

# The INDEPENDENT

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## Opinion

### Flood of 1996 was a call for good planning

Vernonia had an emergency plan when the Flood of '96 arrived. It was used as much as possible, but the most useful element of that plan was that it taught our community that we needed a better plan.

Columbia County, and most communities in the county, put off that task as long as possible, even though it was required by FEMA and the state Office of Emergency Management.

Vernonia did just the opposite. After the most urgent needs were taken care of, a group of citizens sat down and brainstormed about what should be incorporated in such a plan. Then Fire District and City staff started putting those ideas together in a comprehensive plan. That plan was amended more than once before it was sent to the state.

Then there was an unanticipated occurrence:

Vernonia had the first plan in the entire state of Oregon that was approved by the Office of Emergency Management!

This was the result of an aggressive approach to the crisis we had survived, with the intent of being able to manage whatever catastrophe might occur in the future. That is still Vernonia's approach. The emergency response plan is updated every year and more people are trained every year.

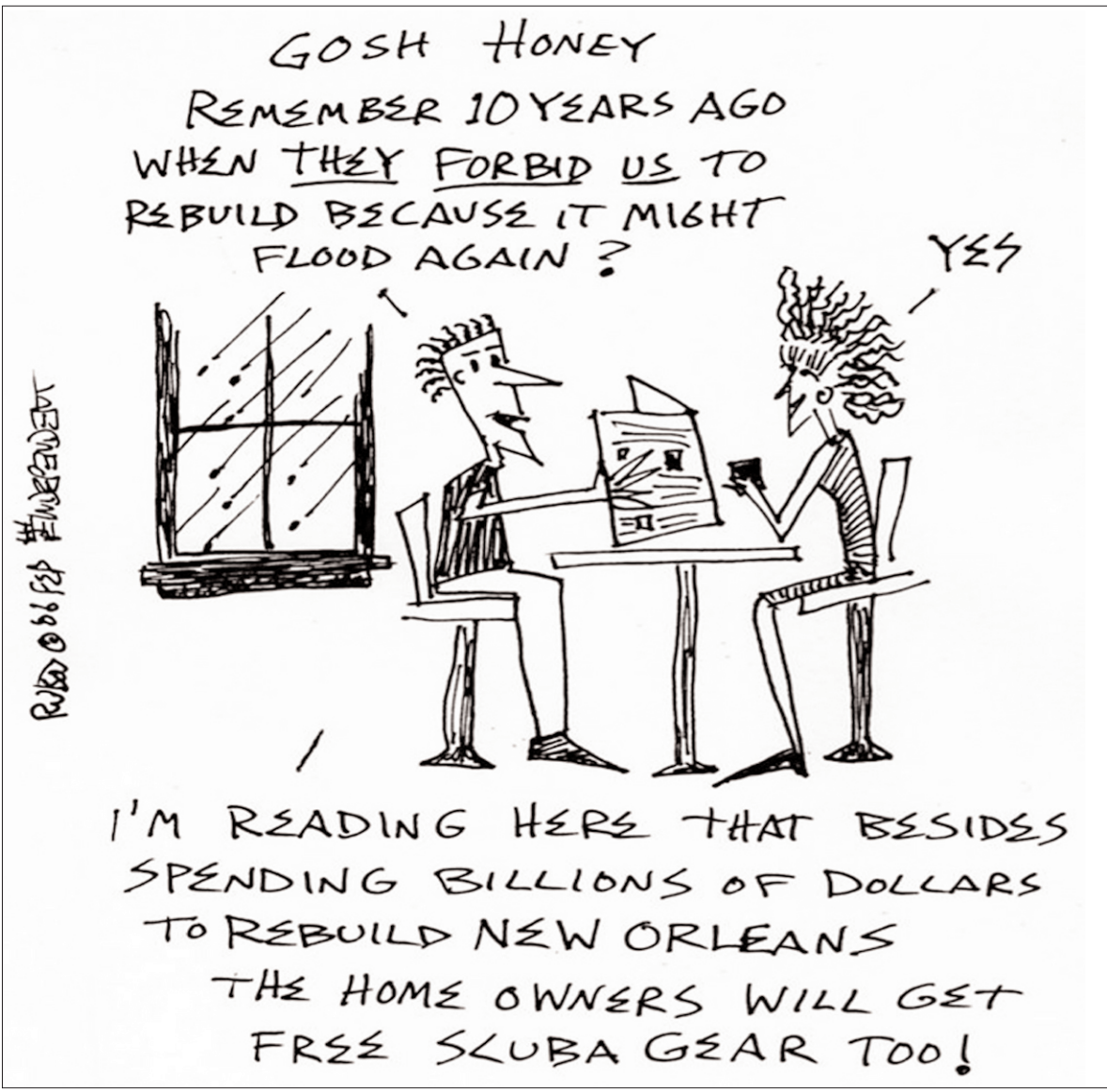
Vernonia will be prepared for emergencies.

### Volunteers needed for 47J Budget Committee

Do you think schools waste your hard-earned tax dollars? Do you think they could do a better job?

Well, now is the time to step right up and volunteer to serve on the budget committee. Three vacancies need to be filled by thoughtful citizens who are interested in utilizing available funds efficiently while providing the best education possible with those resources.

A budget committee for any local agency is one of the best places to learn what is – and what is not – possible fiscally. This is a great opportunity to learn more about local government. Contact the district office, 503-429-5891, for more information.



### Ike Says

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



Being an outdoor person can be a dangerous pastime. There are many hazards that present themselves out in the wilds. A simple walk can lead to broken bones, hypothermia and a long list of perils. Almost every year in Oregon during the

hunting seasons, people get lost, sometimes to never be found again. Sport fishers have an even deadlier environment, with multiple people losing their lives every year due to drowning. Recently I came across a couple of stories that local people experienced and, as you will see, it is not always humans that face danger!

Recently, a fisherman I know quite well had a scary experience, one that could have been deadly. This fisherman was fishing a small coastal stream for steelhead. There were several other people around, since it is a popular destination. The fisherman had been successful in catching one steelhead and soon had another on the line. The fight ensued in the pool above a rapids that lead into a log jam. Luck stayed with the fisherman and the steelhead did not head down stream into the tangle of wood. Soon the fish tired and came to the bank.

The banks on this coastal stream are raw dirt, hovering over the water by a couple of feet. In order to release a fish it is necessary to lean

down to remove the hook or cut the leader on a deep hooked fish. The fisherman was doing just this when the bank sloughed off into the creek. Of course so did the fisherman! The fisherman was wearing chest waders, luckily with a belt around his waist. After falling into the pool and being unable to touch the bottom, the fisherman could feel cold water in the portion of his chest waders above the belt...and the slow progression of water below the belt. Bobbing in the pool, the fisherman was soon relieved to find himself in the back eddy portion, otherwise he would have been flushed downstream into the log jam, a most undesirable location, indeed. With a little struggle, the angler was able to claw at the bank and pull himself up stream until he could drag himself out of the creek. Wet, but alive, the angler continued to fish for an hour before making the long trip home in wet clothes.

What was the key to staying alive in this situation? The belt was a big part of the equation, by restricting the movement of water down into the lower parts of the chest waders the buoyancy of chest waders was maintained. Luck was the second factor, staying in the back eddy was the difference between getting out or getting flushed. What was missing? A life jacket. Yeah, right, nobody is going to wear a life jacket while bank fishing! You don't have to! There are now suspenders that act as life jackets when activated either by a pull cord or water activation. For under a hundred bucks they are cheap insurance. Think about it!

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