

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

Good people needed for fire, school boards

"Good people" is an imprecise description that has different meanings for different individuals. In the context of this editorial, two meanings apply...hard-working people who volunteer to help their communities.

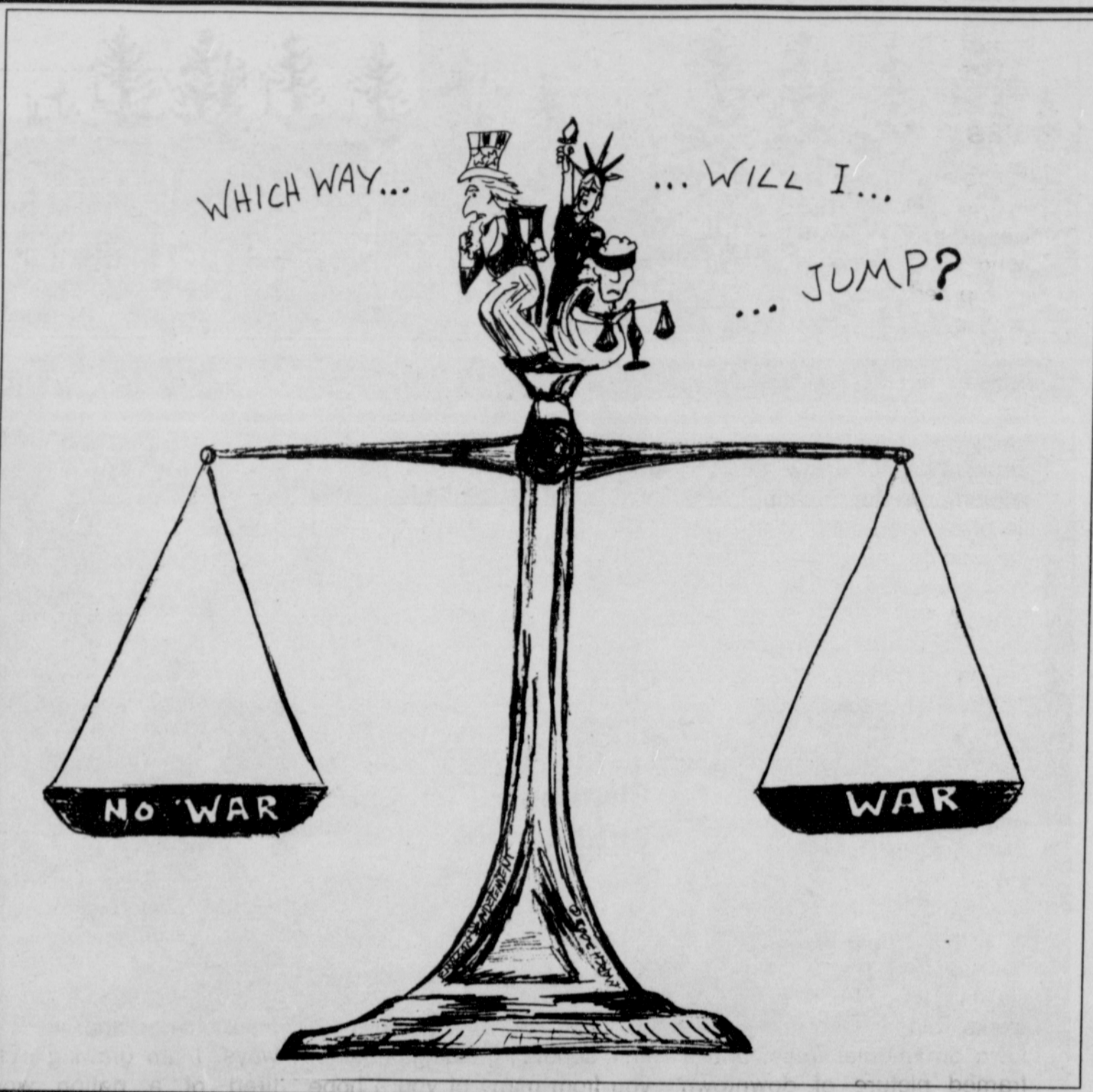
School boards and fire boards are not the only places where good people are needed. The reason for specifying them is because area school and fire districts have several positions that will be filled by election in May. Nehalem Valley voters will have candidates for school board, Vernonia and Mist-Birkenfeld fire districts, Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District and NW Regional ESD. Voters in the Banks area will also have candidates for school and fire boards, plus a sprinkling of other boards.

