

# 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

### More elections scheduled

With an election in November and another in January, it seems as though there should be a pause in politicking. However, elections are scheduled for March and May.

Nehalem Valley residents will see only one item on the March 11 ballot. Columbia County Measure 5-103 would create an ordinance prohibiting the county from providing any services to minor children unless permission of a parent or legal guardian is obtained. The only exception in the measure is for emergency services provided "when the child is in danger of loss of life or of serious physical injury." The INDEPENDENT will publish more about the proposed ordinance in the February 20 issue.

The May election is the regular time for election of special district directors; in Vernonia, Mist and Birkenfeld, that means school district and fire district.

There will be four positions on the ballot for Vernonia Administrative School District 47J. Three of them are for four-year terms that will expire in 2007; the fourth is to fill the remainder of a term that ends in 2005.

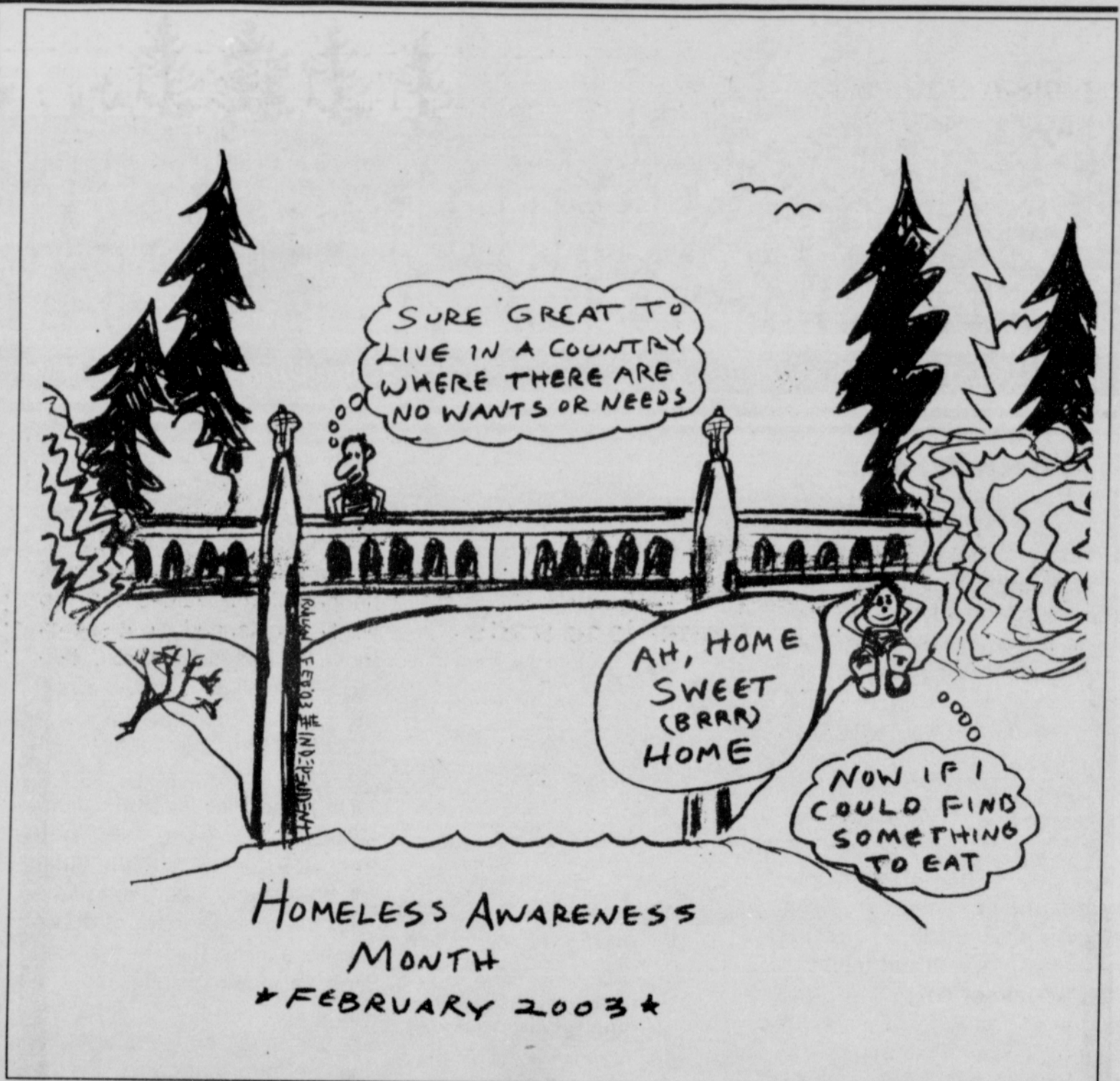
Three positions will be on the ballot for the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District, all for four-year terms, and four for the Mist-Birkenfeld Rural Fire Protection District, two of them for four-year terms and two for two-year terms.

