

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

No, Jamboree isn't dead!

The word on the streets, from some, is that Jamboree is dead. That belief seems to stem from the fact that the Logging Show has been postponed until 2011 and will not be held this year. A few other events will not be held this year, either. The motorcycle show, in it's fifth year, was held on the 4th of July, due to scheduling problems. The community church service, which has been fairly regular for many years, will not be held. Over the years (the 2010 Jamboree will be the 54th), events have come and events have gone. There hasn't been a Biggest Maple Leaf contest for a couple of years, nor a doggie show or kids treasure hunt. Some years there is a carnival, sometimes not.

Jamboree has never been about making money, though vendors undoubtedly do make money. Jamboree was started in 1957, after the O-A Mill closed, to bring back friends and family who had left to find jobs and prosperity elsewhere. The events planned for the weekend are the mechanism for those who live here, those who return (or just visit) to enjoy some activities while, or in between, long bouts of reminiscing about the old days. The old days may be 5, 10, or 54 years ago, but getting together to talk and enjoy friends and family never goes out of style, so neither does Jamboree (this year's will be held August 6-8).

The *Vernonia Eagle*, 1957, had this to say about the first Jamboree, "Now that Vernonia's first Friendship Jamboree is over, it is very gratifying to hear the favorable comments upon its success. We think everyone will agree that a spirit of friendship did prevail the entire three days. It was good to have so many former residents back here to chat with and it is hoped that every stranger who came here was made to feel at home, also...The results were better than we dared hope for and now we wonder what would have happened if all the skeptics who said it couldn't be done, was bound to flop, etc., and themselves did nothing to help had all changed their attitude and gotten into the game, too. A good community spirit needs every member of the community doing its share."

In 1986, the chairman of the Jamboree Committee was Tony Hyde (now a County Commissioner) and still a Vernonia resident. He had this to say in a "Welcome to Jamboree" statement, "When International Paper closed the Vernonia mill for the last time, 29 years ago, the community's response was not despair, it gave rise to the first Friendship Jamboree, a positive, almost defiant collective statement. The 30th is no less so...I speak for the many volunteers who have worked long and hard to prepare a festival that visitors and old friends will enjoy."

In other words, Vernonia's Friendship Jamboree is about friendship, not events. Events will come and go. Yes, even events such as the Logging Show, but Jamboree goes on. To steal Hyde's line, "The 54th is no less so." See you there.



Out of My Mind . . .

by Noni Andersen



During last year's effort to improve the health care system, the bill that finally passed was mostly about changes in health insurance. The simplest and least expensive way to finance health care was removed from consideration almost before anyone could say "single payer."

I have always wondered why we include insurance company profits in our health care costs. It doesn't improve the quality of health care, but it greatly increases the cost. Compared with all other industrialized countries, the U.S. is now dead last in many areas of health care, including infant mortality, which has improved in other industrialized countries while getting much worse here.

Most of us are aware that the health care industry – health care providers, health insurance, pharmaceutical, medical supplies, etc. – employs lobbyists. I've watched Congress long enough to know there are good reasons to be cynical about legislation, but even I am astounded by the numbers of lobbyists and the amounts of money involved in the fight over health care.

The health care industry spent \$1.4 million per day to lobby Congress with six lobbyists for every member. This included 350 former government officials and members of Congress, including Dick Arney (R-TX) and Dick Gephardt (D-

MO).

Fifty health care lobbyists are former employees of the Senate Finance Committee and its chairman, Max Baucus, which excluded single payer from consideration without a hearing.

Five of Baucus' former staffers represented 27 different health and insurance companies.

Baucus (D-MT) received \$1,434,625 from the industry for his 2008 Senate re-election.

More than \$13 million in health care industry contributions went to the 23 members of the finance committee in just the first seven months of 2009.

Chairman Baucus also received more than \$1.6 million in campaign contributions in 2009, though he won't be running again until 2014.

The health care industry contributed nearly \$2 million in 2009 to members of the house Energy and Commerce Committee, where the legislation originated. That \$2 million apparently didn't get the changes they wanted but, wonder of wonders, the House bill was dismantled in the Senate Finance Committee.

The health care industry didn't get everything it wanted, but the people didn't get everything they needed.

Source: Public Citizen, a nonpartisan organization that accepts no government or corporate contribution (<http://www.citizen.org>).

For more information on money in politics, go to [opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org), a nonpartisan organization that accepts no government or corporate contribution.