

50 Years Ago This Month

The October 18, 1962, issue of the *Vernonia Eagle* included the following news story on the front page:

Vernonia and the entire Nehalem Valley reeled under the force of the storm Friday night and were shocked by the realization that "it can happen here." Since Friday evening, there has been little talk of anything else but the storm and the various damages done by it. The only previous storm to anywhere approximate it was one the pioneers told of about in 1880 (sic).

However, as the survey progresses, the most familiar comment is "This is a good place to live" for damage here has been much lighter than in communities on all sides and no lives were lost or serious injuries sustained.

Saturday morning, the town was a scene of havoc which only those who got around early really saw, for everyone went to work at once to clean up debris and put things back to normal. Trees were down everywhere and some homes have the appearance of a plucked chicken as they stand without the familiar trees surrounding them.

Among the amazing things is that so few houses were actually damaged by trees when so many fell around them.

By Wednesday, a tentative estimate of insurable damage in the area had been placed at from \$12,000 to \$15,000. Of this, it is estimated that at least \$6,000 or \$7,000 will be needed to repair damage at the high school, the most heavily damaged place in the valley. This included the grandstand which lost its roof, the public address system which was on the grandstand roof ready for the scheduled Friday night game, the carport at the east end of the building where busses loaded and unloaded, damaged roof, broken windows, an aluminum awning and water damage in rooms.

Some damage was incurred at each of the elementary buildings in the district but was not extensive at any of them.

When the carport blew off the high school, it narrowly missed Darrold Proehl and Dale Andrich when it passed over the car they were in and struck the house of Herb Sturdevant, doing considerable damage to the foundation. He was not home at the time.

Many of the trees which were downed were uprooted due to the rain-soaked ground. Many freak-

ish things happened in connection with this, also. At one house on Second avenue on Corey Hill, tree roots under a part of the house lifted and tore it from the house. At the Sandon house on Scappoose road which recently was purchased by the Gene Calhoons, trees fell to completely surround it, but none hit the house. A huge cedar in the Thayer yard fell across the porch roof and breezeway between the house and cellar.

Several people felt they had a very close brush with death. Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Acaiturri, who had four tall trees fall at their home, one of which hit the house, were making their way to the R. C. Lindsay home when a tree fell just behind them. Mrs. Robert Pollock, coming from Staleys, saw a tree leaning dangerously over the road and stepped on the gas so as to just get by and have the tree graze the back of her car. Richard Peterson of Natal was coming home from Clatskanie in his pickup when a tree blocked the road. He first thought he would sit it out, then decided to walk. He was only a short distance from the car when a tree fell, crushing the cab of the pickup completely.

At several homes, including the Joe Lawler residence in Riverview and the Edith Crowston residence on Corey hill, falling trees tore the electric service installations from the houses. At the Otto Siedelman place on the Pebble Creek loop, the barn and other farm buildings were flattened.

Many people lost roofs or parts of roofs. At the Leslie Caron home three successive layers of roofing were peeled off.

One of the most disastrous public damages was to the bridge about one and a half miles south of Vernonia across the river to the mink farm. A falling tree went across the steel structure, breaking and twisting it.

Officials of Crown Zellerbach, after a survey of damages to company land, estimated that at least 25 million feet of timber was downed by the storm.

The barn on the Frank Reed place below Vernonia, formerly the Mat King place, was blown across the road and at one point Friday evening, debris from it along with utility wires felled by the wind and flying debris, blocked the road at that point.

At the Vernonia airport, a hangar went down on the plane owned by Mrs. Frank Hays, breaking the windshield and damaging

Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



when I read I'd still be found among the pages of *The Independent*. This means I've got to step up to a few more lines, so here goes. One thing that caught me eye in the article "24 Years Ago Today". Someone should check the lake (that is if the lily pads haven't completely consumed the lake). The lake is the one thing that people from out of town go to Vernonia to enjoy. I still think there should be a way to control them, anyhow I know they advertise good to control them (lily pads, that is). I used to see the ads in Country Magazine.

And, in answer to D.S. of Vernonia, on the sewer rate problem. I'm sure we went through that at the council meeting several years ago. Councils of the past (more than at least 12) and the powers that were didn't know they had to keep checking up on their condition, so they didn't think to start collecting monies and keep them separate and leave them alone for just sewer and water upkeep. That involved an awful lot of elected folks, so now everyone must bite the bullet once more, only this time the

Well, here we are again, but with the news that there is to be only ONE paper a month. So, I have put my brain on THINK. Lots of comments have been flying through my brain since I received the paper but it made me sort of smile

wings and undercarriage. Total amount of damage has not been learned. Other planes kept there were those of Wally Grosche and Frank Hays and their damage is understood to be minor. Four other fliers from the valley had planes at Scappoose. L. E. Atkins estimates from \$1000 to \$1200 damage to his plane and Dave Seibel and Kenny Smejkal are understood to have suffered wing damage. Fred Busch of Mist came out with little damage to his plane. It also is understood that a former resident, Bill Olinger of Hillsboro, lost his hangar and suffered major plane damage.

One of the outstanding results of the storm was the demonstration of the resourcefulness of people in the valley who were devising means of cooking sharing with those less fortunate.

The storm will continue to be a topic of conversation for many a day to come and everyone agrees that once was enough for a storm like that. And, as more reports are received from other places, residents here will continue to agree that this was the best place to be when such a storm did occur. Everyone in the valley should be

economy stinks, and it isn't going to get better very soon. I think their attitude was "If it ain't broke, don't worry, be happy."


Now, on to fluffier stuff. Those geese I wrote about a while back – there was one lone goose honking his way across the airway by 5:00 a.m. the other morning, so I believe they are getting serious about leaving. Saturday, the 21st, 14 of us able-bodied older folk took off from the church for a day out of the city. Where to, you ask? The cheese factory in Tillamook, of course. And the beach, of course. Tasty and delicious, then we backed up and took in the Blue Heron Cheese Factory, since I had had more than enough cheese at the first stop I wasn't interested in any more cheese, but a sound caught my ear and I went looking for it. Yes, I found two good ol' boys, guitars at the ready, playing blue grass. I sat down, visited and listened, soaking it all up. It was Fan-Tab-U-lussssss. I put a couple bucks in their coffee can, thanked them for a very enjoyable break, went back to the group who hadn't even missed me, because they were everywhere else. Petting zoo, gift shop, just strolling around the flowers and not a one of us checked out the wine tasting. It made a good day a perfect day. Then we checked out the beach at Oceanside – another grand experience. I walked the beach in my bare feet, it sure felt good. The tide was just beginning to come in. When I got home my son had dinner almost ready to put on the table. What a way to end a perfect day – no meal to cook or dishes to do.

See you next month.

able to count many reasons for the observance of Thanksgiving this year.

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