

The INDEPENDENT

Serving the upper Nehalem River valley. Published twice monthly, on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, by Public Opinion Laboratory Ltd., 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064, as a free newspaper. Editors and Publishers, Dirk & Noni Andersen, (503) 429-9410.

Opinion

Does anyone really want information?

One week ago, a town hall meeting was held in Vernonia to discuss county jail problems, including overcrowding, and to seek any solutions residents might offer.

Among those who came, prepared to answer every question asked, were Columbia County Commissioners Jack Peterson, Joel Yarbor and Tony Hyde; Judges Berkeley Smith and Rod McLean, Sheriff Phil Derby, Sheriff's Sgt. Fred Oviatt, county jail manager Jim Gibson and corrections officer Lee Rigdon; county director of finance Paul Downey, Chris Iverson (chairman) and Sam Patrick, who have been studying the situation as part of a county-wide citizen's committee; Cliff Multanen from Community Corrections (probation and parole), St. Helens Police Officer Mike Cocklin; Dave Hanlon, a Scappoose resident who was construction manager of the new Tillamook County Jail, and Dennis Liebert, president of Liebert & Associates, a correctional planning and design firm based in Boulder, Colorado.

Vernonia area residents in attendance were Hyde, McLean, Oviatt and this reporter (One other local person was there briefly, but she had attended the meeting the prior night at Mist.).

How county government operates has an effect on county residents. How the county jail operates will affect all of county government. Among other, more tangible problems, it is a lawsuit (or another lawsuit) waiting to happen.

It is bad enough that ordinary citizens don't want to know about the potentially huge expenditure facing everyone in the county—though they'll whine later that "nobody told us anything about it"—but even worse, in fact totally unfathomable, is that no one in city government wants to know, either.

There wasn't a single representative of city government...no councilors, no administrators and no one from the police department.

There were no representatives from the business community, neither the chamber of commerce nor the downtown business association, though they always say they want to know what their taxes are being spent for.

There were no representatives from the school district...no board members, no administrators, no teachers...though they are affected by the amount of tax money used for any purpose (It all comes from the same pot.) and they would be expected to have questions about how juvenile corrections will be handled, but apparently that isn't important.

"As citizens of this democracy, you are the rulers and the ruled, the lawgivers and the law-abiding, the beginning and the end."

Adlai Stevenson, 1952

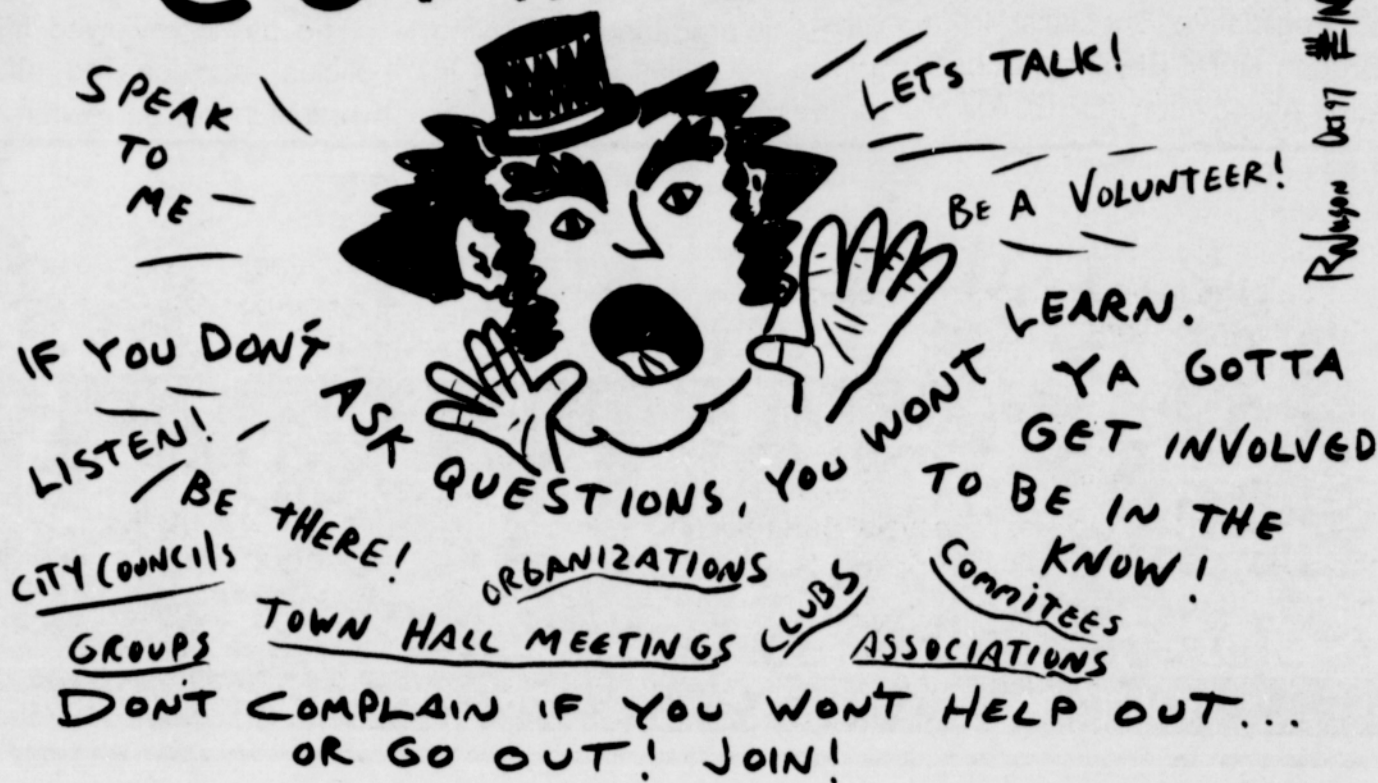
If Stevenson had seen the kind of citizenship displayed here, he would have stricken those words. They don't apply to people who have the opportunity to learn...and refuse to do so.

