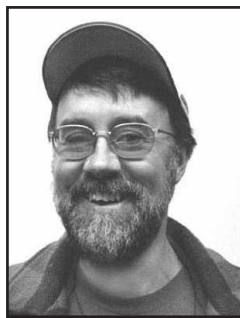
While we're talking about utility rate increases...at one of the rate increase public hearings a resident spoke up and wondered why she had to pay the sewer fees on a house that hadn't existed since it was destroyed by the flood. At the following council meeting where council approved the rate increases, we asked how the city knew who didn't have sewer and were assured by city staff that they had identified everyone in that situation and were giving them monthly credits. The resident in question did not start getting her credits until we called city hall specifically on her behalf, after both of the above meetings. Well, mistakes do happen, huh?

At this point, the citizens of Vernonia bear the responsibility for our city leadership or lack thereof because no one was willing to step forward and run for Mayor. Next time, please consider serving. This city, like so many other small cities, is run by volunteers. Here you really can make a difference – good or bad.



Ike Says . . .

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



What a difference a year makes. Last year we just about tagged out on deer in Eastern Oregon, but this year we almost didn't punch any tags. My son, Michael, managed to bag a forked horn; the rest of us drew a blank, although some of us had our chances. The unfortunate aspect of our story is that it was wide spread across Eastern Oregon. Many sportspeople were reporting the same thing in their units – lots of Does, but not very many bucks. Some areas reported not very many deer period, that is even more troublesome. What is behind the low harvests? A bad winter and predators, a very simple equation for low harvests. As usual, the Does had plenty of fawns during the season, it is simply a matter of getting those fawns to recruit into the deer herd if we expect to gain harvestable deer.

Taking a deer is only part of the equation when it comes to the enjoyment of a deer trip. Simply getting away from the job and entering into the wilderness to deal with her terms is fun. This year we set up our usual camp in the usual spot on Wednesday in nice sunny weather; the next day we were hunting in a pretty good snowstorm. We ended up with six inches of snow before it was done and it was a good hunting snow.

Many times snow ends up being crunchy, which the deer can hear and flee from. We have a comfortable tent camp, a wood stove, dining table, cook table and three cots. We always have plenty of grub to eat and, once a buck hits the ground, the menu quickly expands to heart and liver. This year the heart was literally shot, so we ended up with just the liver from Mike's buck. Dad had grown some Walla Walla sweet onions and I had the honor of doing the cooking. I like my onions cooked until slightly caramelized, the liver floured and cooked quick on a high heat. Let me tell you, it was good! It is also interesting to see what shows up on the menu, this year's surprise dish was sweet and sour meat balls on spaghetti noodles, Mom about had a fit when she heard what we did with the meat balls she had sent with us. Personally, I thought the noodles were just as good as the rice she had intended for us to use, besides, the noodle package was already open – good call Dad. Surprise dishes in the past have not turned out so well; we all seem to remember the Blue Grouse goulash Dad cooked up. Darn, those grouse were tougher than a boot!

Getting out and hunting is also part of the trip's big picture. Getting some good physical hiking, looking at new country and getting back into the packing board straps all bring back memories of years past, years of big bucks and plenty of game. Now we are starting to face fewer animals and fleeting shots at younger bucks. While it would be nice to turn back the hands of time, it

Please see page 2