

**Letters, cont.**

**From page 3**

If you can't volunteer, PLEASE at least assist those who do so by voting YES on renewing the Columbia 9-1-1 levy.

**Deborah K. Brown  
Vernonia**

**Verizon policy may omit some rural DSL**

To the Editor:

Regarding your editorial concerning the seemingly contradictory information on DSL availability in Vernonia received by residents from different Verizon contacts, it is likely that both answers are, in a way, correct. Even though DSL may be available in Vernonia, that does not mean it is deployed to all those with a Vernonia telephone number.

In fact, senior Verizon representatives have often publicly stated that the company is intentionally limiting DSL deployment as a way of pressuring regulators to adopt rules which favor the company. For a recent example, see coverage of remarks made by their Sr. VP of public policy at <http://www.internetnews.com/xSP/article.php/3343081>

Another case in point: I have a 324 prefix Banks telephone number. DSL has been advertised as "available" in Banks for some time. It is not available to anyone in my neighborhood, however. Like many people in western Washington and Columbia counties, my telephone line does not connect me to the Banks Central Office, but instead to an intermediate piece of equipment referred to as a Remote Terminal (RT).

About a year ago, I noticed a Verizon crew doing some work on the RT equipment nearby. It appeared that they were installing a brand-spanking new one. As a communications engineer that has worked on DSL development for the past several years, this piqued my interest. One day I stopped to talk to them and they were kind enough to give me a brief "tour" of the new equipment. I recognized it as a state of the art, fiber-optic fed, broadband-capable RT. "It should really improve your telephone service," one of the technicians said. I asked, "what about DSL?." He looked me right in the eye and said his manage-

ment "won't let us" install DSL in RTs. He showed where in the equipment rack he could install the DSL cards, if he were allowed to do so. I wasn't the first person to ask him about DSL while he was out working in the field, but he elaborated that they are told by their employer that "we're not in the DSL business." He then mentioned some concern he heard that, if they did widespread deployment, they might have to lease some of the equipment to competitive DSL companies.

So it seems those speeches make by executives aren't just talk, but have real effect on the ground. It's a real shame. Broadband connectivity is becoming increasingly less of a luxury service, and more and more a vital requirement to stay fully in touch with this digital world. Callous decisions from companies such as Verizon about who will get service, and who will not, have a sharp negative impact on the economic vitality and livability of our region.

Sincerely,  
**Barry O'Mahony  
Banks**

**9-1-1 dispatching is an essential service**

To the Editor:

May 18th Columbia County voters can make a difference. We can vote to protect our lives and communities by voting YES on the 9-1-1 Operating Levy. To keep our system in place, not only must a majority of voters say YES to the levy, a majority of registered voters must actually vote. This is the infamous double majority requirement which we didn't achieve last November, despite an overwhelming 70 percent YES vote.

At a cost of \$54 for a \$100,000 home, this 9-1-1 coverage is a bargain. This is a slight reduction from the levy we are currently paying because our 9-1-1 system has held down costs. This service is essential to our safety and the system has earned your support. Ask your family and friends to vote YES on Measure 5-122 to renew our 9-1-1 system.

**Jim Tierney  
Vernonia**

More letters on page 24

**Ike Says . . .**

**From page 2**

these animals can't survive!"

Here's an easy to understand example of why the Marbled Murrelet, a sea bird that nests in ancient forests, is in trouble. Look out your window: Can you see a tree that is 200 feet tall with an open canopy and a branch 150 feet above the ground that is 16 inches in diameter? This is the murrelet's nesting requirement. I don't know about you, but I can't even see a tree 150 feet tall. Of course it's easy to dismiss this ocean bird as having little value.

Or, how about the spotted owl, which struggles to survive in a forest devoid of one of its primary food sources, the flying squirrel. Flying squirrels need large, old snags to live in and there are not many of these in the forest today. But more troubling are the interrelationships between the forests and the animals and insects that occupy the forests.

Take, for instance, the relationship between voles, deer mice, flying squirrels and trees. Without them, the forest would not exist. These rodents eat underground truffles that contain spores; they then expel spore-laden droppings onto the soil. When a tree seed germinates and penetrates one of these fecal pellets, the roots are inoculated with the spores, which form a fungus around the root tips in a symbiotic relationship that benefits both the fungus and the tree. In fact, most seedlings will not survive without this relationship. So, all of a sudden, deer mice, voles and flying squirrels become more important to us.

The book goes on to describe how Old Growth forests contribute to insects and, eventually, to itself, as trees die and slowly rot back into the soil from which they grew. It is troubling to think about the huge disconnect that human intervention has caused in natural forest recycling, since very few trees ever complete this cycle today. The question looms, can this go on forever?

If you are looking for a good book on the natural history of an Ancient Forest, I recommend this one. The book provides a human time-line of events to put the discussion in perspective. It also has extensive biological

information on various species of animals and insects that inhabit an ancient forest. This is a real eye opener!

Now, while many of you are thinking that my writing only confirms me as a green whacko, does the thought not exist, ever so slightly, in the back of your mind that we humans should leave some forests to do what they did thousands of years before us?

Look out your window, do you see one Old Growth tree? Have you not lost part of your heritage? Are our grandchil-

dren doomed to hi-tech gadgets and hanging out downtown? The answers will be written in the future history books. Will tomorrow's generations ask, "Didn't they understand what they were doing?" It will soon be up to you to answer that question.

**Izaak Walton League  
Nehalem Valley Chapter**  
meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Call 503-429-7193 for location of meeting.

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