

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

The INDEPENDENT looks at two decades

There are some little numbers on newspapers that mean nothing to most people. They are usually under the banner on page one, as in *The INDEPENDENT*. In this case they now say Vol. 20, No. 1, shorthand that means this is the first issue of the 20th year of publication for *The INDEPENDENT*.

A lot has happened in two decades. The work force has changed. Vernonia now has more people who work in the high tech industry than in the timber industry. Timber hasn't lost its importance in our economy, but mechanization (yes, high tech mechanization) simply requires fewer people.

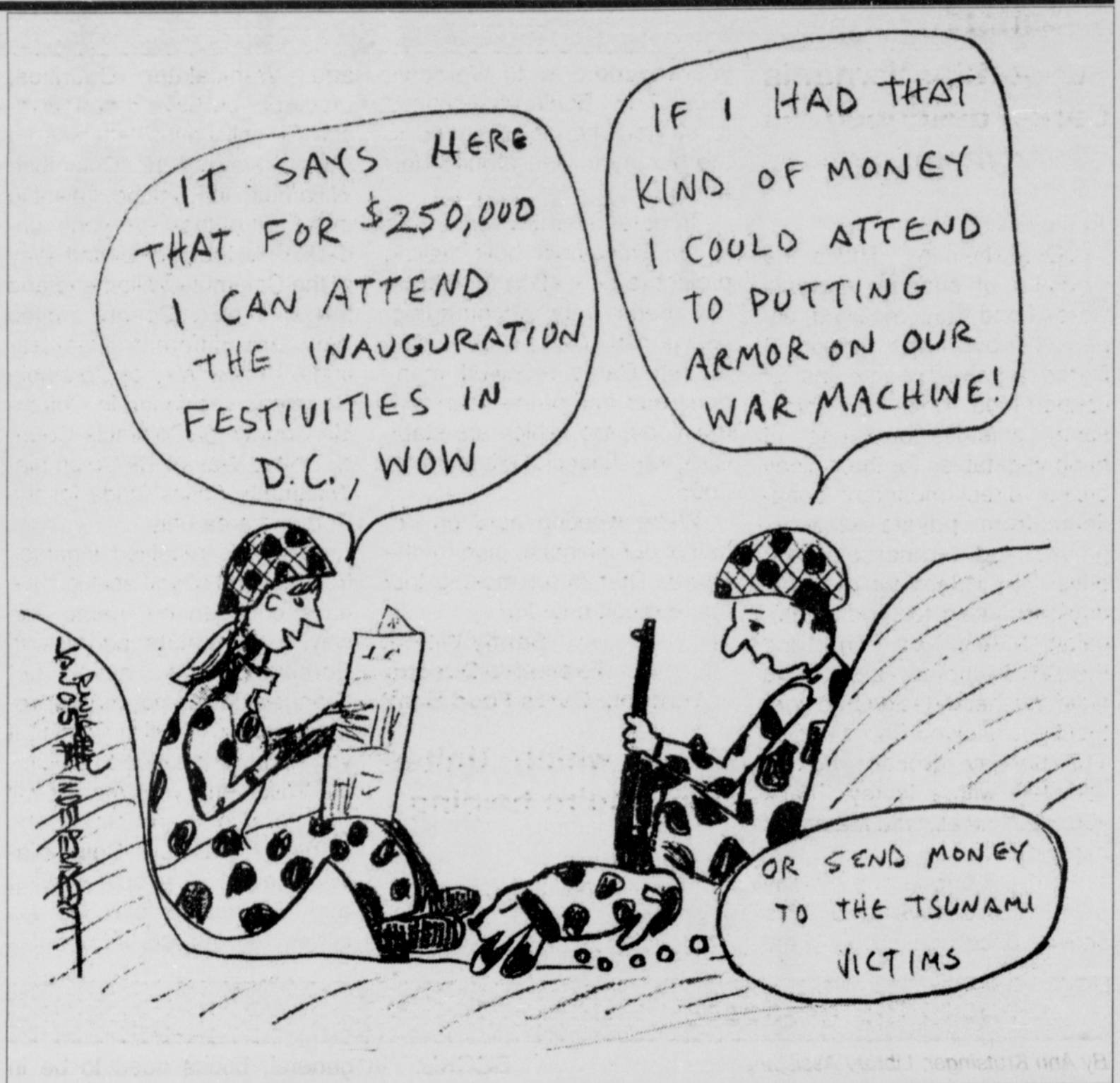
City government has had to become a lot more professional than it was 20 years ago and volunteers in city government have become proficient in areas they had never previously considered. Grants have helped change the face of downtown, but it is the people who have had the vision needed to, not just grab opportunity as it passes by, but actively seek it.