COMMUNICATION

... MAKES ...

— BUILDS —

COMMUNITY



Ike Says...

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

PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT ON PROPOSED RULES FOR MANAGEMENT OF STATE FOREST LANDS

"The proposed rules will clarify statutes that authorize the Oregon State Forester to secure the greatest permanent value for almost 800,000 acres of state forest land, most of which is located in Northwest Oregon. The proposed rules also cover the purpose of the lands, the stewardship policy for state-owned lands, forest management planning, and land base designation and classification."

The preceding paragraph and the headline are from a dept. of forestry release that I received because I have been writing to them with concerns over landslides into streams and onto public roads throughout the state. Most of these landslides originated from clear cut slopes above the stream or highway. Many were on private land and not on state land so the rules perhaps won't apply here; but I think the people whose houses were destroyed and the fish that have died wouldn't be concerned with those distinctions.

Written comment regarding these rules should be sent to Jeri Chase, Oregon Department of Forestry, 2600 State Street, Salem, Or. 97310. I would suggest that anyone writing also send a copy of their letter to Governor John Kitzhaber, M. D., State Capitol, Salem, OR 97310, and I hope that a lot of fishermen and fisherwomen take a moment to write in with their concerns. Many people don't realize that not only these 800,000 acres are their property, as citizens of the State of Oregon, but that the water and the fish are also the property of the people of the state and not the exclusive property of those who are fortunate enough to own land adjacent to the streams. In the past, the State [public] owned lands have been "managed" as tree plantations for income to the state and the timber industry and, it seems, the Oregon Dept. of Forestry wants to continue this way forever.

This greatly concerns me as a fisherman because it is not a coincidence that the fish in the greatest danger (including those facing extinction)—sea-run cutthroat trout, Coho salmon and the mighty steelhead—are those that stay in fresh water for at least a year, and some as much as three or four years, before

they smolt and go to sea. Fish can't read a map and will die whether they are abused on public land or private land, so it won't hurt to ask that logging companies be required to be more responsible for their actions on private land, too.

By sending copies of your letters to the governor's office, we are attempting to increase citizen input into the processes that affect their public land and water. To make it easier for those wanting to get involved, I will finish this column with some proposals for changes in the Forest Practices that are fish and people friendly; this way, perhaps we can prevent more of our fishes from dying.

Under current laws a culvert can be used to "kill" a stream and the timber companies are rewarded by being allowed to log the area upstream of the culvert because now that it no longer has fish in it, it has become an "N" stream. Vegetation retention and riparian zone protection are not required for small N Streams in the Coast Range or the Western Cascades. This N designation also allows the headwaters of a fish bearing stream to be logged when there are no fish in that area of the stream. This area of the stream often is the cool spring origin, or birth place of the stream, which sends cool water into the whole system. When it is logged, there is no shade left to protect the water and it heats up. Our readers probably remember the importance of cool water, which holds more oxygen than warm water. Warm water kills salmonids, too. The area downstream is further compromised by silt and sediment that smothers the eggs of fish in the gravel, hides food from newly emerged fry, cause clubbing on the gills [making it hard to breathe] and fills in the back eddies that smaller fish need to hide in off the main current. We need to eliminate the type N designation from the rules and protect all waters of the State.

Steep slopes above homes, streams and roads should not be clear cut and should be harvested very carefully, if at all. If stumps or logs end up in someone's living room, they should be compensated. There should be a serious fine for any landslides into streams and those landslides should be planted with a quick growing grass to hold the slope and prevent the stream from filling up with mud. When stumps end up on public roads like they did all over Western Oregon, the company that logged above the road should pay the wages and all costs for the clean-up by reimbursing the county and state road crews

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