

# The INDEPENDENT

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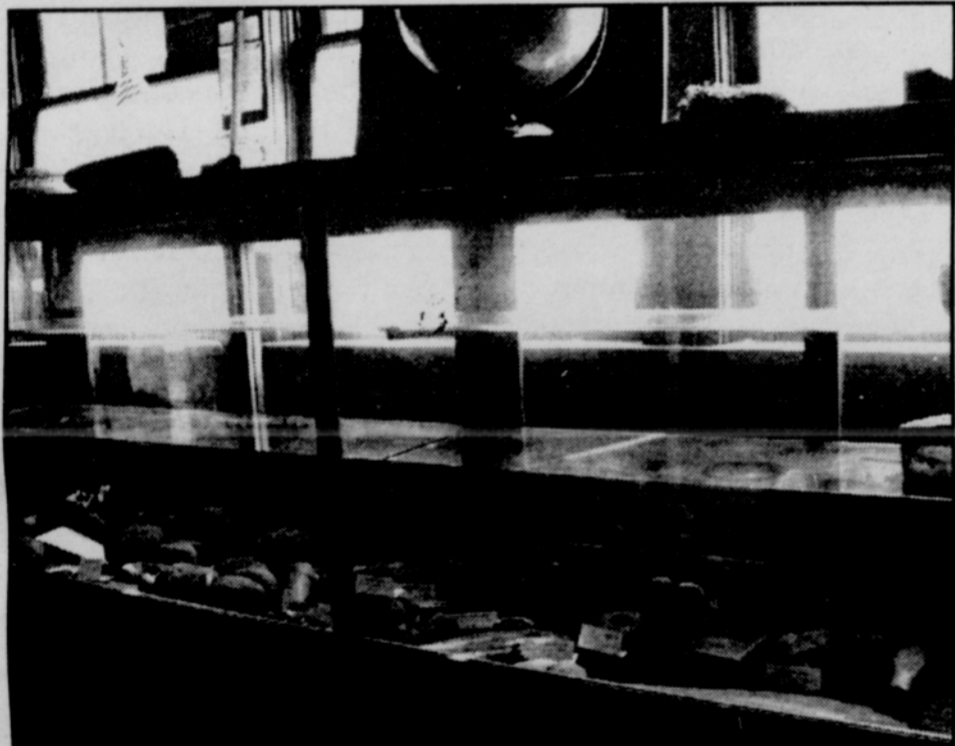
## Opinion

### It's time for elected officials to get busy

Elected officials don't have an easy role. No matter what they do, someone is going to be unhappy. But that is no reason for doing nothing.

A small example, though significant to many in the county, is represented by the empty showcase below. That is where the Indian artifacts were before they were removed from the local museum.

There have now been two meetings with the Board of Commissioners and nothing has happened. No one



seems to know, with certainty, whether the artifacts on display at Columbia Center in St. Helens were taken from Vernonia, though that possibility has been circulating for nearly three weeks.

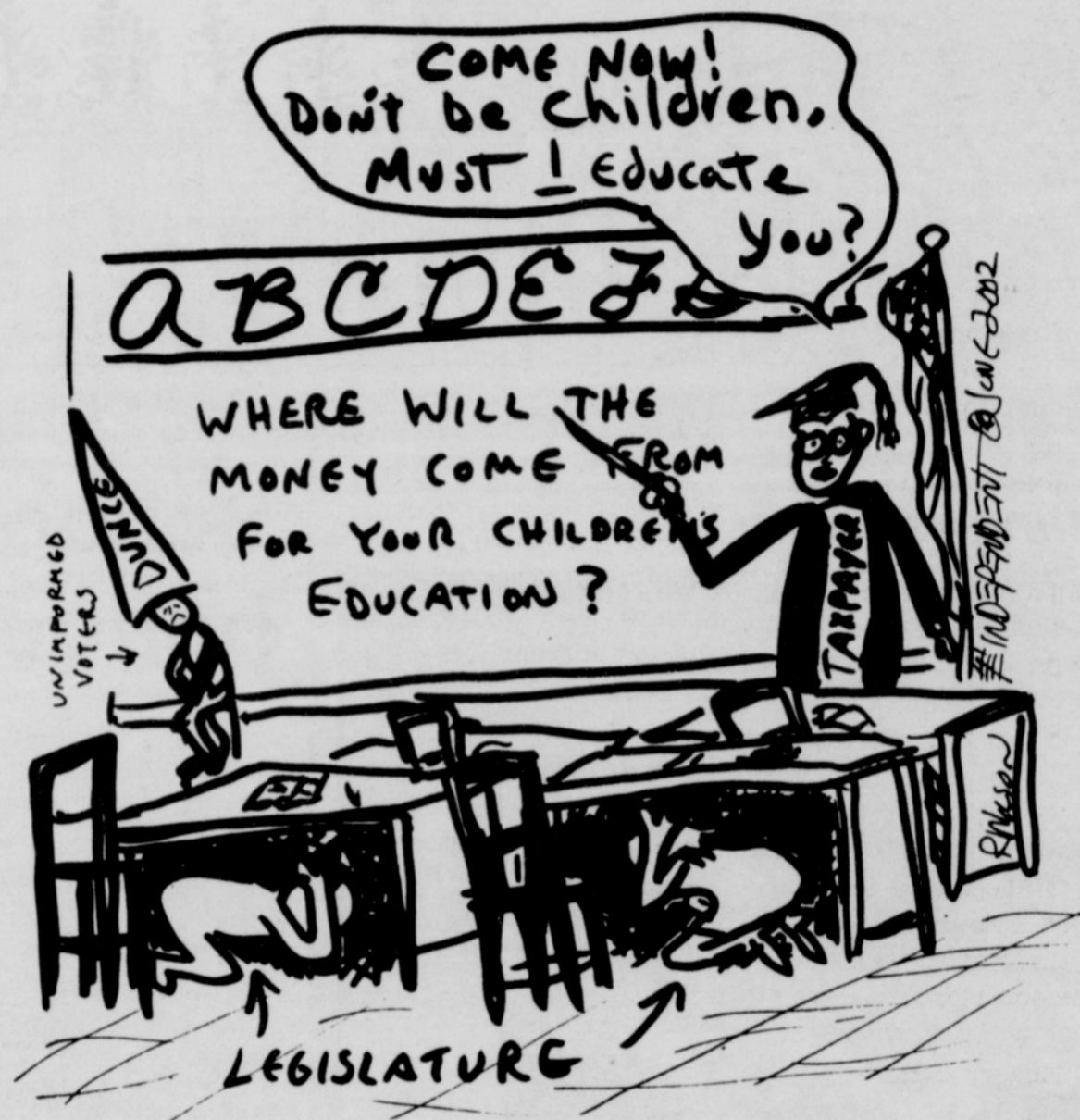
So far as The INDEPENDENT can ascertain, no commissioner has asked that question of the people who put the display in Columbia Center. Why not?

