

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Not all donations are used as advertised

Now is the time to give generously to charities, but which ones? Some charities spend far more on administration and fund-raising than they do for their stated purpose.

Fortunately, there are resources with information that can help. The fifth annual report on nonprofits from the Oregon attorney general's office has information on some charities that are outstanding and others that spend far too much on fund-raising.

For instance, Portland-based Mercy Corps spends only 2.8 cents of every dollar it receives on fund-raising, and the American Red Cross Oregon Trail Chapter, spends just 3.7 cents.

Unfortunately, the Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association uses 82.6 cents of every dollar it receives for telemarketing and fund-raising, leaving only 17.4 cents for services and programs. Special Olympics Oregon is better, but not good, with about half of each dollar used for programs.

It would be wrong to use problem charities as an excuse to stop giving. While the idea of giving until it hurts is foolish, it makes sense to give where you know your gift can help.

When we donate to the Senior Center, Vernonia Cares or other local organizations, we know that those funds are well-used.

Information on charities that conduct nationwide solicitations is available on line from the following:

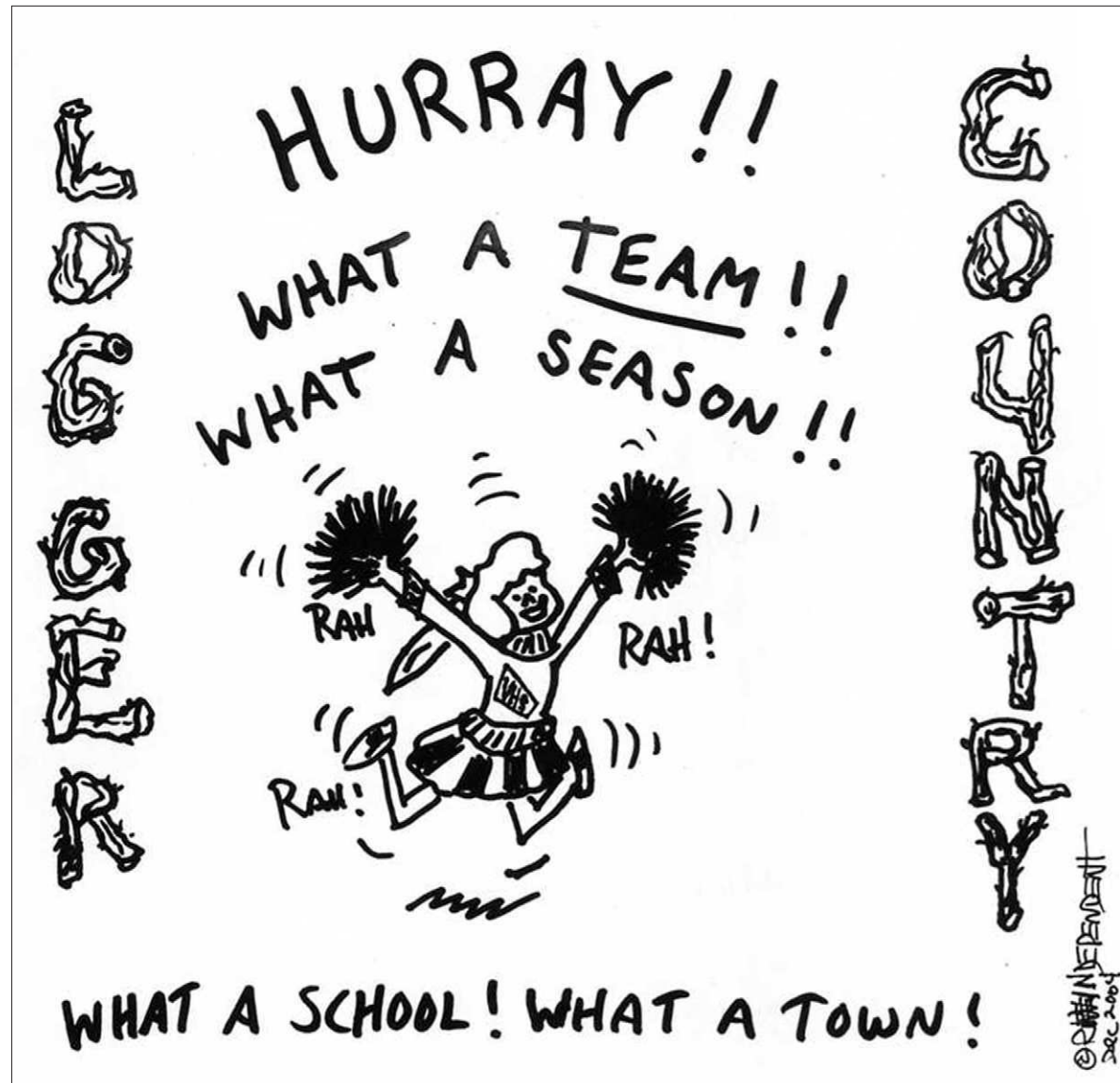
National Charities Information Bureau, <www.give.org>
 American Inst. of Philanthropy, <www.charitywatch.org>

For information about a specific charity in Oregon, call the Charitable Activities Section of the Oregon Department of Justice at 503-229-5725.

Great attitude, great team

Congratulations are due the Vernonia High School football team, but not just for their winning percentage.

This team – players and volunteer coaches – set a high standard for work ethic and responsibility. They can look back at this season and honestly say, “We did our best.”



Ike Says . . .

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



Well it has been a busy last month! Many of you may have heard about the cougar attack in the Riverside Drive trailer park. My house is almost in sight of the area that the attack occurred. Jim Walters, from the Vernonia Police Department, informed me of the episode and I decided to investigate further. My father owns the land next to the trailer park and it was the obvious avenue to the attack area. Dad had done some recent logging and the ground was muddy...ideal conditions for tracking. Sure enough, there were cat tracks on one of his skid roads. While I am no expert in cat tracks, I do know that cats retract their claws while walking. These tracks were definitely cat. The tracks were also round in appearance, but were not real large. I have seen cougar tracks in Eastern Oregon and they were a lot larger than the tracks in the mud. My guess is that the tracks were made by a very big bobcat or a young cougar.

Mysteriously a few days after the cougar incident, a coyote started hanging around local houses. The coyote was so brazen that I caught it bedding down on my front lawn three times one evening. The coyote had a bad hind leg and looked in poor shape. After about a week of hanging around the local area, the coyote finally

disappeared, probably for good.

Bull elk season is over for this year. It was hard to get a real feel for overall success, but it appears that both seasons were a little slow, although some nice bulls were taken. I spent a lot of time scouting and hunting elk this year. Luck was not with me, as I never saw a branch bull during the season. Most years while scouting, I see tracks but not the animals; this year was the reverse. In three days of scouting I saw 65 elk and two branch antlered bulls. I bedded down a herd the night before the season but I wasn't sure the bull was with them because I was more than 3/4 of a mile away.

I started the elk season early in order to walk into the clear cut the elk were last seen in. As daylight broke I was there, carefully slipping up the logging road that bisected the clear cut. After about an hour of looking around, I discovered the elk had been in a small timber patch right next to the road I had walked in on. The elk heard me and waited for me to pass, then they busted across my backtracks. Ironically, they passed within sight of where I had parked my pickup. I chased the herd around the rest of the day, but the weather was not cooperating so it was next to impossible to get close.

The weather this year was not good for hunting elk. While opening weekend was cold, which produced a lot of fog, the rest of the season was warm. Elk tend to not feed as actively when the temperature is warm, so most of the herds that I encountered were bedded. Bedded elk are real-