

The INDEPENDENT

Serving the upper Nehalem River valley. Published twice monthly, on the first and third Thursdays of each month, by Public Opinion Laboratory Ltd., 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064, as a free newspaper. Editors and Publishers, Dirk & Noni Andersen. Phone/Fax: 503-429-9410, e-mail: noni@vernonia.com

Opinion

Odds and ends...

Small, volunteer fire departments

always face the problem of too few firefighters because volunteers must earn their living on other jobs. The mutual aid agreements that move engines and personnel where they are needed, when they are needed, are absolutely vital but they can't always respond as quickly as is needed. It might help if people who work swing shift or nights could be volunteer firefighters during the day, when most others are at work. How the training and required meetings could be handled is another puzzle, but the idea is worth looking into.

In the meantime, responses from other districts are hugely appreciated.

United Way's "Day of Caring"

is certainly a misnomer for United Way of Columbia County and, most probably, all of the other United Way organizations, because they work every day at caring. United Way of Columbia County helps fund Vernonia Cares, Vernonia Senior Center, and various Community Action Team programs that are vital to low income residents of the Nehalem Valley. They also help fund Boy and Girl Scout programs and far more agencies than will be named here. So, while their "Day of Caring" is pretty special, what is really special is United Way's program of "neighbors helping neighbors." If you haven't made at least a small donation to United Way, please do so. You can get a pledge envelope by calling Vernonia Cares, 429-1414.

Oct. 15 is the last day to register if

you want to vote in the Nov. 7 General Election. There will be some important measures on the ballot as well as elections of U.S. and state senators and representatives, governor, county commissioners and city councilors. Not all of the races will be interesting, not all of the measures will be vital. Nevertheless, if you're not registered, you can't vote and, if you don't vote, you've lost the right to complain—and we ALL want to complain about some element of our government. Whether your complaint is about politicians or bureaucrats or regulations or potholes or the price of stamps or the taste of the water, is really unimportant. The important thing is to become a part of our government by registering and voting.

Remember, if you don't buy a ticket, you can't win the lottery.



Ike Says...

By Dale Webb, member
Nehalem Valley Chapter Izaak Walton League



Hunting season is here, although there may not be a lot of places to hunt as I write this article, due to fire danger. Please try to be patient, beside, the best hunting is late in the season. There has been a landownership change in upper Rock Creek that may affect some hunting opportunity. Stimson Lumber Company has purchased 7,000 acres bordered, roughly, by Kauppi mainline, Rock Creek road and Coates mainline. If you plan on hunting in this area you may wish to call Stimson as to their access policy. A state forestry official that I talked to, thought that the area would be open only on weekends, as is the policy in the Camp McGregor area.

Thank goodness Burn Road will give access to land behind this recent Stimson purchase, which points out the value of keeping these old county roads in the public domain. I will try to follow up on this development once I get back from deer hunting in Eastern Oregon.

Make sure you have sighted your gun in before hunting. It's unbelievable how many animals are missed each year because hunters hadn't sighted-in their rifles. I ran into a problem last year when I was sighting-in my rifle: I had fired three rounds on 3 power and then turned it up to 9 power to look at the target. Without turning the power down, I fired three more shots and was amazed when they all hit in a nice group – two

inches high and three inches to the left. I decided it was time to retire my old Weaver and replaced it with my spare scope. It is always wise to test your variable scope to see if this problem has developed. I don't know how long the scope had been doing this, but now I always check my scope for this problem.

Anybody enjoying the outdoors this fall should wear some bright colors, but not yellow, to help avoid becoming an unintended target of a careless hunter. While this is not a common problem, it is a good precautionary measure.

With the first rains of this fall, be sure to go down to Rock Creek and watch the Chinook salmon return to spawn. This year's run should be healthy. My favorite places to observe the salmon are at Anderson Park, where the small falls makes the salmon jump, and behind the City water treatment plant, where the salmon spawn in great numbers. Please, do not harass the salmon, and keep pets on a leash. If your dog does encounter a salmon carcass, be sure to watch its eating habits and, if the dog quits eating its food, call the veterinarian because it may have salmon poisoning.

This has been a great salmon season, even I boated a few fish this year. All the bays are pumping out fish and the Columbia has been red hot. The fish are also good-sized this year, with 40 pounders not being uncommon. A 66-pound Chinook was caught in the Rogue River this year by a bank fisherman. He was helped by some boat fishermen who came to his aid by getting him into their boat, where he could more effectively fight the fish.

I recently experienced crabbing in Nehalem
Please see page 16