There will also be board openings on the Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District and Northwest Regional ESD.

All of these are volunteer positions and the financial outlay is minimal; a candidate can either pay a filing fee of \$10.00 or obtain the signatures of 25 registered voters on a nominating petition. To do a good job, however, all of these positions require a great deal of time and attention.

What they don't require is experience as an educator or a firefighter because board members don't teach and they don't fight fires. Their job is to develop policy, oversee administration, set goals and plan for the future. The most valuable board member will have one very important characteristic – a desire to learn how to be a good director. That person will take advantage of opportunities to improve his or her skills and knowledge of (for lack of a better word) boardsmanship.

For anyone interested in an unpaid, time consuming and rewarding job, nominating papers may be obtained from the agency involved.



### Ike Says...

By Dale Webb, member  
Nehalem Valley Chapter Izaak Walton League

According to information I received, and also read on Oregon Dep't of Fish & Wildlife's web site, Vernonia Lake is going to be stocked with only 4,500 rainbow trout this year. I contacted Keith Braun our District fish biologist, who said that was a mistake and that Vernonia Lake will receive about 10 percent fewer fish than last year. Keith didn't have the final number at the time, but this should put our allotment from 8,000 to 9,000 fish. The reason for the decrease is a switch in hatchery production from the Cedar Creek hatchery to the Nehalem hatchery. Keith did not say if this is a permanent reduction. I feel it is important that Vernonia receive a high level of hatchery fish, since we draw very large numbers of fishermen, have very good facilities for disabled persons, do not have other close locations and can truly say that the fish planting has a positive economic impact on the community.

With the defeat of Measure 28, sportspeople can expect cuts in Oregon State Police wildlife law enforcement. I have always supported having more wildlife law enforcement, but there comes a time when a person needs to sit back and ask the question: Can this be done differently? In my opinion, the OSP wildlife division is ineffective at best. Enforcement is very spotty and usually centers around district offices, an example being the Astoria area where I was checked four times last year. Yet I hunted, or was in the field in Eastern Oregon and here at home close to 20 days last year and never saw an OSP officer. Quite frankly, wildlife outlaws have refuges where there is a void in law enforce-

ment.

It may be time to rethink whether using OSP officers as the enforcement arm of ODF&W is the best that we can do. I feel that OSP officers are probably the most professional that we will ever get, but we are paying a high price for an unacceptable level of service. We cannot effectively enforce the wildlife laws of this state with only 100 officers. We also must recognize that wildlife law enforcement is usually seasonal. There are times that we need many more officers and then there are times of the year when we need few. A program that may give us this type of law enforcement would employ the use of a smaller permanent force, the use of retired police officers and a trained reserve force. We need a network of officers who, even when they are not actively working, are in the community and have an ear to the ground. We need to make a change; it is obvious that there is not going to be more money for wildlife enforcement and at the level of enforcement we are now receiving, we might as well give it to the schools.

The North Coast Game Association, which many of you belonged to, is now defunct. NCGA closed their books last month and distributed the remaining funds to OSP wildlife in Astoria for the purchase of decoys. While this is a sad development, it was not unexpected. NCGA was developed by a handful of dedicated sportsmen to fight for reasonable big game hunting in the North coast units. The association, which once numbered up to 900 members, fought to reduce the antlerless harvest of deer and elk.

NCGA also actively participated in ODF&W's public hearings and public work groups. I feel

Please see page 16