

Photos tell story of record rain

It rained intermittently all day on Friday, Aug. 6. By early Saturday morning, the rainfall turned into a deluge and obliterated a record that had stood for nearly a century in south-west Iowa.

The storm that hit Council Bluffs and the surrounding area was an historic and memorable one.

In a span of less than 24 hours, it dumped an official measurement of 10.48 inches of rain on the area, breaking the record set in 1903.

Area residents awoke to find a mess left in Mother Nature's path.

Streets and intersections were flooded, retaining walls were washed away, bridges were damaged, cars were seen floating down city streets, basement walls collapsed, parks were under water, sewers backed up and, in some instances, people were forced from their homes.

Many residents saw a lifetime of memories washed away by the flooding.

But such storms can also bring out the best in people.

By mid-morning Saturday, residents were helping their neighbors clean up after the storm. Cleanup efforts for some were completed in a few days.

Others are still struggling as they try to return

their families' lives and living quarters to pre-flood status.

"I've never seen it this bad," said Council Bluffs Mayor Thomas Hanafan shortly after the rains ended.

He had taken office just months before a series of tornadoes devastated the west side of the city in 1988.

Extra firefighters and police officers answered the call to help deal with the emergency situation.

Red Cross and Salvation Army personnel and volunteers immediately mobilized. A disaster declaration brought federal and state officials into the area to help assess damage and offer assistance.

As the mayor noted, there is no way to adequately prepare for this type of situation.

Area residents will long remember and want their children to remember the record-breaking storm.

Thanks to the photographs submitted by Nonpareil readers, this special section will help capture and preserve those special events.

Those who submitted flood photos may pick them up at The Daily Nonpareil office, 117 Pearl St., beginning Monday. Photos cannot be mailed back.



Photo by Duane E. Whitbeck

Flooded fields stretch east toward the South Expressway as trees and a grain elevator are reflected in the water.



Photo by Landon Knauss



Photo by Matt Koppell

Above, some flood survivors found themselves paddling up a creek until the waters receded. At left, Paul Smith and his son, Tyler, waded through the flood waters near 1908 S. 11th St. in Council Bluffs.



Photo by Landon Knauss

Two men who live in the neighborhood canoe down the 1600 block of South 11th Street in Council Bluffs.

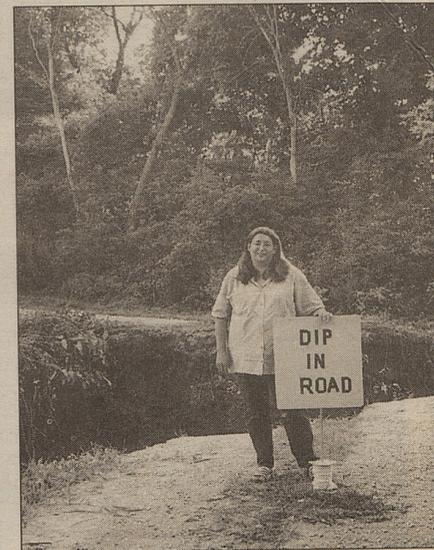


Photo by John Steenson

Disaster is often washed down with levity as evidenced by Cathy Steenson of Council Bluffs, who posed by the sign, "dip in road."



Photo by Diane Shamblen

Devin Swift, a true flood survivor, makes like Tom Sawyer and floats down Avenue F in Council Bluffs.



Photo by Glenn L. Snipes

Virgil Lake, 601 Valley View Drive, leans on his Jet Ski as his daughter looks over damage to her new car at about 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 7. The car in the background was washed down Mosquito Creek about 40 feet.