

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Graduates have choices

This past weekend at Vernonia High School, 65 young men and women walked across the stage to pick up their diplomas. This Friday, Banks High School seniors will have their graduation ceremonies. 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.Ds. 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 T.V., really.

We hope every graduate 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 of volunteerism are great, try it and see.

Some, unfortunately, will become involved in drugs 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.

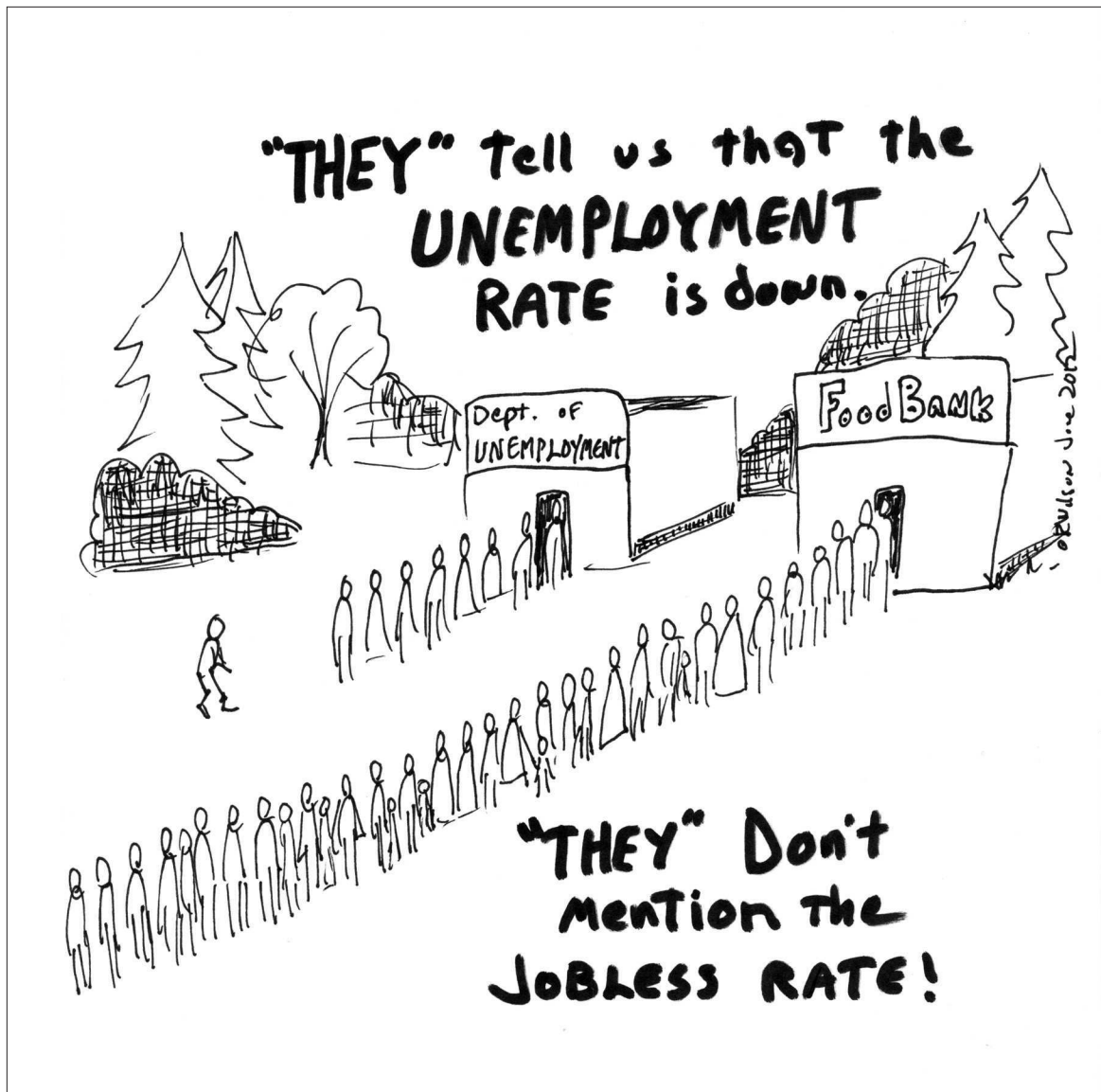
Here's hoping that all the grads will stay safe while they pursue whatever their dreams. Don't drink and drive, and don't get in the car with any driver who has been drinking or doing drugs. There are plenty of other 'risky' behaviors that are better avoided, too. To the best of your ability, make good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

