

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

New faces for Vernonia

A close election, like this year's race for Oregon governor, often indicates a lot of indecision on the part of the electorate. The opposite, an election that leaves no doubts about what the voters think, just occurred in Vernonia.

In a four-way race for mayor, Josette Mitchell received 342 votes, more than twice the 150 votes that went to two-term incumbent Sally Harrison, making it abundantly clear that voters want something different. Challengers also won the two open council positions by large margins, with Willow Burch getting 423 votes and Marilyn Nicks receiving 305, to 109 votes for recently appointed (and little-known) incumbent Catherine Helmer, and well-known incumbent Cindy Ball's 68 ballots.

The question now, of course, is what will be different? The answer can't be known until the new members join current councilors Randy Parrow and Kevin Hudson in January.

It is likely that accurate budgeting and fiscal responsibility are voters' goals, since Mitchell has demonstrated her commitment to these goals as chairman of the city budget committee, then by following through with an ad hoc budget panel that is trying to maintain the fiscal sanity that has been sorely missing in Vernonia government for too long.

Both Burch and Nicks are downtown business owners and, naturally, are concerned about local business. But they will also have to demonstrate an understanding of the many other elements involved in "governing".

Regardless, both winners and losers in any election deserve thanks from the rest of us. It isn't easy to put yourself in front of the public and say "I can do the job. Vote for me."

Banks school bond defeated

Voters in the Banks School District said no to a bond measure for school improvements. It is hard to know whether it is the uncertain economy that caused the bond failure, or whether the majority feel that the improvements were not needed.

After more than a year of study, public meetings and tremendous effort, the result must be disheartening to those who worked so hard to pass the bond. Although it will be hard for many to revisit, it is important to make an effort to find out why the bond was unsuccessful.



Ike Says . . .

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



The local rivers finished off the summer a little on the low side for water flow, but it appears no harm was caused to the fish. With the recent rains, the rivers have again shot up to levels that exceed the norm. We should have a high level of survival this year for salmonids due to the cool summer water temperatures, now we have to get them through the winter. Let's hope for another mild winter, but it sure doesn't look like it is shaping up to be mild.

Deer hunting locally started off slow, but what's new; it has probably been several decades since we actually had a deer population that would supply a good opener. It sounds like the harvest has picked up a bit at the back end of the season, but again, that is no surprise, it always does. With the bucks going into the rut they become far more vulnerable. I have also noticed more deer movement in the last couple of weeks as witnessed in road kills on my way to work. I saw one deer hit in the opposite lane on highway 30, that was getting a little too close for comfort. I have also been witnessing people driving excessively fast on highway 47. I really doubt that going 70 mph is going to give a person much of a chance to react to a deer stepping out into your travel lane. Maybe ODF&W should

start charging for the animals that are struck by careless drivers?

Elk hunting season is just around the corner, all indicators show it will be another good season in our area. Despite the recent cut in rifle elk hunting tags in the Saddle Mt. unit, sportspeople took more bulls last year, and the second season tag holders actually pushed the success rate up to 20%. I was happy to help in that regard! Rifle hunters need to be on guard though, who knows what ODF&W will propose to do next in their misguided quest to lower the bull harvest. Let's not let them keep cutting our tags, give Herman Biederbeck (503-842-2741) a call and let him know that the rifle hunters have been cut enough both in tags and season length.

The preliminary word from eastern Oregon in regards to deer hunting this year was dismal in a general view. Of course there is always somebody with a honey hole or private ranch ground who thinks everything is just fine, but that is a very narrow view of a very big state. My own personal and limited view was the same as other recent views. I perceive a deer herd on the decline, shrinking down to key core areas, female deer having lots of fawns but very few surviving to recruit into the herds. Hunter numbers far exceed the ability of the herds to produce mature bucks and predator numbers are continuing to climb. This year, our hunting party of three never saw a single legal buck and, with a legal buck being one with a visible antler, that is plain pathetic! What I did see was, the farther I went

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