

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

Good candidates and...

Our editorial policy is to not make candidate endorsements. We believe each voter should make an informed decision of their own, not rely on what any other person or the newspaper suggests. With that said, for the local Vernonia City Council candidates, we are de-endorsing Mayor Sally Harrison and Councilor Cindy Ball. The major reasons? Both of these council members have been on the council the entire time that the budget has gone south without notice, yet neither ever appeared to be a bit concerned about the city's spending, even though they both serve on the budget committee (as do all council members). In addition, both sat and watched as six city administrators went through the revolving door of Vernonia city hall in the past six years.

This council (not including Catherine Helmer who was just appointed this past July) has been highly unresponsive to the community and the citizens they were elected to serve. Council has even gone so far as to name a Hillsboro paper the city's paper of record, assuring that citizens have a very hard time seeing public notices and notices of public meetings.

Who should you vote for then? The sheer number of candidates running appears to indicate that it's time for new faces. We urge you choose one of these new faces and vote against the Vernonia "lock step administration."

Vernonia gets F- in records

Attorney General Kroger just released a report (see page 1 for full story) showing Oregon earned an 'F' in government transparency. If Oregon got an 'F' we think Vernonia deserves an 'F-'. The reason?

Public records requested many months ago were never provided. When District Attorney (DA) Steve Atchison sent the city a letter saying that the records requested were fully releasable, the city still didn't hand over the records until minutes before the seven day deadline after the DA's notice. Had they waited minutes longer, they would have had to file a lawsuit in circuit court, suing the DA instead of handing over public records. How's that for transparency. Oh, yeah, and they thought it would be a good idea to have (that means 'pay') an attorney review the issue. Apparently, they don't understand that the only authority higher on the public records chain of command than the DA is a judge.

Vernonia flunks not only on records transparency, but also on meetings. They did not give public notice of the meeting this past Monday, where a quorum of the council met early to interview two attorney firms to make a hiring decision. The notice should, at least, have been in the window of city hall for the public, but wasn't. When this was politely pointed out to city staff, they were obviously annoyed at the messenger.

ELECTION TIME 2010



I WOULD RATHER VOTE FOR THE *** I WANT
AND NOT GET HIM ELECTED ...
THAN TO VOTE FOR THE *** I DON'T WANT
AND GET HIM! HARRY TRUMAN

Out of My Mind . . .

by Noni Andersen



This is an interesting campaign season, too often for the wrong reasons. I don't watch much commercial TV so I haven't seen many of the nauseating campaign ads. I don't mean ads by candidates or political parties, but the ads by organizations that don't say who is

paying for them.

One thing is clear, however: When five members of the Supreme Court went beyond the legal question in the Citizens United case and gave corporations 1st amendment personhood, they guaranteed that "independent" organizations would start buying elections. The purpose of the ads, of course, is to persuade voters that electing (fill-in-the-blank) will result in Armageddon, or something similar. Facts are not required.

When we know who is paying for statements, we have more information. A good example is when GOP House leader John Boehner claimed that small businesses would be hurt by ending the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy. His office explained that "small" was determined by how many people *owned* a business, which made Bechtel Corporation, the fifth largest privately held U.S. firm, a small business!

One part of current politics has been crystal clear; after Obama won the presidency, the GOP strategy was to block every piece of legislation

wanted by the Democrats, a strategy they loudly proclaimed. That resulted in weakening regulations on the financial industry that was hugely responsible for this deep recession, though the Democrats managed to make a little headway.

Locally and nationally, the GOP opposed loans to GM and Chrysler to keep jobs here, but they campaign to return to the policies that give tax breaks for taking jobs to other countries. (Those loans are being repaid, incidentally, as are most of the TARP "bank bailout" funds of the Bush administration.)

So the GOP wants to extend tax breaks for the wealthiest 2% and retain subsidies for oil companies, while making the extension of unemployment benefits either difficult or impossible.

Yes, they did more damage than that, but those unfunded tax breaks added more to the deficit than the combined cost of two wars. Add to that the Medicare prescription program, which was a present for big Pharma, with its ban on negotiating drug prices, and you may begin to understand the \$3+ trillion deficit that was sitting there when Bush left the White House.

Bush and the GOP had eight years to make the rich richer and the middle class weaker. Anyone who thought Obama and the Democrats could change everything in 18 months must believe in the tooth fairy.

Chris Dudley is the same: He wants lower business taxes (Forbes Magazine just ranked Oregon 6th in the nation as good for business, up from 10th last year — after Measures 66 & 67 passed.), and he wants to *eliminate* taxes on

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