

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

It's time to give thanks

Even though last year's Thanksgiving piece in this space was written before the flood, we decided it still says it all, so here it is again. In fact, it's even more true now, after the flood, than it was before:

Now is the time of year when we stop and take inventory of the many reasons there are to be thankful.

Originally, Thanksgiving celebrated the generosity of others who gave food to some early English settlers who were starving on their own.

If you have food on your table, even if it's much more humble than a big turkey dinner, there is a reason to be thankful.

There has already been one power outage (2007) and winter is still new. Electricity and all the conveniences it brings, such as hot water, refrigeration, heat and lights are all more reasons to give thanks. It's easy in the world we live in to take such things for granted. There are still many places in the world, undeveloped and warring countries, for instance, where people live without such niceties as safety, electricity, sanitation, clean water, enough food. What a luxury, to have clean water to drink, and even enough water to bathe in and wash clothes.

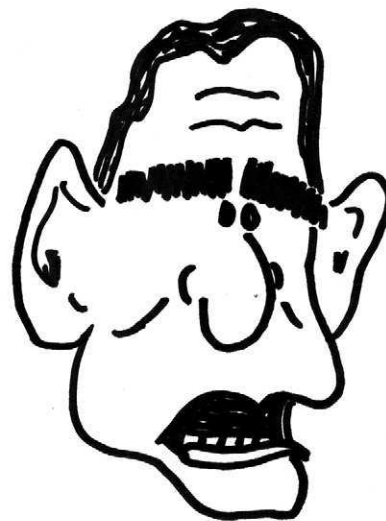
Got a dry, warm place to live? Be thankful your house wasn't the one that burned down in Vernonia, on November 13 (2007). Got a job? Got a car? Got recreational opportunities? Yes, most of us have lots, and lots for which to be thankful.

How about the really important stuff? Got a family and/or friends? This is a good time to tell someone you love them, or at least, that you appreciate them.

Thank you to all volunteers. We won't try to name them all, lest we forget somebody like we did last year. The amount of charity our community (and we mean the whole area; Vernonia, Timber, Mist, Jewell, Elsie, Birkenfeld, Buxton, Manning, and Banks) is capable of showing during times of need is overwhelming. There have been a number of injuries, deaths and fires this year that have brought out amazing generosity and support for the individuals and families involved. People helping people is what community really means, and ours is a great community.

Finally, if all your basic needs have been met, please consider finding a way to give to others. If you can't give lots, maybe just share what you have, whether it's time, money, food or love. And, take time to give thanks.

Nov 08 08:00 AM
K. ANDERSEN



MY LAST DECREE

AS YOUR
PRESIDENT
OF THIS
UNITED STATES
OF
AMERICA

IS TO MAKE IT
ILLEGAL ...
...TO SELL OR PUT UP ANY
X-MAS DECORATIONS BEFORE
THANKS GIVING!!

Out of My Mind . . .

by Noni Andersen

In a couple of weeks, it will be one year since Mother Nature evicted hundreds of Nehalem Valley residents from their homes. Many families are still unable to go "home" and are living in other towns, in rentals here or elsewhere, with other family members, or in FEMA trailers. Still others are back in their homes, whether or not the homes are completely repaired.

Every time weather forecasters predict heavy rains, "flood nerves" trigger great anxiety for some people. Others dither (I'm in this category.) about what to do next. Can my house be raised or moved; should I buy the kind of replacement furniture I really like, should I stick to furniture with metal legs, or should I just stay with cheap stuff; and so on. Too many of us know that it takes more than a year to recover from the effects of a major disaster.

We have been reminded, again, that Nature is in charge of weather. Unfortunately, we are in charge of our economy, and to say that we have done a poor job would be a gross understatement. More jobs will be lost and more people will lack adequate health care in this coming year. Nevertheless, Thanksgiving is next week and we really do have much to be thankful for:

- ◆ The flood caused physical, emotional and financial damage, but there was no loss of life and no one was seriously injured.

- ◆ We were reminded, not just that we need each other, but that our community steps up to help fill that need.

- ◆ We have been helped by many wonderful

people, not for money, but just because we needed help.

There have also been some governmental responses that are rather remarkable for a town as small as Vernonia:

- ◆ U.S. Geological Survey and National Weather Service experts held a meeting here to discuss weather and forecasting, and answer our questions.

- ◆ Gov. Kulongoski sent an excellent Oregon Solutions team to help with the schools, one of our many major problems.

There are many other reasons to be thankful. Here are a few we should all appreciate:

- ◆ Smiles and friendly "hellos" from people on the street.

- ◆ Our many courteous and considerate teens.

- ◆ Friendly greetings and good service in local stores and offices.

- ◆ The wonderful Vernonia Public Library.

- ◆ Emergency medical services that are not just good, but excellent, with well-trained professionals and volunteers.

- ◆ A school district that continues to work toward good conditions and good results in spite of many remaining obstacles.

- ◆ An electric co-op that plans ahead, while working to keep our power on in all weather.

- ◆ The local food bank and Senior Center.

- ◆ Volunteer firefighters who drop whatever they're doing whenever they are needed.

And, on a personal note, I am thankful beyond words for my wonderful family and friends.

I wish you all a warm, happy Thanksgiving.