Outdoor recreation, always enjoyed by local residents, now attracts visitors from other areas. We recall the distress, the fear of change, when a few people pushed hard to develop the Banks-Vernonia Linear Trail. The idea of inviting strangers to play in our backyard was genuinely disturbing to many area residents. Now we are looking forward to extending the trail in the other direction, to Scappoose!

In 1996, 60 percent of our homes were flooded – and the doors of the other 40 percent were opened to those who needed a place to live.

A lot has happened in nearly two decades, and there are some very important people who have made it possible to continue reporting on events in the Nehalem valley — advertisers!

We are grateful for their support and urge our readers to tell them "thank you" for bringing news of births, deaths, church services, police blotters, civic meetings, school activities, court reports, parades, traffic problems, sports activities, organizations, entertainment, government, letters, community calendar and everything else in this free community newspaper – for the past 19 years.



Ike Says . . .

By Dale Webb, member
Nehalem Valley Chapter, Izaak Walton League



In my last column I included a sportsmen's quiz that had some rather pointed questions, unknowingly, they were more on target than I anticipated. The questions hit so close to home for some members of our community that they have accused

me of being the one who turned them in for committing big game offenses. Let me set the record straight: It was not I but, if I had seen or had first-hand knowledge of the offenses, it would have been. I make no bones about where I stand on sportsmanship in the field and nobody should take it personally when they run afoul of me or the other true sportspeople in the field. Get it straight! It is we who have been offended.

It also seems that crime in our area is having an impact on local sportspeople. I kayaked the Nehalem River the other day and took out at the Green Steel Bridge. I noticed that somebody has stolen the small cable block hanging off the telephone post that Owen East put up years ago for local fishermen to use when winching their drift boats out of the river. Without the block it will make retrieving boats more difficult. I will see about trying to get it replaced.

Criminals struck again at the only shooting range in our area. It seems somebody decided that the spotting scope that was donated by

Leopold after the flood of 1996 destroyed our old one, was too nice to pass up. If you see somebody with an ugly looking, gold spray-painted Leopold 20X50 variable spotting scope, turn him or her in! Now locals will have to do a little more walking back and forth from the target to see where they are hitting the target. It is interesting that the scope stayed unlocked for all these years. It was truly the honor system, but I guess the honor has left some people in Vernonia. It is amazing to me that someone would steal from people that they know own guns, now that is real smart!

I got flagged down the other day when I was down at City Hall. It was Maggie Peyton and she had to show me the Coho Salmon that were swimming around in the pool at Betty Wall's. Bear Creek is still chugging along trying to produce fish for the future.

I recently attended an Oregon Hunters Association meeting with my friend Jim King. Jim had invited me because the guest speaker was a graduate student from Oregon State University who had just completed a study to see if Hair Loss Syndrome will pass to Mule deer. It was a very interesting presentation, even though I had already heard or read about some of it. The results of the study show that Mule deer are susceptible to HLS, although none of the Mule deer in the study ended up showing the actual loss of hair that is common in local deer. The reason is thought to be the high protein diet that the deer in the study were fed. Deer on a high protein diet

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