

Former Grafton Mayor Recalls Great Flood 30 Years Later

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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GRAFTON - 30 years ago, the Great Flood of 1993 impacted several towns in the Riverbend area - including Grafton, where flooding was recorded for [195 days](#). Former Grafton Alderwoman and Mayor Bobbie Amburg recalled her experience with the flood, including commuting to and from work by boat, meeting a presidential candidate, and more.

The Great Flood of 1993 began shortly after Amburg moved to Grafton with her husband, Edward “Ed” Amburg, a Grafton native who was used to the flooding and helped prepare her for it.

“He explained to me when water started coming up, what would happen,” Bobbie said. “Streets would be closed, people would have to move out or move up a floor or something in their house, so he had me pretty well prepared for what would happen.”

Originally from Alton, Bobbie had never quite seen anything like the flooding in Grafton that year. She remembered traveling to and from her house along Route 3 not by car, but by boat.

“It kind of scared me, because I was working and I’d have to go by boat from our house to Route 3 going up out of Grafton,” she said. “That bothers me - getting stuck in the house and not being able to leave - but he had a boat and he grew up with floods here in Grafton, so he kept me calmed down.”

Fortunately, Bobbie lived near higher ground and had more time to prepare and move items out of her basement before it was completely flooded, though she noted they still ended up with four feet of water in their basement. While she didn’t live in any of Grafton’s riverfront houses on stilts, she remembered seeing those residents sail to and from their stilt houses.

Unfortunately, several homes and most of the businesses and buildings along Main Street were severely damaged by the flood. Bobbie said she recalled St. Patrick Catholic Church suffering some of the worst flood damage.

Bobbie said Grafton received visits from presidential candidate Ross Perot and Vice President Al Gore. Perot arrived by helicopter near the town’s Post Office and spoke with the mayor, aldermen, and local businesspeople. Gore was given a tour by boat to assess the flood damage around town.

Bobbie had been elected as an Alderwoman in Grafton shortly before the 1993 flood. After the flood, she “worked to save many of the historical buildings in the community, including the Reubel Hotel,” according to an [article from Riverbender.com](#) about her work in the city. She was elected as Mayor of Grafton in 1998.

Today, the Edward Amburg History Museum of Grafton - named after Bobbie’s late husband - contains several artifacts from Grafton’s history, including the Great Flood of 1993. The museum is located at 950 E. Main Street in Grafton.