The only response from the board is that the county counsel is researching the records to find out who is responsible for what. That response is identical to the one obtained about six weeks ago.

Incidentally, the BOC has approved a new hydraulic excavator for the road department. The price? Over \$130,000

Asked what the justification is for such a purchase, The INDEPENDENT was told by Commissioner Bernhart, "The department head said he needed it."

The Senior Council needs funds to help the elderly. Which is more important?



### Ike Says...

By Dale Webb, member  
Nehalem Valley Chapter Izaak Walton League

Yes, you heard right: Ike Says has gone outlaw. I received the first ticket of my life last month and of course it would have to be a wildlife violation. While I am somewhat embarrassed by this event, I also understand that the odds are that you will receive a ticket sometime in your life. Here's what happened; don't let it happen to you!

Donna, two friends and I were digging clams on a slightly minus tide in the Gearheart area. Since my partners were not experienced clam diggers, I was helping them by pointing out holes, how to dig, etc. I was finding a few clams and was keeping track in my head. About 45 minutes later, I thought I had dug my 15 clams and headed away from the surf to count them. Donna and I knelt down to count our clams when we heard a voice say "Hold it, I'm with the police." I felt a slight flush on my face since I wondered if I had counted right. The state wildlife officer knelt down next to us and I proceeded to empty my clam bag onto the sand and then slowly and deliberately counted out 15 clams. I breathed a sigh of relief, only to be followed with panic when the officer stated, "There is still one clam in your bag." I looked down and, to my dismay, there was a clam partially hidden in the folds of the bag. I removed the clam. Then the officer counted the clams for himself, at a pace that Donna and I were not able to keep up with. The state bull declared that there were 17 clams. Of course, my mind was roiling with the thought I was going to get a ticket, which the officer confirmed when I asked him. I knew better than to

argue or question his counting. I was guilty since I had counted 16 clams, anyway. The officer seized two of my most smashed clams and gave me my ticket.

When I got home that night and emptied my clams into the kitchen sink, I was not amused to see that I only had 14 clams. This meant that the state game officer had also miscounted my clams. I am sure it was an honest mistake, but then again so was mine. I also noticed that the officer had written the wrong time on the ticket—a whole hour earlier and I had not dug a single clam by then. In my mind, while I could have maybe gotten off on this technicality, it was not ethical or worth taking up the court's time with a clam violation. Instead, this was a lesson in life and I have used it to reinforce how I conduct myself in the field.

Two weeks later, while digging clams with my dad and Don Tiffney, we observed a lone person approaching our location. Dad and I grinned at each other in recognition of who this probably was. Sure enough, the state trooper eased into our small group of people, occasionally digging a clam as he looked from beneath the wide-brimmed hat of his disguise. I had already counted my clams once and had 10. I counted them three more times before I finally finished my 15. Don was standing next to me when I made my final count and he asked, "How many do you have?" Looking straight at the game officer I replied, "22." The state trooper just turned around and walked off, he knew he had been had. I have to give him credit he is a go-getter.

So here are some pointers if you go clam digging: First, do not trust your ability to keep track

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