Vernonia School District has a pretty good board of directors and, if they all choose to run again, the people of the district would be well served. These board members generally work hard and take advantage of opportunities to learn more about their responsibilities—which often means they spend weekends or evenings to improve their own performances as board members. In spite of philosophical differences, they work together for the good of the district.

Vernonia Rural Fire District has some nice people who are ineffective board members because they don't see a need to improve their own performances. Without a doubt, it's more interesting to go on vacation, or hunting or fishing, than to spend a weekend at a seminar or conference in order to do a better job as an unpaid district director. Unfortunately, that doesn't serve the people of the district. Those interested in running because of a personal vendetta or because they have an axe to grind, will not be good directors, either.

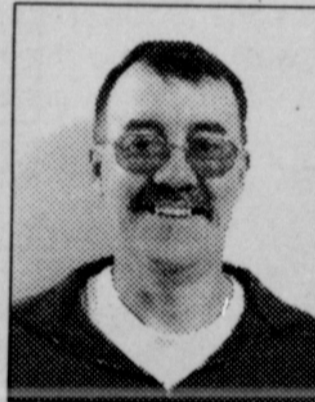
You don't need to be an educator to serve on the school board and you don't need to be a firefighter to serve on the fire board. Good directors will be concerned about accounting, insurance, legal liability, fair employment practices, developing and implementing policies that treat everyone fairly, and much more.

For \$10, or 25 valid signatures, you can be a candidate. Information and forms are available at your school and fire districts. They must be completed and turned in to your county elections department no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 20, 2003.



Ike Says . . .

By Dale Webb, member
Nehalem Valley Chapter Izaak Walton League



Just as there is turmoil in our State government budget, there also is turmoil in the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife budget. Currently, ODF&W is asking the legislature for increases in license and tag fees. ODF&W cannot raise fees by itself, it must have legislative action. ODF&W is currently asking for fee increases totaling \$10.1 million in the next biennium. To accomplish this, most tags would increase in price by \$5.00. A combined license would go up by \$10.00. I figure this proposed increase would cost me around \$25.00 more a year, which is about a 30 percent increase. While a lot of us can afford to pay more for our privileges, this may start to become a burden on low-income families with multiple hunters under the same roof. We also must balance the need to adequately fund ODF&W. The same pressures are applied to ODF&W as any state agency and their budget must see increases to keep pace with rising costs.

ODF&W is somewhat caught between the proverbial rock and the hard spot, because they manage a resource over which they do not truly have control. While the fishery side of the coin has room for much expansion and, thus, some increase in revenue, the wildlife side is constrained by the wishes of the landowners who control 50 percent of this state. We have watched as the landowners have gone to the legislature and effectively neutered ODF&W's

big game populations on both the east side and west side of the state. With the legislature running the show, ODF&W has no gumption to stand up for the sportsmen who actually pay the bills. Now they have their hand out and we know, up front, that these fee increases will not provide increased opportunity; in fact they are needed to prevent cutting programs.

So how are we supposed to feel about all of this? From what I hear, a lot of people are not pleased. To pay more for what most sportsmen feel is less opportunity than in the recent past is offensive. We would like to see something for our money, and many are asking where this will end. ODF&W got fee increases in 1999. Are we to assume this is going to continue every other biennium? At this rate, by the year 2019 we will be paying \$311 for a combined hunting license, deer and elk tag and an angling harvest card. Another aspect to consider is that, while we are asked to pay more for the privilege, the amount of return is diminishing. Hunter success rates are dropping and anglers are not able to harvest as many fish per harvest card. Selling us less for more, is what I call it. The question is: How far will the sportsmen go along?

Did anybody else catch the picture of the man who may have shot the new world record Roosevelt Elk? It was taken in, of all places, the Willamette Valley! This big Roosevelt bull was found in a unit that is supposed to be an elk de-emphasis area, where ODF&W wants to severely reduce the number of animals. It sounds like there are other good bulls to be found down in the farmlands, but don't count on ever getting to hunt them, this is all private land. Besides, only

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