

Letters to the Editor

River wants to engulf town

After the flood of Oct. 20, 2003, the town of Hamilton is a complete disaster area. Driving through the town after the devastation makes one wonder why anyone would want to live in the path of a raging river. I for one would like to see the river have the town, and save those people and the government the pain and cost of restoring it once again. Move Hamilton to higher ground and the pain and costs will go away.

Every time the river gets above flood stage the town of Hamilton evacuates, not only 14 feet above flood, even a few feet above. This time was a record and the whole town was affected. The mayor, Mr. Bates, has stated in the past that they will stay regardless of the consequences. Just raise the homes a little higher. Well, Mr. Mayor, you are going to have to raise them even higher next time. The river will continue to inundate the town of Hamilton from now on. There is no doubt about it. The Skagit River wants the town of Hamilton.

*Betty Hoffman
Birdsview*

Flooding was inconvenient

As I sit here having my morning coffee and reflect back to this week, I have found a new faith in my fellow man. I watched as the river grew and wondered like everyone else if it was going over the banks.

I watched as a small community of RV'ers come to life and tried to get their belongings to safety. I was really proud of what I saw, people helping people that they didn't even know. We finally ended up in parking lots from Safeway to Skagit College.

While at one parking lot I saw a uncompassionate man telling everyone to move because of the inconvenience

that it caused. I could only think of how they must have felt, already uprooted from their homes. Inconvenience, a word tossed around lightly in the last few days.

To me, inconvenience would have been if we would have lost even a single life because of a flooding river.

Inconvenience would have been if we would have lost even a single trailer that had everything that a young couple owned in life.

Inconvenience was watching a scared mother holding two babies in her arms wondering if somebody was going to move her unit.

Inconvenience was watching a man on a limited income putting his very last \$10 in his gas tank so he could maybe move one or two more trailers.

Anyway, for those of you that found RVs in your parking lot and understood and was patient, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. And we do apologize for the inconvenience.

*Shane Eargood
Mount Vernon*

Court system is inefficient

My wife and I recently were participants in a Small Claims Court action at the Skagit Valley Courthouse in Mount Vernon. We are questioning a cumbersome procedure in what appears to be a waste of taxpayers' money and time. The current requirement is that each case must go before a citizens mandatory mediation board in hopes the case can be settled without input and decision by the judge.

Meanwhile, a whole courtroom of people wait their turn for the mediation. And as near as we could figure — there is no time limit placed on the mediation process. We also noted the Judge waited right along with us,

tiddling his thumbs and bantering with the waiting cases.

To our way of thinking, this all seems like a large waste of time, and \$'s. The court seems to have forgotten that these are small claims, and for people coming from out of town, the current procedure can often result in two trips to the court for a decision over an extended period. These cumbersome rules truly discourage wanting to work within the system again.

In our case mediation was not even appropriate, nevertheless we had to wait another six weeks for another appointment with the courts.

Whatever happened to having the most knowledgeable person in the courtroom make the final decision in all cases? The Judge! Stop wasting taxpayers' money and time.

*Clyde Rutherford
Mount Vernon*

Flood survivor, not victim

When I was little, my wonderful father thought it would be great to build a house in Hamilton. So off he went to accomplish his dream. It was great! We picked blackberries, found snakes, grew a huge garden and would run down to the river. It only took my little legs about 5 minutes to get to the river, less if I was trying to outrun my little brother.

That ironically is about the same amount of time that we would have three out of four years to get out of our house before the river took it over. We almost lost my dad once in over 6 feet of water, but hey we got to be on the news! We also got to live in our garage for six months while the house was drying out and getting fixed up. (fun!) Finally my parents decided to move us onto a hill in Mount Vernon. I have very little tangible childhood memories, the

river took them. It did not take me though. My family and I were not "flood victims." We were and are "flood survivors."

I know emotionally and financially it can take its toll, but don't let the flood win, you are all survivors. You have a whole county that cares about you and will help you stay strong. So when you're feeling down, remember that you survived, you're not a victim. Stay strong.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

*Racquel (Futrelle) McDermott
Mount Vernon*

Letter to the editor guidelines

■ The Skagit Valley Herald welcomes letters written by residents of our circulation area that address issues in the public arena. No form letters. The maximum length is 250 words.

We edit letters for clarity, accuracy and to avoid libel. We accept no more than one a month per writer. Letters must:

- 1) Be typed and be signed by only one person, with the full first name (not initials).
- 2) Include daytime phone number.
- 3) Include full street address.

Write: To the editor, Skagit Valley Herald, P.O. Box 578, Mount Vernon, WA 98273; fax: 360-428-0400; or e-mail: letters@skagitvalleyherald.com (no attachments, please).

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