

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Around and around we go!

The INDEPENDENT has unintentionally angered City Hall. We are not exactly sure what we did, but after what we thought would be a productive meeting with Interim City Administrator Aldie Howard, to open a meaningful dialog and attempt to improve our relationship with City Hall, the meeting suddenly turned bad when we brought up our public record request for the city audit. That subject resulted in Howard making an attempt to intimidate us with insults and yelling. Howard followed up the next day by informing the Chief of Police that he could no longer submit his "Did You Know" column to *The INDEPENDENT*.

Apparently discussing issues such as what laws the city feels they can ignore (like some of those regarding public records, public meetings and laws governing city officers) while passing laws (ordinances) that we citizens have to abide by is just too upsetting for Howard. Since he keeps reminding us he studied journalism, we just naturally assumed he would be more aware of a newspaper's role as the eyes and ears of the community and the community's designated question askers. And, who would think he would not understand that the role of government is to serve the people and to be open and transparent with their business, which is really your business.

When asked why he pulled the column, Howard responded by saying until *The INDEPENDENT* gets more positive and less negative, we won't get anything from the city. Asked for particulars, his response was, "You're kidding, every article has a negative slant." Pretty amazing since we don't even write every article. We even asked him to mark all of the negatives in one of our papers to help us identify where his perception is stemming from. Really! So far, he hasn't done so.

Okay, next we figured we'd best let Mayor Sally Harrison know that our attempt to improve our relationship with city staff went awry. We called Harrison and told her about trying to get the audit (see story page 1) and about Howard pulling the column and the reason he gave. Harrison's response, "That's not going to happen, that column is for the community." Good answer, Mayor. She said she'd tell Howard not to pull the column. As of now, no column. Next Harrison says, "Well, it will be back in for the next issue." Really?

Howard also said the only reason we want the audit is, "to find more to bash the city with." Does he know something we don't?

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Ike Says . . .

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



Wolves, love them or hate them, they are coming to Oregon. In fact, it is said there are several on our side of the Snake River now. You have probably read in the news that the Wolf is slated to be removed from the Endangered Species Act in the near future, well maybe. Lawsuits are now being filed by some of the very same environmental groups that belied up to the table and helped forge the original plan for the wolf's recovery. Now they want to change the plan, they want to keep the wolves protected under the ESA and further the expansion of the wolf population. This only confirms the predictions that many sportsmen and cattle groups stated from the beginning.

Biologically, the wolves have been recovered since 2002 (approximately 325 wolves), what has held up the delisting process was the state of Wyoming, which fought for and won a more restrictive wolf recovery plan than its neighboring states. In the meantime, the wolf population has exploded to approximately 1500 wolves. Idaho is catching the brunt of the recovery effort. The recovery area for the Grey wolf includes Montana, Wyoming, Idaho and the Eastern half of both Washington and Oregon. Oregon has its own ESA listing and a recovery plan for wolves, so

even if the wolf is delisted federally, they will still be protected in Oregon until they are deemed recovered under our state plan, which is basically 8 breeding pairs (probably under 100 wolves). Once the wolf is federally delisted, management of the wolves will be a state function and control will surely be through hunting. This is probably what is sticking in the craws of the environmental groups, many of which are against hunting in the first place. But we all knew that to begin with. The Federal Wildlife Service will continue to monitor wolf populations, to be sure states stay within the ESA guidelines. If wolves are again endangered, the federal government has an emergency clause that can be used to relist the wolf.

Why is this a contentious issue? Well, sportsmen view wolves as competition for game animals. The fact is we both like to eat the same prey animals; the wolves are way more efficient than sportsmen and this is a threat felt by sportsmen. Many sportsmen view the wolf reintroduction as a way to gradually crowd hunting out as a management tool. There is truth in that feeling. One of the first places that the wolves were introduced was in Yellowstone National Park. There is a herd of elk that lives in the northern part of the park and winters outside the park boundary to the north. This herd has supplied sportsmen with hunting for a long time. I'm sure some would say that we should not be hunting park animals, but they must have forgotten the sharp shooters that were employed by the park service years

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