

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Let the Christmas season be joyous with simplicity

Shopping for Christmas presents can exhaust both your body and your bank account, but there really are ways to make the whole season more enjoyable.

For instance, it isn't necessary to spend hours – and gallons of gas – in your car. We who are lucky enough to live in small towns should first take a good look at what is available at home.

Vernonia has many businesses now. There are very good antique and gift shops; excellent teas, coffees and specialty food items are available; choices are abundant for household goods, automotive equipment and accessories, as well as pet and garden supplies. Other businesses include children's clothing, games and toys; computers and other electronics, including cell phones; a flower shop; a family clothing store, a saddle shop that also does leather repairs, and a jewelry store.

Banks may have fewer shops, but a variety of good quality merchandise is available right in town. Incidentally, don't drive too fast through Manning, or you'll miss a few gems there, too.

You can also take advantage of the many service businesses in your area with gift certificates for a massage, hair styling or a soothing pedicure. How about a gift certificate for an oil change or a car wash, or for dog grooming?

If you know a reader who lives outside city limits, giving one year's fee to a city library would make a great gift. Someone who is concerned about physical fitness would be delighted with a gift certificate to a local gym or fitness program.

Other readily available presents could be gift certificates to restaurants, especially if the gift included an evening of baby sitting, as well.

Speaking of baby sitting, some of the most loving gifts you can give to those you care about will cost nothing but time and energy. Personal gift certificates for window washing, gutter cleaning, vacuuming, mopping, dog walking, lawn mowing, weeding, or other tasks that are physically difficult for some, are truly wonderful gifts that show you care.

Christmas should be a time of warmth and joy, not a competition to see who can do the best job of exhausting both their bodies and their bank accounts.

Take a good look close to home, it's worth it.



Ike Says . . .

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



It is that time of year again, the slow time, hunting seasons are winding down and, hopefully, meat is in the freezer. What I'm hearing from the field this year is that things were comparable to the past, which means deer season in our area was slow at

best. Elk season seemed a little slower this year during both rifle seasons, we will have to wait and see what the stats show.

Speaking of stats, next year all hunters will be asked to report their success, or lack of, for each species that they hunt. This is good news; statistics are a very important part of managing wildlife, without those facts, mistakes can and have been made. Previously, hunts that involved lots of hunters had good statistics because large enough samples of hunters were called. The degree of accuracy become more questionable in hunts with fewer hunters. The new system should solve this problem and not be a burden on sportsmen. It sounds like there will be three options for reporting your harvest – phone, computer and POS locations. The first year will be voluntary, but expect the reporting requirement to become mandatory in the future.

I hunted the second rifle elk season in the Saddle Mountain unit this year. I managed to be successful, taking a bull on Thanksgiving Day. I

even managed to get home in time for dinner! I have been fairly successful hunting elk and many people wonder what it takes to get a bull elk. First, I would have to give a large share of the credit to my father; through his instruction and mentoring I have developed a successful strategy that seems to work. Of course I have added my own twist to hunting, as each individual always will.

So what does it take to be successful at hunting elk? First, persistence has to be at the top of the list. Hunting is a lot like fishing, if your hook isn't in the water, you cannot catch a fish. So you have to plan on being in the field, daylight to dark. In order to do this, you have to be comfortable, which means the right clothing, boots, pants, coat and hat. This year, the season was extremely wet, which meant having clothing that kept you dry. I have been wearing Cabelas Dry plus pants and pullover top; it is incredible how resistant to rain this material is. At times I felt like I was getting wet, but this was mostly from sweat on the inside, once slowed down and cooled off, the wetness went away. At the end of the day, I always felt dry. Boots are one of the most important articles of clothing a sportsman will wear, they have to be tough, have good traction and keep your feet warm and dry. This is a tall order and most boots will fail this test. I have had great success with a combination type boot that has rubber bottoms and leather uppers. I did not have a day this year that my feet felt wet. Lastly, a hunter needs a good hat; because I

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