



THE INDEPENDENT

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The Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley for 25 years

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The Independent starts 25th year of publication

by Noni Andersen

I was astounded when Clark and Rebecca reminded me that this issue begins the 25th year of *The INDEPENDENT*. While it certainly doesn't seem like yesterday, it just doesn't feel like it's been that long.

Looking back at the headlines from that first year, I get the feeling that some things may never change...

In April of 1986, Wally Thompson was named to a

county position, and now he is in an elected county position as Justice of the Peace.

Repetitive headlines also record revisions to the planning ordinance, city apathy toward local business, and sewer and water problems.

Some other elements that don't show up in the headlines of 1986, have been repeated over the years. When the city council repeatedly violated public meetings law regarding executive sessions, I printed

the actions they took in those meetings. If that sounds familiar, it's because *The INDEPENDENT* has had to do the same thing fairly recently.

Off and on over the years, there have been problems with police officers, too. Some were too eager to treat all teenagers as vandals or "druggies", some were entirely too familiar with women while on the job, some parked outside the bars to intimidate patrons of legal businesses, and some were unne-

cessarily quick to be physical. Fortunately, we have had our share of good officers, too. The conduct of our police officers has always seemed to reflect the attitude of the city council toward our citizens.

It may seem odd today, but development of the state linear trail required a long and difficult effort. We were in the middle of the battle, but there were few supporters and many opponents. The city council wouldn't support it, most businesses wouldn't publicly support it, and the state didn't want to develop it. The county board of commissioners, the Vernonia Chamber of Commerce, Mario's Cafe and this paper publicly supported the project. As you know, that fight was won and, when real estate ads started using the trail as a desirable amenity, we could only laugh.

From the time my late husband, Dirk, and I started the paper, we were never hesitant to speak out. People often didn't like what we said, but it still beat rumor, innuendo and gossip.

I am saddened, though not surprised, that our city government has returned to the old ways...keeping citizens at arm's length, making decisions that are never discussed in public, and generally acting like they are above the law.



Some people were so angry with this newspaper that they sometimes tried to put us out of business. When we editorialized against going to war with Iraq, a local business called all of our advertisers, urging them to withdraw their ads because we were traitors (or worse). Other times, our newspapers disappeared, or someone came in to the office to yell at us, because they didn't like what we printed. Yet, at no time were we charged with libel, because the truth is not libelous.

When circumstances made it necessary for me to step away from the paper, my son and daughter-in-law, Clark and Rebecca McGaugh, who were already running it, formally took over operations.

That was one of the best decisions made regarding this newspaper, because our town still needs someone who is not hesitant to speak out. They are continuing what was started 25 years ago. And it still beats rumor, innuendo and gossip.



The New Year started with tragedy for the owners of this Elsie home. A benefit is planned to help with the rebuilding. See article below for details.

Elsie residence is totally destroyed in January 3 fire

A house on Beneke Creek Road, in the Elsie area of Clatsop County, burned to the ground on Sunday, January 3. The home was owned by Iris Dahl and Dennis Baker.

Dahl, who works at Camp 18 Restaurant as a baker, was at work when the fire call came in at about 10:00 a.m. Baker escaped the fire uninjured. The one-story, older wood frame

structure burned to the ground. The cause of the fire has not yet been determined. Fire crews from Elsie-Vinemapple, Gearheart, Cannon Beach, Seaside, Hamlet, Mist-Birkenfeld, Banks and Vernonia responded to the fire, and crews remained on site until about 6:00 p.m.

A benefit featuring an Authentic Mexican Food Buffet has been scheduled for Sun-

day, January 10, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., in the Camp 18 Banquet room. All proceeds will go towards rebuilding the home. The cost for the buffet will be \$7.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children. Other donations can be sent to Camp 18 Restaurant, 42362 Highway 26, Elsie, OR 97138, marked for the Dahl Fire Fund.

Two tax measures on Jan. 26 ballot

With a special election set for January 26, television viewers are being bombarded with commercials about Oregon Ballot Measures 66 and 67. Claims, pro and con, are all over the place. This is an effort to clear the muddy waters.

These changes in state taxes are intended to help fill budget shortfalls in education, services for children, the elderly and the disabled, public safety, business regulations, natural

resource management and state administration. The shortfall is the result of a state tax structure that relies primarily on income taxes, and a recession that reduced income. It is estimated that Measure 66 will raise approximately \$472 million and Measure 67 about \$255 million. The state's share of Federal payments is also reduced by decreases in state services.

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