

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Charter, 47J facilities meetings important

It seems that everyone is busy, but even busy people need to understand the importance of two studies currently underway in the area.

Tonight at 7:00 p.m. at Lincoln Grade School, citizens will have the opportunity to ask questions about facilities in the Vernonia School District and express what they feel should be given top priority in considering improvements.

This will affect your pocketbook, but more than that, it will impact the education of our children. Whether you have children in the schools is not important. What is important is that the community be involved in the decision-making process.

Columbia County government will be the topic of a meeting Monday night, Nov. 13, at 7:00 in the Washington Grade School cafeteria. This will be the first of five public meetings to find out what form of county government citizens want—and to explain how a home rule charter may make your ideal possible.

Home rule charters can take many forms so you need to know why the charter review committee is recommending some specific changes and asking your opinion about other potential changes.

Team disappointed but did a great job!

In a first for Vernonia High School, the varsity volleyball team dominated league play, won at the district level and hosted the first round of state playoffs. The team is, naturally, disappointed at their loss in that first round.

Nevertheless, they have reason to be proud of their efforts. They did a great job with hard work and good sportsmanship. Four team members received All-League honors and team captain Tarah Pond was named League MVP.

Coach Dan Foss was honored, too, as his fellow coaches named him Coach of the Year. Anyone who has observed the concern, time and effort that Foss expends, knows he earned that title.

Congratulations to all of you.

If you want to vote for Packwood's successor, you must be registered

The primary election to pick nominees for the Oregon senate seat vacated by former Sen. Bob Packwood will be held Dec. 5. In order to be involved in those choices, you must be a registered voter.

The last day to register for the Dec. 5 election is Nov. 14, just six days away. This will also be the first mail election for a federal position. It will be nice if enough people take the time to open their envelopes, mark their choices and return the ballot in time to be counted. It's not hard. Try it...it could become a habit.

WE'RE ^{PROUD} VETERANS AND WE
SPENT A PART OF OUR SELVES
FOR OUR ^{WE LOVE OUR} COUNTRY AND PEACE!
HOW DO WE REMEMBER THEM?



Ike Says

By David Michael Jones, member
Izaak Walton League, Nehalem Valley Chapter

As Dale Webb indicated in the last Ike column, the salmon count Izaak Walton members did for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODF&W) in the upper Nehalem and Rock Creek was much better this year than last year. In the area that I counted, I saw only one fish last year and thirty-five this year. I didn't see any redds (redds are depressions of cleaner gravel in the streams where salmon lay their eggs) last year and saw over ten this year.

The question I have for our biologists is "Was this a better year throughout the Nehalem drainage for the salmon count on this spring chinook or did the fish just come higher in the drainage because of the wet spring and summer we had?" A long time resident of the Rock Creek Valley, Beulah Maiken, tells me that there are always a lot more salmon following wet summers. Beulah also told me of a stream that was "full of salmon" when she was a child. These were probably coho salmon, which spawn in smaller streams. The stream in question no longer exists, for all practical purposes, for it is pretty much filled in with silt.

According to an informational leaflet revised in 1980 called *Salmon of Oregon*, the chinook salmon female may deposit eggs in several redds and the number can be from 3,000 to 7,000 eggs with an average of 5,000. Many of the young go to sea the first spring and summer but some remain in the streams at least one year. In a phone conversation with ODF&W biologist Walt Weber the other day, he said that the female (chinook) will remain in the area of the redd until she succumbs to her natural end, dies and drifts off down stream. All Pacific salmon die after spawning but the steelhead, a seagoing rainbow trout, will often live, return to the ocean and come back to spawn again. Walt also said that steelhead will leave as soon as the eggs are laid. My conversation with Walt regarded a number of questions about spawning chinook salmon. I was curious about the fish remaining on the redds and have observed the fights between the males while females prepare the redds by

using their tails to dig a hole and clean the gravel. The usually brighter female will lay on her side in the water and thrash her tail up and down to move the gravel. The males, on the other hand, will often chase and bite each other in the area of the female. Another question I had was if the fish could tell where there was a redd by the cleaner gravel and the depression in the bottom. Walt said there is a possibility of the fish superimposing on a redd if all available gravel is taken. This is an excellent reason to leave the gravel in the stream or perhaps even add gravel to a system that has been depleted over the years.

The spawning activity is quite interesting to watch and Oregon Trout and others have a spawning watch and salmon feed on the Sandy every year with thousands of people attending. The salmon that are eaten are Alaskan Coho, not Oregon fish which are in serious trouble. Here would be an opportunity for Vernonia to have a tourist draw that would help local businesses and educate the public. In the direction of education, I would like to caution those wading our streams to be on the watch for the redds because the eggs can be "killed" while in the gravel.

A book I would like to recommend is *Mountain in the Clouds, A Search for the Wild Salmon*, by Bruce Brown. The publisher is Simon and Schuster in New York and I understand it is to be reprinted soon, or already has been. You can check with your favorite book store and perhaps order it.

In closing, I would like to thank Longview Fibre and Cavenham Forest Products for leaving some of their gates open for the public. At the same time, I want to caution everyone to treat private land with the respect and care that we would take of our own.

Also—all of Tillamook County is barbless for fishing—let's do it statewide.

Izaak Walton League meetings are the third Wednesday of each month, Vernonia Public Library at 7:00 p.m. The public is welcome