

LOCAL

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City Editor: Dick Clever 360-416-2143 / citydesk@skagitvalleyherald.com

Skagit Scenes

*"They don't need to worry about that garbage.
We'll have another flood soon and send it all
down to Mount Vernon."*

Man commenting on Hamilton flood debris

senting the high water of 1995. Today,
there is a new line — 19 inches higher.

Hamilton is back to normal

A sure sign of the rebirth of flood-ravaged Hamilton is the reopening of the town's only watering hole, buzzing nerve center and cultural crossroads — Willie's Hi-Lead Tavern.

"We finally got the mud cleaned out and we're in the middle of remodeling," said co-owner James Thomason. "But we're open for business."

That was music to the ears of Willie's devotees in the oft-flooded town of 300 (give or take a few) on the north bank of the Skagit River about halfway between Concrete and Sedro-Woolley.

Battered, tattered, but still kickin', Willie's reopened this past weekend with an offering of karaoke singing and the usual libations. The "Hi-Lead" (rhymes with *rye seed*) part of the tavern's name stands for the old hi-lead crane used in the area's logging heyday.

Before the record-setting flood of nearly two weeks ago, there was a line painted around the interior walls of Willie's around the 5-foot mark, repre-

tainers.

A man standing nearby said, "They don't need to worry about that garbage. We'll have another flood soon and send it all down to Mount Vernon."

Going, going, garbage!

Volunteers were hard at work in Hamilton last week after the flood, helping load debris and damaged carpet, wood and furniture into large trash con-

■ If you have an idea for the series, e-mail it to news@skagitvalleyherald.com, mail it to Skagit Scenes, Skagit Valley Herald, P.O. Box 578, Mount Vernon, WA 98273-0578 or call 360-416-2160.