

# The INDEPENDENT

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## Opinion

### Letters to Santa shared

We asked Santa if we could share some of the Letters to Santa he received at the Vernonia Fire Hall. Here's a selection he sent us.

Dear Santa

I feqyered that I wode wright you a leter this is wate I wode like to have if yo can make thim

1. a D rex.
- 2 a lageo city harvester.
3. a fx super international slot car track.
4. a fake tree 44in.
5. a 22-inch raat skrin tv.
6. a Philllips speker set at fredmires.

Senerley

T.

P.S. hear is spung Bob (picture was included with letter) and some muterel money.

Dear, Santie clous,

Can you please get me ebay cards and whatever you can.

Love

D.

Dear Santa

this year I would to have a Picture of you and your raindears. and a DSL. also help my family

f.

Dear, santa,

I wish that you could get me an electiric guitar, a dirt bike, toy story 3, and a nerf gun called stampeed E-CS.

from: B.!

Dear Santa

can you please bring me high heels and some coloring supplies.

from T.

Hoping Santa is good to each and every one of our readers. And, Merry Christmas to all and a Very Happy New Year.

♩ HAVE A HOLLY  
♩ JOLLY CHRISTMAS  
♩ AND A SWINGIN' HAPPY NEW YEAR  
AND ALSO  
REMEMBER TOO!



Broderick Crawford  
HIGHWAY PATROL

THAT THE  
MOST EFFECTIVE  
SAFETY  
DEVICE  
IN YOUR  
CAR  
IS  
YOU!

### Out of My Mind . . .

by Noni Andersen



It's natural and it happens every year, but I'm not thrilled that heavy winter rains have arrived. As I write this, I'm also watching the river gauge upstream from Vernonia on the Nehalem, and singing "River Stay 'way from My Door".

After the December 2 groundbreaking for the new schools project, I was thinking how fortunate we have been. Yes, that's sometimes a stretch for those of us who have been flooded twice and haven't been raised, but it's true. And it's truly humbling to realize how much of that good fortune has derived from the kindness of strangers, combined with the vision and empathy of so many of our elected officials at all levels, but especially on the state level.

There are several reasons I emphasize the state level. One of the most important is that, without their help, the efforts of county and city governments would make very little headway at improving conditions created by the 2007 flood.

The state has also been our primary "lobbyist" for obtaining CDBG (Community Development Block Grants) funds from the federal government. Our state and federal officials have worked hard for us, but a united "push" by a combination of state and federal officials is often required to make any particular effort successful. So state

government plays a unique position as "middle man" in putting together effective coalitions at all levels of government.

While watching and listening to the groundbreaking ceremony, I was struck by the depth of commitment expressed by many of the speakers. They are going to do what is necessary to complete the school project, no matter what the obstacles may be.

When Governor Kulongoski spoke of coming to Vernonia in a helicopter the day after the flood, and seeing devastation "everywhere," it was obvious that he hadn't forgotten what he saw. He was somber when remembering, and elated at the progress made. He has every right to be elated; his vision went far beyond immediate needs, and he provided both the impetus and the structure needed to bring together a diverse group of people in government, business and philanthropy, people whose goal is *our* recovery.

Yet, instead of telling us how important he has been to the success of the project, Gov. Kulongoski spoke only of the efforts of others, including those of the people of Vernonia. He also remembered the Oregon National Guard troops who risked their lives to save lives here by making nighttime rescues in raging waters – and he had them them come to the groundbreaking.

Listening to him, I was reminded of the volunteers who came to Vernonia to muck out mud, clean our homes and schools, tear out soggy drywall, insulation and carpeting, and then restock our food bank. They came to help, not to tell us how wonderful they were for helping.

We have been fortunate, and I am grateful.