

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Anniversary marks one million papers

Though there are folks who try to avoid the number 13 in any context, it is an interesting benchmark in the life of *The INDEPENDENT*.

In December we completed our thirteenth year of publication and realized that, in those thirteen years, *The INDEPENDENT* has printed and distributed one million free community newspapers.

A million newspapers isn't significant to a large, daily newspaper but, of course, we don't fit that category nor have we any desire to do so. After starting as a monthly newspaper, *The INDEPENDENT* eventually moved to twice a month and—all too soon—it will be time to consider the need for weekly publication. But not now.

At this time, we want to thank the many, many people who have helped keep *The INDEPENDENT* going during the past 13 years. There have been many volunteer writers who have kept the community informed about a wide range of subjects, while other volunteers have helped with production and circulation.

There would be no free community newspaper without the advertisers who realize there is a good market in this area and actively seek to reach that market. Our advertisers are both vital and appreciated.

One more ingredient is also vital: YOU—the loyal readers who show your appreciation by taking your business to the advertisers who pay for your free community newspaper.

In the past 13 years, we have tried to help our community by providing an open forum for your letters, printing everything that is signed; by explaining what is happening in city or county government; by letting you know what is coming up and by being a booster for the good things that happen in our community.

We may not always meet your needs, but the effort is worth it and we'll keep trying for the following reason:

Without communication, there is no community.

VHS program spotlights academic achievements

Nearly one-third of the students at Vernonia High School were recognized for improving their grade point averages during the first quarter of the 1998-99 school year, by at least a half-point (0.5) over their G.P.A. at the end of the last school year. Students and staff are to be commended for their efforts.

Equally commendable was the enthusiasm shown by the remainder of the student body for their peers' achievements. The pep band played, cheer leaders performed, students cheered and clapped as the honorees were called to the front. It was every bit as much fun as a sports assembly.

Academic excellence is a tough goal, but it's the right goal. It's good to see it actually become important in the Vernonia School District.



Ike Says...

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

Happy New Year! Yes, it is again time to think about a new year. What surprises await us? Well I don't have a crystal ball so you are on your own. We can gain some insight from what has happened this year though.

Hunting: I would not expect any major changes in hunting seasons or bag limits in the coming year. Exceptions are the Wilson and Trask Units which will be under an October first season for elk, with an any-bull tag, and a late November spike-only second season. How much snow the state receives will determine the number of available animals for this coming season. This mainly affects Eastern Oregon. The decision on antlerless deer hunting in Saddle Mountain Unit will most likely be made this June.

Fishing: Oh boy! What a can of worms! We can expect just about anything to happen this coming year. Coho are now listed as a threatened species up and down the coast, including our area. ODF&W does have some limited fisheries on fin clipped coho (North Fork Nehalem and Trask) in our area. It will be anyone's guess though if they will be able to continue. The problem stems from the incidental catching and killing of wild coho that also exist in the streams. Under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) the department must have a permit for this incidental take. The problem will most likely come in a lawsuit from an outside group which will be opposed to such limited takings.

I don't foresee any changes in cutthroat trout regulations that currently restrict fishing to catch and release. I feel there is room for a consumptive fishery in the Nehalem but this would need to be proven scientifically first. There seems to be no motivation within ODF&W to pursue this issue. Regardless, this is a tremendous fishery and I would only expect the size and number of fish to increase.

Steelhead fishing will most likely not see any changes, with the possibility of an ESA listing being remote. Again, lawsuits could change this fishery.

Chinook appear to be doing well. The US vs. Canada fish wars have helped this fishery to some degree. This fishery is also a shining indicator that something is not right for fish that have to stay in fresh water for more than half a year. Chinook migrate to the estuary by fall in the same year that they hatch. Steelhead and coho stay in fresh water for at least a full year and in the steelhead's case usually at least two years.

On a brighter note, there have been some indications that ocean conditions are changing back toward favorable for fish. We need to take advantage of this to rebuild our fish runs so the next time the ocean turns bad we will have a cushion of fish with which to guard against extinctions.

The Upper Nehalem Valley Watershed Council continues to do good work in the form of fish restoration projects and stream monitoring. Stream fencing and riparian planting occupy a large portion of the Hire The Fishers program crew and they have done a magnificent job. I predict that in 10 years a lot of people will be amazed at the sight of all the new conifers they will see growing along river banks in our area. You can already see results, if you take a close look.

A group of Watershed Council members were trained by the DEQ to evaluate water quality using a PH meter, Dissolved Oxygen meter, and Turbidity meter. Maggie Peyton, watershed council coordinator, and I spent about a day and a half checking turbidity in our local streams. The turbidity meter we used is a very straightforward device that measures the amount of light that passes through a sample from a light source. There is a digital read out that displays a unit of measurement called Nephelometric Turbidity Units, or NTUs. We measured samples from various streams on December 10, 11 and 12. I anticipated a learning experience and I was right. Often I have looked at a stream and thought to myself that it looked muddy. Now we can actually measure just how "muddy" the stream is. What became apparent right away was that the depth of the water in a stream has a large bearing on our perception of how "muddy" a stream is. A person has a tendency to declare deeper waters muddier than a smaller stream where they can see the bottom. We have found this to be a big misconception. We have also found that the human eye is very sensitive in distinguishing a slight amount of turbidity difference where two streams meet, yet is relatively lousy in judging just how turbid water is in some streams is.

Maggie and I started guessing what the turbidity reading would be before reading the sample. We missed some of the samples by a long ways. To give you a perspective of the range of turbidity that we found, here are some of the readings we discovered on 12/10/98:

Tap water from my house = .28 (good job Public Works), Nehalem River at Hwy 26 = 5, at

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