

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Correction is necessary

Having often pointed out that people shouldn't place blame without being certain where it belongs, guess who fell into the same trap. Yep, ye editor.

The Vernonia School Board did not make the rule regarding the number of votes required to approve any transaction. That rule, which requires an affirmative vote by a majority of the board, and not just the majority of the quorum, is state law.

That doesn't make it a good law. It still allows a decision by the majority to be overruled by a minority of votes. When the number of board members present equals the number required for a quorum, a unanimous vote is required to transact business. Under this rule, a single board member can prevent any action from occurring.

Somehow, though, it's comforting to know the situation wasn't developed locally. But it still defeats the intent of rule by the majority; it is still a bad law.

City employees learn life saving procedures

Ten City of Vernonia employees were so busy with other activities one day last week, that it was necessary to hire someone to sit in the office. And it was a good way to spend a little money.

The employees spent six hours learning first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, CPR. Local instructor John Naron, with his assistant Dawn Scott, taught the class right in City Hall, making it possible to include more employees than could have attended at some other location.

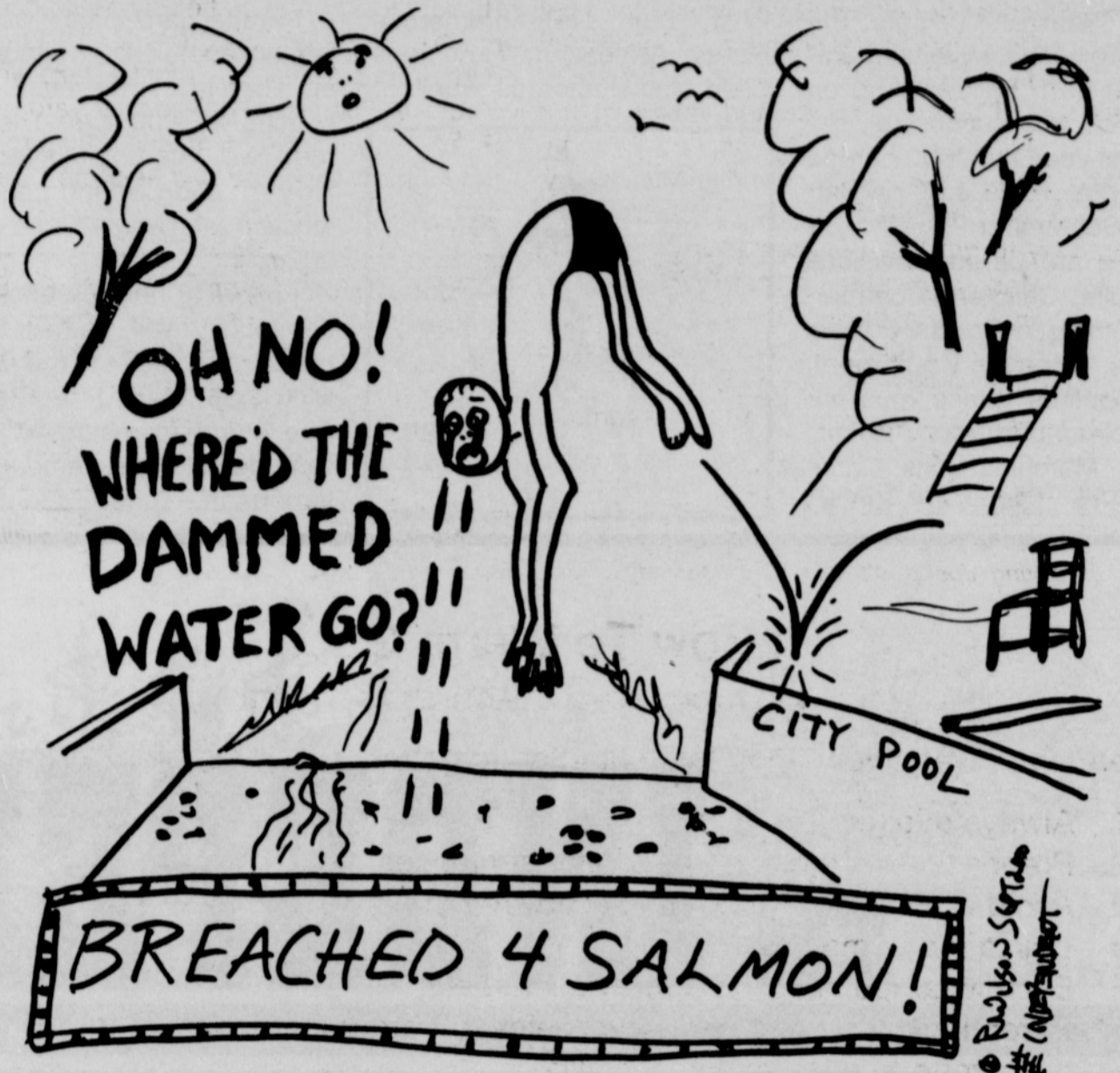
Three administrative employees took the course - Cindy Naillon, Julie Coontz and Mike Sykes; four from public works - John Trent, Scott Rethwill, Jeff Burch and Jim Gido; and three MTC summer employees - Alishia Buffum, Brian Collins and Kody Watts. They may never need to use what they learned. On the other hand, if it is needed, it's too late to start learning.

