

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Mayor's importance often is overlooked

Two concerned citizens are seeking the mayor's seat in Vernonia and, while their methods may be somewhat different, they both care very much about their home town.

Jim Jacobs has lived in Vernonia for seven years, has served two years on the city council and 18 months on the planning commission. He is a contributing member of the Unmet Needs Committee and the Hazard Mitigation Plan committee.

Jacobs is concerned about the city's deteriorating infrastructure, especially the water distribution system and has made the water master plan a priority.

Outgoing Mayor Tony Hyde says that Jacobs has demonstrated his leadership skills throughout Vernonia's flood recovery and feels that Jacobs should move from the city council to the mayor's seat.

Jacobs is a field service engineer for Nikon Precision, Inc. at Intel.

Wally Vaughn, a longtime Vernonia resident, also has a good record of community service, as a former mayor and city councilor from 1980 to 1989.

Vaughn, who was mayor when the present water treatment plan opened, is also concerned about the city's infrastructure, especially the water distribution system. He is also disturbed about the proliferation of manufactured homes throughout town and wants to find a way to curb some of the less desirable aspects of manufactured homes.

He is semi-retired from the water treatment and pump business which, he points out, give him more time to pursue city business.

At this time, Jacobs has an edge over Vaughn for the mayor's seat. He is up to date on current problems and procedures and has been involved in some of the most important activities Vernonia has ever seen.

We recommend Jim Jacobs for Mayor of Vernonia, but also want to see Vaughn stay involved. He, too, has much to offer.

Amundson, Shriver good picks for City Council

The three candidates for two Vernonia City Council positions are all relative newcomers, and are all contributing citizens.

Don Amundson has served the city well since his appointment to the council last year. He brings excellent skills to the budget process and has headed the city facilities process, a job he wants to complete with construction of a new city hall.

Gayle Shriver has become very active in seeking answers to drainage problems. She also has been physically active in clearing debris from ditches and organizing others to help. She serves on the Hazard Mitigation Plan committee, as well.

Anna Jeffers is still learning her way around city government, but is an eager learner.

At this time, we recommend Amundson and Shriver for City Council.



Ike Says

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

Since my last article, I have had a memorable experience while working on a fish-related project for Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW).

I had agreed to participate in a fish removal project at Fishhawk Lake, near Birkenfeld, using a technique that required the application of Rotenone, a derivative of a South American root which causes fish to suffocate. I had never witnessed such a project and thought it would be interesting. Oh, was I in for a surprise.

The date was already scheduled for an electroshocking trip with the District S.T.E.P. biologist, so I twisted his arm to change our plans. We would help with the Rotenone project in the morning and go shock Battle Creek later in the day.

After pulling my graveyard shift at work, I arrived at Fishhawk Lake at 9:00 a.m. (I have found that if I work outside, I can stay awake.) There I met District Biologist Walt Weber and his assistant, Joe Sheahan, S.T.E.P. biologist John Casteel, and Kin Dailey, a warm water biologist. The reason for treating Fishhawk Lake was that somebody had introduced largemouth bass and bluegills to the lake. The bass eat coho salmon fingerlings, and the bluegills eat most of the food that the coho fingerlings need to survive. Because the Fishhawk system has one of the last strong runs of coho salmon, it is vital to keep it that way...especially in light of the impending Endangered Species Act listing.

After draining the lake, our task was to spray the Rotenone solution onto the few remaining ponds of water that were left. It was drained several weeks in advance, in hopes that the mud would set up hard enough so we could walk on it. Walt designed some special shoes to wear on the mud. If you can imagine the footprint of Bigfoot, that is what Walt cut out of plywood. He then attached straps to the "shoe" so we could fasten them to our boots. This looked like a great idea—until Walt's mud paddles sank beneath the muck of Fishhawk Lake. The mud shoes became anchors and I did my share of hee-hawing as Walt emerged from the ooze with muddy hands.

The biologists had no evidence of a bass

and bluegill population in the lake, just the word of the people who live there, so we decided to spray a likely pothole and see what showed up. We found that we did better without the Weber mud paddles and proceeded to spray several ponds. It took a while before we started seeing any effect from the Rotenone, but after twenty minutes, Walt was scooping up plenty of bass from the first pond we sprayed. That was bad news; now we knew then we had to spray every pothole.

We started spraying the bigger ponds, using a boat to fully cover it. The Rotenone solution was put in rubber bladders with a pump spray handle, like the kind used to fight fires. Rotenone solution is harmless to other species and fish killed by it are said to be edible. The solution does have a strong odor and turns the water a milky white color.

We finished the bigger, easy waters and set out to mop up the small ponds. This is where it got interesting. Walt was determined to spray every possible hiding spot of the warm water fish, which the warm water biologist said was vengeance for having been turned down for a warm weather species position.

The next thing we knew, there was half a man sticking out of the mud flats about fifty yards from shore. We all had a pretty good laugh at Walt's expense—until we realized that we were going to have to get him out. I managed to ginger-foot my way out to him and, with a few pieces of scrap plywood, we were able to extricate Walt, but not before some of the locals had shown up to videotape the man stuck in the mud.

Walt had not fully given up on his mud shoes and he made a startling discovery, they worked better on the hands than on the feet! Walt walked on his hands and knees, using the mud paddles, and was able to exterminate the fish in that pond. I, too, found it much easier to navigate on my hands and knees, using a wading staff for surface area for my hands. We were told we looked like a couple of seals waddling around in the muck.

After a lunch break we tackled the last few puddles, on the far side of the lake. When we got there I noticed a lot more of the smooth, slick-looking mud that had proven so treacherous earlier. After spraying several ponds, spending half of the time on our hands and

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