

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Graduates have choices

This weekend at Vernonia High School, 55 young men and women will walk across the stage to pick up their diplomas. From that point on, they will find that life is full of choices.

Some of the grads will go to college to get a two year degree, some will end up with Ph.D's. Some will go straight to work in a chosen field, some will just luck into a job that suits them, some will have many jobs before finding their niche in the working world. Some will get married and raise families, some won't.

Perhaps the most important assets we could hope they have are inquiring, open minds. Life long learning is more interesting than reality T.V., really.

We hope every grad makes choices that bring them many true friends, loving families and satisfying careers. And, we hope they'll decide to give back to their community by volunteerism. Join the boosters, run for city council, the list could go on and on. The rewards for volunteerism are great, try it and see.

Some, unfortunately, will become involved in drugs (heroin use is on the rise right now, and that's not good) or crime and will be lost to their families and friends. But, even those who go down really bad roads can find their way back – as long as there is life, there is hope.

Here's hoping that all the grads will stay safe while they pursue whatever their dreams. Don't drink and drive, and don't get in the car with any driver who has been drinking or doing drugs. There are plenty of other 'risky' behaviors that are better avoided. Make good choices.

This Vernonia class has the dubious distinction of having started school in one flood school year (1996) and graduating in another flood school year (2007). May they have learned to handle adversity from this.

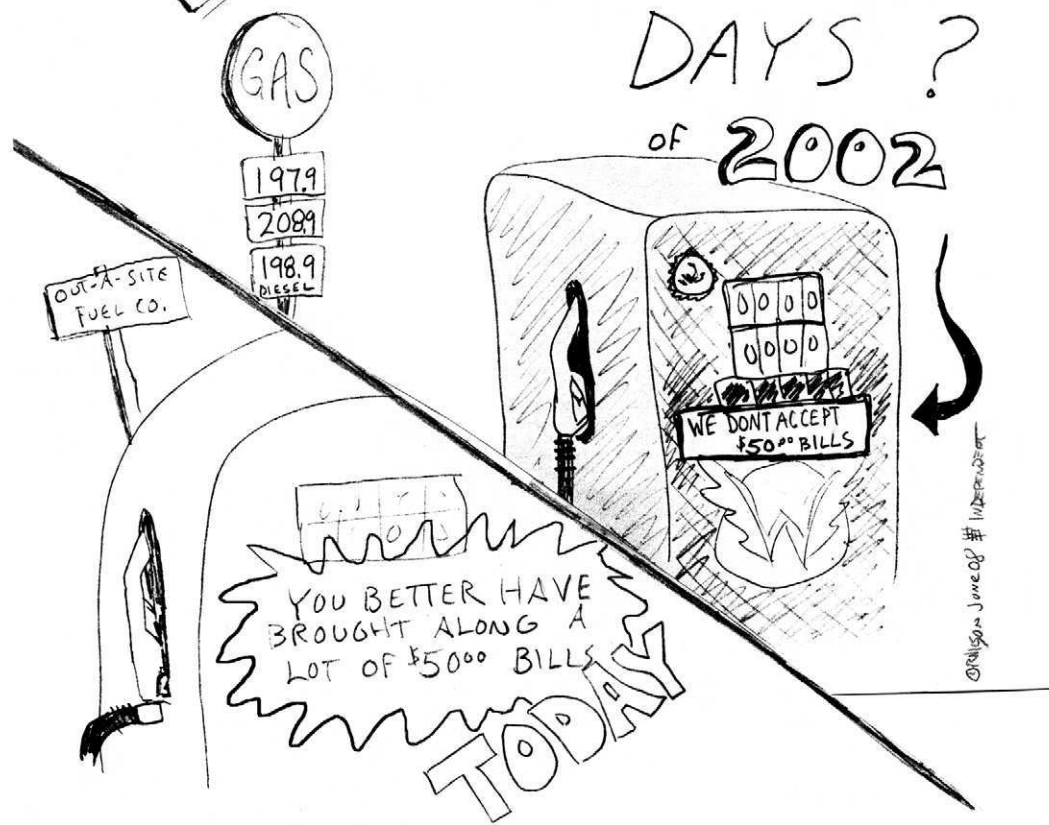
City does good, but badly

Kudos to Vernonia's Mayor and Council for finding a professional, qualified, interim city administrator. Jim Johnson has already shown an ability to calmly steer the ship away from the reefs.

But, Shame on the Mayor and Council for once again putting the cart before the horse. There was no public process or discussion of this hiring, so it appears they made some decisions outside of the public meeting process. Then, they announced the hiring before voting on the contract. We hope things improve from here.

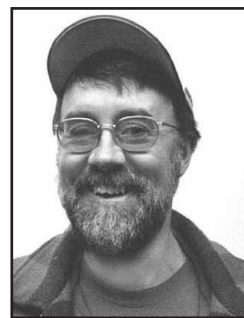
REMEMBER

THE GOOD OL'
DAYS?
of 2002



Ike Says . . .

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



The sky is slightly overcast as you drift down the Nehalem River, your son's eyes dancing from spot to spot on the river, looking for that perfect place to cast his lure. Here you are, opening day of trout season! For many this is an annual event, one ingrained and passed on from father to son/daughter for several generations. I can almost guarantee a discussion of "how it used to be" will come up. The fishing was great back in the old days, lots of trout and big ones to boot...then limits started being imposed and were continually ratcheted down, until today, you can no longer keep any Cutthroat Trout. Then the son or daughter in the boat will ask, "Gee Dad, why can't we keep any trout, we're catching lots?? Most Dads can't answer that question, me included!!

That will almost, but not quite, be true again this year. Yep, there is a proposal this year to allow the retention of a few Cutthroat Trout in the North coastal streams. Unfortunately, this proposal was not well crafted and is creating a lot of opposition, most of it warranted. The crux of the problem is that Sea-run Cutthroat Trout are mixed in with resident fish and the Sea-run Cutthroat population is depressed and warrants pro-

tection. The proposed regulation change would allow keeping two trout with an eight-inch minimum size. Unfortunately that is too short to protect Sea-run Cutthroat Trout smolts, which can be as much as 11 inches long. The proposal would also allow retention in the fall when Sea-run Cutthroat Trout are in the rivers. We definitely should not catch any adult Sea-run Cutthroat Trout. What should be proposed is a two-fish limit, 12" long and above, and a retention season to the end of July. I expect the current proposal to die a very ungracious death at the rules adoption meeting before the ODF&W commission.

What is more disturbing about this proposed change is the amount of opposition that has come from the catch and release crowd. While catch and release is an appropriate method of limiting harvest on fish runs that cannot sustain a harvest fishery, it has now become a way of excluding people from fisheries and promoting a "trophy" fishery. Since the C&R fisherpersons are usually very dedicated to "their" fishery they are also very vocal. The average Joe who wants to take the kids out and catch some quality trout on one weekend out of the year is simply drowned out by the C&R crowd. What is more disturbing though, is using "conservation" to keep a consumptive fishery from becoming a reality. Yet, these same people can often be found exploiting the very fish they want to keep other people from impacting. A prime example in this debate: The C&R crowd do not think a consumptive Cutthroat Trout fishery is warranted due to the impact on

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