

The INDEPENDENT

Published on the first and third Thursdays of each month by The Independent, LLC, 725 Bridge St., Vernonia, OR 97064. Phone/Fax: 503-429-9410. Publisher Clark McGaugh, clark@the-independent.net Editor Rebecca McGaugh, rebecca@the-independent.net Assoc. Editor Noni Andersen, noni@the-independent.net

Opinion

Flood public hearing tonight

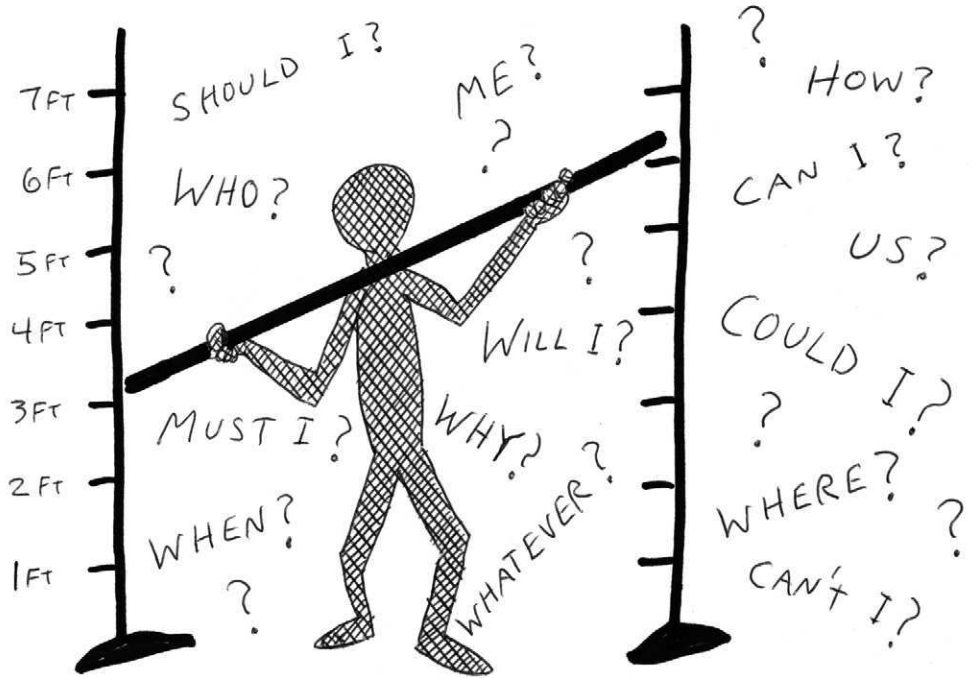
There have been so many meetings and town halls since the flood, it's hard to keep track of them. Much information and some mis-information have been floating around at the meetings and otherwise. The basics seem to be that FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) makes rules and the City of Vernonia has to enforce them by ordinance. It's tempting to say, I'll help you raise your house, then you help me with mine and then we'll both go help somebody else and forget about all the rules, regulations, and possible (note: possible) sources of financial help. But, that's probably not realistic. In any case, please don't miss meetings where decisions that may seriously impact your home take place. We urge everyone to attend and participate in the Public Hearing tonight, starting at 5:00 p.m. at the Vernonia Community Church on State Ave., followed by a special City Council meeting at 7:00 (same location). The ordinances addressed at the meetings are on building (including planting trees) in the flood areas and substantial damage (homes with substantial damage will have to raise, move or demolish). At a public hearing (though no new testimony will be accepted) the public can speak in favor, in opposition or as a neutral party on the ordinances.

Good deeds get recognized

Vernonia Police Sergeant Mike Kay, Vernonia Mayor Sally Harrison and Columbia County Commissioner (and Vernonia resident) Tony Hyde presented awards and certificates to Flood First Responders at the Council meeting on January 22. It is our pleasure to list each recipient here and add our thanks to those they have already received: Life Saving Awards to Norm Brown, Lt. Ben Davis, and Lt. Dean Smith; Certificates to (in no particular order) Tom Moss, Wayne Vaughn, Kristina McCord, Holly Vaughn, Caressa Brooks, Shelley Cota, Teressa Bernardi, Dan Owens, Michelle Kay, Scott Laird, Christie Davis, Catrina Conner, Charlotte Koch, Helen Hudson, Dawn Moss, Mike Orth, Cindy Ball, Alexis Posley, Colleen Posley, Ray Cota, Shandi Cota, Dylan Vaughn, Dan Murphy, Robin Murphy, Syn-da Allen, Genny Fischer, Kathy Spinden, John Spinden, Paul Epler, and Noni Andersen. (If we missed any, Mike, let us know so we can include them.) We welcome the opportunity to shine the light of appreciation on those who worked hard for all of us during the Flood

Please see page 3

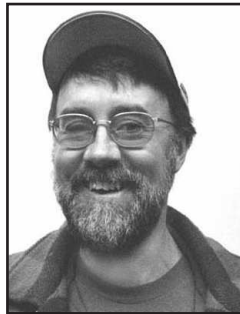
WELCOME TO THE HIGH WATER LIMBO WHERE, DO I, PLACE THE STICK?



FEB 08 Billon #1022478

Ike Says . . .

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



So how deep was that water during the flood? Well, that is a loaded question, it really depended on where you were, but I do have an answer for a specific spot. If you start prodding around, you will find that all measurements of flood heights are given

in feet above sea level. The high water mark at the sewage pump station at the confluence of Rock Creek and the Nehalem River was 618.3 feet. I happen to have an elevation drawing of the sewer lagoon system and an elevation of 592.5 feet is given for the diffuser, which is level with the bottom of the river, just a short distance down-river from the pump station. So the answer is, approximately 26 feet of water was flowing down the Nehalem River channel at this location.

So how much water was flowing down the river? I don't think we will ever truly know, because trying to measure the water that was outside the channel is extremely difficult, but here is a stab at the flow at the sewer system diffuser. The total distance across the river at this location, from the lagoon dike to the far bank at eye level from Webb Way, is around 75 yards. Since it would be difficult to figure the flow outside of the channel we will just figure what was *in* the channel, about half the above distance, which would come out

to 112 feet. We know that the depth was around 26 feet and all we have to know now is how fast the water was flowing. Having previously conducted stream flow readings, experience tells me it is very common to find stream flows in the 3-4 foot-per-second range, but flood waters really move, so let's use 6 feet-per-second. To find Cubic-Feet-per Second (CFS), which is used to measure stream flows, we simply multiply the width by the depth by the feet per-second-of-travel. This comes out to 17,472 CFS, or for something we can better relate to, 130,699 gallons of water per second flowing through this area. So the amount of flow in just one minute was over 7.8 million gallons of water, quite impressive indeed. Remember, this is only a very rough estimate and does not take into account the other half of the flood water that was flowing through the flood plain next to the channel. Additionally, there was the water that was flowing through the gap down at the Blue Heron area.

Here are some other high water mark readings: Washington Grade School, 618.5; just down-stream from the sewer lagoons on Webb Way, 616.0; at the concrete block house by the pump for Lake Vernonia, 615.2 and 614.0 (two readings for some reason); at the primitive campground at Lake Vernonia, 611.6; the West Oregon Electric substation at Alder Street, 608.9; lastly, a reading close to Knickerson Creek and Highway 47, 603.2.

The Army Corp of Engineers has been conducting the elevation readings and they have

Please see page 3