In Vernonia, the Class of 2012 has the distinction of being the last class to graduate from the old high school. The Class of 2013 will be the first class to graduate from the new K-12 school.

Wherever the winds of fortune take the 2012 graduates, we wish them a happy, healthy life.

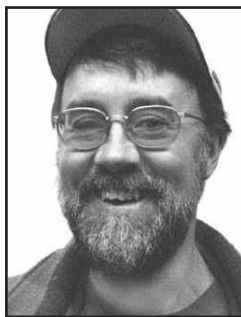
Sewer/water cost increases

Vernonia City Council approved a resolution (see related article on page 1) to raise the sewer loan fee by \$19.00, from \$12.00 to \$31.00. That means the minimum bill for sewer and water (only 2,000 gallons) will now be \$122.00 per month. These rates are going to hurt most of the population. Since these rates are driven by government mandate, it's time for our government to stop making unfunded mandates. Perhaps infrastructure improvement projects should be the next federal jobs program.



Ike Says . . .

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



Here is one last comment about being green before we get back to hunting and fishing. Being green can be expensive. Being that I did not agree with how our water rates were changed, it has become a matter of principle for me to reduce my usage, not only to save water, but also to point out through financial means why the rate structure is flawed. One of my conservation measures was to install a rainwater car washing system. I installed a 100-gallon stock tank, a submersible pump, hose with nozzle and a new extension core to power the pump. In doing the math for the break-even point, I will have to wash 3,494 cars at 15 gallons per car wash. I would suggest that anybody going this route, get used and free materials if you are going to make it pay, otherwise it will be only about the principle of the matter.

Let's talk some hunting! Yes, the controlled hunt draws are in the mail. There will be winners and lots of losers this year. The ODF&W commissioners will be adopting some more reductions to tag numbers across the state, but nothing drastic. Eastern Oregon for deer and elk will be pretty much static in regards to tags issued. Many of us find that a little hard to believe in light of the continued decline in perceived animal numbers, but time will tell. On the wet side of the

state we will see reduced antlerless deer opportunity, especially here in the Northwest corner of the state. The commissioners are expected to adopt the staff recommendation to reduce rifle antlerless deer tag numbers from 100 to 20 in the Saddle Mt. unit. Scappoose rifle antlerless deer will drop from 50 to 20 and the same for the Wilson unit. Archers will be restricted to bucks only in the Saddle Mt., Wilson and Scappoose units. Disabled hunters will also be restricted to bucks only in the three above units. Youth antlerless hunts will be unaffected and will remain at 50 tags in each of these units.

All I can say is that somebody in Salem is finally listening to the people who live in these units. I know a concerned local sportsman called me last year asking what he should do about the low deer numbers and I suggested writing a letter to the commissioners and not pulling any punches, that must have been a great letter! This person walks logging roads almost everyday to stay in shape and, being that he is a great outdoorsman, he is always keeping an eye on the wildlife. Over the years, he has witnessed the steady decline in our deer population and has reached the point of being outraged about the harvest of antlerless deer. B.H. good job!

I read an interesting article from Montana the other day regarding wolves and cougars. Many experts have predicted that wolves will reduce cougar populations in the area that they occupy, but that seems to come at a cost. The article described a radio-collaring program that Montana is using to help monitor wolf packs, and

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