We are accustomed to having our volunteer firefighters and emergency medical service volunteers learn these skills, but they can't always be around when needed. Other businesses or organizations might consider scheduling such a class for ordinary citizens who happen to be their employees or even their customers.

VHS class will present candidates to the public

Lots of candidates mean lots of choices, so local voters are fortunate that the Current Affairs class at Vernonia High School is planning a Candidates' Forum. The date isn't set, yet, because school just started. Teacher Steve Calhoun is to be congratulated for taking on this task with his class.

If you want to help guide your own future, register and vote.



Ike Says...

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

Here are a few late summer ideas for day trips in our local area. Saddle Mountain State Park is an easy hour's drive from Vernonia and rewards those who hike the three mile trail to the top, with a spectacular view. The trail is steep in places and I would not recommend this hike for small children. Older children should be warned of the dangers that lurk just mere footsteps away from the trail's edge. Steep hillsides and vertical drop-offs hold the potential for a nasty fall. The trail can also be slippery underfoot with loose rocks. Despite these dangers, a good time can be had hiking the trail and using common sense, and taking your time will reward you with a beautiful view of the Pacific Ocean and the Columbia river. Saddle Mountain State park also has a varied landscape of vegetation. At the trail head, you start out in a rain forest complete with dripping trees. Then you travel into a mature conifer forest, then into a near-alpine setting as you approach the top. The mountain itself is actually made of pillow lava and is a cast of a huge hole that was once where the Columbia River used to travel. Over the years, the sedimentary rock that surrounded this lava deposit eroded and the harder igneous rock was left standing, creating a mountain. The hiking trail is a no-fee area, but there are tent camp sites available at the trail head and I believe there is a fee for their use. I would suggest camping here on a hot summer night since this is a cool spot under normal conditions. Drinking water and restrooms are available at the trail head.

It's huckleberry time. My friend, Donna, invited me to experience one of her family's traditions of picking huckleberries. Traveling into the Columbia River Gorge, we crossed the Bridge of the Gods at Cascade Locks, then proceeded up and through Carson, Washington. Take the highway that proceeds up the Wind River for four to five miles and watch for the sign that indicates the Forest Service office to your left. Information about picking can be obtained there. They also provide maps of the better picking areas. You may pick up to three gallons of berries per person without a permit, but you must have a permit if you are selling the berries.

We took the 54 road, which climbed high into the mountains. After about twelve miles, the road turned to gravel and soon we were in good picking areas. Unfortunately, the day was cloudy and the clouds were raking the vegetation and dropping their moisture. Soon our pants were

wet and those wearing tennis shoes made squeaky sounds when they walked. The picking was very good and the berries were ripe. When this article comes out, the berries should be at their peak, so don't delay.

Archery deer season is in full swing, but areas at the time of this writing were limited to public lands, since most of the private timberlands were closed because of the high fire danger.

Some hunters were surprised this year when their application came back unsuccessful for Saddle Mountain bull elk tags. The reason was a cut back in the number of tags, to 1500 in each season. Oregon Dep't. of Fish and Wildlife has reasoned that there are not enough older age class bulls in the Saddle Mountain unit and they needed to try and raise the number of bulls escaping hunters. My opinion on this subject is that this is a ploy by ODF&W to cause dissension among the elk hunters, so they will start to favor a spike-only hunting format that everybody can hunt every year. The truth of why bull elk numbers are down and that the age structure is not near what ODF&W wants (we have never seen what they want on paper), is that ODF&W has systematically reduced the elk population in the Saddle Mountain unit with excessive cow hunts. When the Saddle Mountain unit went to the 3-point or better rule in the late 70s, there were an estimated 10,000 elk in the unit. Annual bull harvest just prior to the 3-point rule averaged over 900 bulls a year. We now harvest fewer than 500 bulls a year, on average. The first thing ODF&W did was harvest a large number of cows in the first few years of the 3-point rule and they have never let up since. The second thing they did was to lower the Management Objective to 7,800 animals in the unit to justify this cow harvest. The Management Objective was set mainly by ODF&W and private landowners. I know this first-hand because I received the mailing list for all the participants for a meeting to set this objective. There were only two sportsmen representatives and about ten private landowners invited to the meeting. Both of the sportsmen representatives were unable to make the meeting and we were saddled with a 7,800 animal limit on our elk herd. This number has no scientific basis and no studies have been conducted to indicate what the true carrying capacity of the Saddle Mountain unit is. Many of you may think that I am beating up on you by opposing the amount of cow hunting that is being conducted in the Saddle Mountain unit, that isn't

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