

# THE INKWELL

By Lynn Berry

The warm sun is finally making its spotted appearance this season, and being so sun-starved, I seriously dread yet another drop of rain. However, after reading local resident Steve Calhoun's poem below, I was reminded how the gray clouds and the rain are so essential, not only to the nature around us, but also to the nature within us. We too experience our own cycles of gray clouds and rain in our lives, in which adversity, like the rain, has a purpose and a function. The hardships we walk through have the potential to soften and awaken new possibilities for understanding, acceptance, courage, and hope. In moving through the difficult times in our lives, we find the gifts of our character and our growth. Living with the long season of rain in Northwest Oregon, we learn that the sun will eventually return to our lives.

Calhoun's poem, "Rain," sings an ancient song of life: constant change and elemental rhythms of time. Using images of the cycle of rain to its eventual passage to the sea, Calhoun expresses an awe for nature's simple dramatic patterns, separating us from our hurried lives, moving us to the march of nature's unending journey.

## Rain

Gathering clouds, rolling thunder  
An announcement of things to  
come.

Life's pace takes a change  
Animals scurry, a place of  
shelter to find.

A dewy mist fills the air  
It kisses the earth with a sweet  
caress

Enveloping every leaf and blade  
of grass,  
with its cool freshness  
The lifeblood of all living things

From little brooks  
to merging streams  
an age old song is played  
of water running over  
rocks

It sings its song, to those who  
hear  
earth elements on the move.  
Blending and making their way  
Their journey to the sea they  
seek.

At long last  
fresh water blends with the sea  
Its journey to start yet anew  
The circle of life is complete.  
-----Steve Calhoun

---**Writer's Idea:** Begin a poem with the first words, "I am....." and continue creating your poem. "You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement" -----Woodrow Wilson.

---**Writer's Tip:** Don't have time to write? Sometimes creativity comes through us in "snippets" rather than lengthy composition. Write during breakfast; write while waiting for an appointment; write while drinking your coffee; write instead of smoking that cigarette; get up 10 minutes early and write; stay up an extra 10 minutes and write; write during a TV commercial; write while your child is napping; write when the boss isn't looking; find the space to write everyday...you get the idea, no excuses.

---Please send your original submissions to, (or if you would like a copy of any of the published poems in their entirety), InkwellVernonia@gmail.com or by mail: PO Box 333 Vernonia, OR 97064. Please include your name and contact information. Write—Express—Expand.


Lynn Berry holds an M.A. in English, specializing in feminist literature and literary criticism. She has spent several years teaching Literature, Composition, Poetry, Creative Writing, and Critical Thinking at various school districts and colleges, and occasionally provides writing workshops.

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## Vernonia Council Terminates Contract *continued from page 12*

has been stressed or strained for quite some time now. And from where I'm sitting it just seems to be degrading as time goes on. And that was the basis for my vote."

Councilor Parrow spoke and stated that he wanted the three Councilors to know that Vernonia had state agencies working with them through Bill Haack. "It really boiled down to is these pieces of paper about a police officer. We have one very close personal friend who should have never voted on anything. Another Councilor who is very close to him. Talk about conflict of interest."

Parrow closed his comments with the following, "Vernonia—this was our chance. And you three people blew that chance."

At a special Council meeting on

Friday May 6, 2011 at 1:00 PM, Council could not agree on a plan to transition and replace Haack until a permanent City Administrator is hired. Councilor Hudson suggested contacting the LOC to see if the search process could be expedited, and also suggested filling the temporarily position with someone locally, mentioning as possibilities Mayor Mitchell, City Recorder Joanne Glass, Planning Commissioner Dan Brown and citizen Jim Tierney. All four of those people have been advocates for hiring Haack as the permanent City Administrator. Hudson also mentioned that Consultant Jim Johnson could be retained to assist the City part-time.


Mayor Mitchell suggested that one of the Councilors could change their vote to terminate Haack immediately and they could terminate him on June 15, 2011; the required two weeks' notice would keep him in Vernonia until the end of the month. That would allow Haack to be responsible for any transition. Mitchell suggested that the Ordinance that governs the City Administrator's authority could be revised to limit Haack's powers while he finishes his work. No Councilor chose to exercise this option.

According to sources, Haack has already been offered a position with Columbia County Emergency Management, but said he could be available to stay until June 30th if asked.

The decision was tabled and another Special Meeting was scheduled for 7:00 PM on Monday May 9, 2011, following a Council Workshop with the LOC at 6:00 PM to review potential candidates for the permanent City Administrator position.

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