

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

The need exists now; it's not getting better

United Way of Columbia County and Vernonia Cares both need funds and, because a lack of funds caused Vernonia Cares to close for several weeks, there are those who forget the broader purpose of United Way.

Among other activities, United Way provides about a third of the operating funds for Vernonia Cares. It also helps fund several programs headed by Community Action Team, including the county-wide Columbia Pacific Food Bank, assistance with energy bills and emergency housing needs, Child Care Resource & Referral, Even Start, and Caring Options Respite Care.

Beyond these programs, United Way of Columbia County helps fund Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Columbia Community Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol Prevention & Intervention programs in county schools, American Red Cross, Salvation Army and the Women's Resource Center. In other words, United Way of Columbia County is part of the glue that holds our society together.

United Way also helps in other ways: When they get a call about any need, they work to help find a solution. Perhaps it's finding someone who can clean gutters or trim a tree for a senior or disabled person. They also sponsor special events for a specific project such as providing school supplies for students throughout the county.

Nevertheless, fund raising is vital. Contributions may be made in a lump sum, through payroll deduction or automatic deduction from your bank account. If you work in another county, you may even ask that your payroll contribution be earmarked for Columbia County.

We can help Vernonia Cares with an immediate donation and still help with broader needs through small monthly donations to United Way of Columbia County. Our friends and neighbors need help and, together, we can help.

For more information, call United Way of Columbia County at 503-556-3614, or see their web site <<http://unitedway.colcenter.org>>. Contact information for Vernonia Cares may be found in the article on page 3.



Ike Says . . .

By Dale E. Webb, Member
Nehalem Valley Chapter, Izaak Walton League



This year, local deer hunters have had some of the best weather for hunting in many years. I have heard of a mixed bag of hunting success, though. One group of hunters took large blacktails starting on opening weekend and ended when four large bucks were all taken out of a small area. Other hunters have struggled to see even one deer per day. It appears that the deer population is fragmented into isolated groups. The hunters who are being successful are those who have found out where the hot spots are.

I really love these late days of fall, the leaves are just spectacular. It is weather like this that inspires me not only to hunt, but also to write a hunting story.

The sky was inky black and in the dull glow of the cab light, the man slowly made sure he had all his hunting gear in the pickup. There was a slight drizzle coming down from the heavens, the kind that could get you soaking wet by day's end. The hunter carefully drove to his favorite hunting spot not far from town, parking back a ways from where he would hunt so as not to alert the deer in the area. The sky was just turning dingy gray as the sun struggled over the curve of the earth. The hunter sat back in his seat in the early morning silence waiting for more shooting light before

he left his dry warm place. Soon he could see 50 yards down the old grass-covered spur he had parked on and he quietly slid from the pickup seat. Replacing his ball cap with his trusty felt hat, putting on his wool coat and fanny pack, the hunter was ready for a day afield.

There was a steady northwest breeze, which he had expected, and the drizzle was slowing as the sky turned lighter. Moving slowly up the road, the hunter used his visible breath to continue checking the wind direction. The morning dew on the grass held signs that something had been down the road before him. Small jack firs along the road showed that a buck had been through, not too long ago. The trees were missing limbs and the trunk bark was missing, the inner layer of the tree looking bright in the low light.

The hunter felt the wave of excitement come over him and a grin came across his face. Continuing slowly up the road, he was careful to scour the landscape before him; he just might get lucky and catch the old buck still in the road. Soon, the end of the road appeared and the hunter knew that, today, the buck was not going to be easy to take.

Having hunted here before, the hunter found the old cat road in the larger reprod patch of trees surrounding him. Slowly he worked his way uphill through low hanging limbs, scouting not only the limited line of sight on the cat road but the small openings interspersed along its length. There were some nice deer prints in the soft mud of the cat road, tracks that looked like they were

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