

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Hearing will decide phone service area

Vernonians complain about the cost of phone service because long distance charges apply to every call except within the 429 prefix. It's a legitimate complaint and there is now an opportunity to address it.

Tonight, May 20, at 7:00 p.m. in the Washington Grade School gym, the state Public Utilities Commission will hold a hearing to establish whether Vernonia has a sufficient "community of interest" to warrant expanding the Portland Extended Area Service (EAS) Region by adding the Vernonia exchange.

Of the criteria used by the PUC to determine an addition to an EAS, Vernonia has failed in only one area—the number of calls made to 25 percent of the exchanges in the Portland EAS. Vernonia phone customers make enough calls, just not to enough different exchanges.

Not everyone will want to be part of the Portland EAS Region because that would increase the base monthly rate for local service. But everyone who would have a lower phone bill with the EAS should be there to explain their "community of interest." Businesses, especially, that suffer economic disadvantage because of exorbitant phone bills, should make their needs clear.

The hearing will consider only one subject—the Portland EAS Region—so it will be impossible to bring up the problem of GTE's stone age switching equipment. At this point, however, any relief would be welcome.

The INDEPENDENT will not print unsigned letters

Every so often it is necessary to remind people that only signed letters will be used in *The INDEPENDENT* Letters to the Editor.

Though we can conceive the possibility that a writer may have a valid reason not to sign a letter, that isn't likely to cause a change in this policy.

Two unsigned letters have been received recently. One of them was an apology for some vandalism; the other was a complaint about school district action. The writers seem to feel that if their statements are published, everything is okay. Sorry, folks, but people who don't accept responsibility for their statements are the same as people who haven't said anything.

If you have something to say to the public, your letter is most welcome. An unsigned letter, however, will not be published.

Summer, bikes and laws

When the weather turns pleasant, bikes seem to appear as rapidly, and profusely, as dandelions. But laws regarding bikes don't go away with the bad weather.

Remember that (1) helmets are required for all bike riders under 16, and (2) bike riding isn't allowed on sidewalks in the commercial area of Bridge Street.

The police are citing offenders already, so a word to the wise should be sufficient.

SPORTSMAN'S PARADISE

NEHALEM RIVER FISHING SEASON OPENS

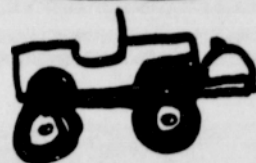
YA KNOW IT'S
CATCH + RELEASE*

YEAH,
IT SEEMS
EVERYTHING IS
GOING THAT WAY..

*TORTURE
OR
ARE FISH INTO
BODY PIERCING?

...BUT I DON'T
MIND, I GOT
ME THAT NEW CX2800 SUPERMEGA WINCH
ON MY JEEP SO I CAN REEF IN A
BIG BULL THIS SEASON.

COOL, JUST BE SURE TO FILE OFF THE
BARBS ON THAT ANCHOR!



BALE OF
ALFALFA
FOR
BAIT

MAY 20, 98 THE INDEPENDENT - R. WILSON

City Scene...

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

The other day, as I was cleaning up my trout fishing gear before the river trout season opener, I started reminiscing about previous trout seasons. The fishing trips that stood out the most in my mind were the ones with my old fishing buddy, Phlegm Slinger.

Phlegm is an avid fisherman and specializes in catching fish in the Nehalem River using natural baits. Phlegm and I cut our teeth fishing for small stream cutthroats with crawdad tails. Eventually Phlegm became more advanced and obtained what he calls "high tech" gear and started fishing the big water of the Nehalem.

I remember my first trip down the Nehalem with Phlegm in his "new" boat. It seems he was down at the garbage transfer station when somebody dropped off a small aluminum boat. Phlegm thought just because there was a two foot hole in the bottom, that shouldn't keep it from floating again. After he lag bolted two pieces of old plywood, with bondo sandwiched between them, the old boat did float. Of course Phlegm gave it a new coat of paint...black, green, gray, brown and whatever half-empty can of spray paint he could find. I found the florescent orange spots quite attractive.

Phlegm had already taken the little boat for its maiden voyage before our fishing trip and he said it handled like a breeze. I noticed as I climbed into the boat that Phlegm had small ropes tied to the oars (two 2x4s roughed out with a powersaw), his nose bag, thermos, fishing pole, tackle box and everything that was loose. The boat looked like it was filled with a giant cobweb. I asked Phlegm what all the ropes were for; he replied, "to keep things handy." While I was considering that, he pushed us off from shore and stepped on the edge of the boat with his corks, abruptly overturning the boat. I hadn't even quit spitting water when Phlegm said, "See?", as he started tugging the ropes to bring each article back in the boat.

Eventually, we both got into the boat without capsizing it, and started down the river. Phlegm's oarsmanship left a little to be desired but, after a few more dunkings, he started to get the hang of it. Soon we were fishing. I deftly used my little ultra-light pole and reel to present a rooster tail. Phlegm used his "high tech" pole, the wonder stick. He said it was a Fen-Dai-Abu-Zeb-Garcia. I noticed the pole was of five section construction and asked Phlegm where he found such a beauty. After a lengthy

discussion about each manufacturer having a good section in each of their poles, he admitted he had been down at the transfer station again. The reel looked sort of like an old egg beater with a beer can as the line spool. Phlegm had an ingenious system rigged up for casting and reeling. He had tied a wire around the pole at about 90 degrees from the spool. From this wire, he had a fishing pole eye hanging with a notch cut in its side. When Phlegm wanted to reel he would flip the line through the notch and into the eye. When he wanted to cast he would flip the line out of the eye. Phlegm said that those fancy new reels were just not reliable enough for his kind of serious fishing.

Phlegm is, for the most part, a bait fisherman. Worms are the mainstay of his arsenal, but he doesn't use worms like you and me. On a previous fishing trip, he noticed that he seemed to catch more fish after eating an orange. So he would eat a slice of orange, then bait his hook and, wham, fish on!

After a few fishing trips, Phlegm got sick of eating oranges and invented a new fishing bait. It seems he had spent some time in his kitchen and had come up with an orange Jello worm bait. Phlegm found that if he added a little extra gelatin to ordinary orange Jello, it would stay on his hook for a long time. He had also discovered that if he boiled his worms and only used the clear essence that floated to the top, that his Jello worm baits held together longer. Phlegm was quite proud of his new invention and I have to admit that he caught a lot of fish on those baits.

I will never forget the fishing trip that Phlegm and I took a couple of years back on Fathers' Day. I had driven over to Phlegm's house to pick up both him and the boat. He was just stepping out the back door and giving his wife a kiss, when she reminded him to be home early because her parents were coming for dinner. We had loaded the boat in the back of my pickup and started down the driveway when Phlegm yelled, "Hold it, partner." With that, he bailed out of the pickup and ran into his house. Phlegm came running back with a bowl of orange Jello. "I didn't have time to cut my bait into chunks, I'll do it on the way," Phlegm exclaimed. His fishing luck that day stank and, eventually, he borrowed some of my worms and started catching fish. As usual, we didn't get back home in time for dinner and Phlegm's wife seemed a lot more furious than usual. It seems that Phlegm's wife had also made a bowl of orange Jello for dinner!

Lately Phlegm has started fly fishing for trout.

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