

Commentary...

# Cancer and me: I wanna go home

By Jim Williams  
Columnist

By early 2015, it was time to leave. After having spent the better part of a year debating the merits of a move to Portland, or waiting until we retire, the itch to move grew more intense.

Things were not going so well where I worked. A regime change then, in one fell swoop, changed the entire culture, and I no longer wanted to be a part of it. A rather heated discussion with my daughter over the merits of coming over to see me, also left me feeling like it might be time. Throw in the fact that after 17 years, the Sisters fishbowl was getting small.

A couple of unexpected job opportunities arose and were both too good not to go for. Initially, I received a job offer at the City of Portland. After discussing the opportunity with my wife, Katie, we determined that now seemed like a better time to leave than waiting until retirement. With some trepidation, I accepted the offer with the City of Portland, and now found myself with the reality that the place I called home for the last 17 years was no longer going to be the case.

After a month at the City of Portland, I eventually found myself working for the City of Oregon City, which was a much better environment to work, and gave me better opportunities to grow. Since my acceptance of the Portland offer in March, till May of 2015, I had made numerous car trips, moved into a studio apartment, later found a house which would take all the animals, and waited for Katie to find something so she could join me. By June, she found a job in the Tigard area and we packed up the truck and moved to Beverly, so to speak. No swimmin' pools, or movie stars, just the same town I had grown

up in, only bigger now — much bigger.

It didn't take long after we had settled in to our rental, that we missed Sisters. That was to be expected, I thought, because we had been there a long time and now we were gone. Eventually we realized that it was more than that. Our friends were there; the roots we'd planted all those years ago ran deep and were tugging us back.

We decided since we'd made the commitment that we were going to stick it out. We ended up buying a new home in Oregon City in February of 2016. We loved the house and the area, but the lingering pull of Sisters was still there. I made the mistake of sending Katie some ODOT camera shots of a snow one day and she called me back crying. Katie, who always liked an adventure and was tired of "small town" Sisters, wanted to go home.

Opportunities arose for both of us on the job front. Katie's replacement at her job didn't work out and they were practically begging her to return. I had an interview in Redmond already scheduled, which I'm quite sure I would have gotten if I had pursued it. Calmer heads prevailed and we decided to stay. We had just purchased a house and wouldn't have gotten all of our equity back. It was a great opportunity to go back, but it was too soon to make the move, as much as we both wanted to.

As spring rolled into summer, things were going well. We had settled into the new house and were enjoying the new surroundings. Then in late August, I got the cancer diagnosis ... again.

Initially, Katie thought if we ever went back, that Bend would be the better option. More to do, and you don't have to drive 30 miles to do your heavy shopping. Now, though, the things

we took for granted are the things that continually draw us back.

We miss riding our bikes out our front door, either to challenge the mountain bike trails, or going on a long road bike ride. We miss the 30-minute drive to Hoodoo. We miss the spectacular beauty of the mountains. In the 10 years we lived in Crossroads, I never tired of the view as we drove home out McKenzie Highway. We particularly miss our best friends at Rancho Viejo. If Edgar caught us walking across the street, our favorite cold beverage would be awaiting us as we entered the building. In the almost two years we've been here, we've yet to find a place like that. A place we can all our own. Like going home.

Katie and I both love the snow and have been envious of the winter weather this year. The weather in Sisters can be a challenge at times, but it's all part of the charm.

Sisters, in a word, is special. For all of you who live there, you should consider yourselves lucky. No place is perfect, and Sisters certainly isn't. But to me, it's just about as close to perfect a place as you can find. As hard as I try, I don't think I have the words in me to adequately describe it.

All I know is that its home, and I wanna go home. There truly is no place like home.

## PLOWING: Neighbors are helping neighbors in heavy winter

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more — individual plow sites be grouped together for the sake of efficiency. STA membership is not required.

"Right now we have but one big red tough truck equipped with a seriously effective plow blade, and we are blessed with several willing and competent volunteer operators," Calvin said. "It is not efficient or effective to respond to every individual call for plowing service, nor is it realistic to think we can respond quickly to all in need after a big dump of snow. But I'd sure like to see Big Red put into cost-effective service as much as possible for the benefit of STA."

Calvin cites Suzy Ramsey as a great example of serving as a neighborhood plow organizer and scheduler. "Suzy recently coordinated 11 plow jobs within her neighborhood," he said "and together she and Michael (Grant) knocked them all out in a couple of hours, raising what we think will be at least \$440 for STA but, more importantly, raising awareness of STA efforts to build and maintain multi-access trails in and around Sisters."

That kind of neighborhood organizing is what Calvin hopes to see more of. "Makes sense to me," he said, "that we work to locate a few more neighborhood plow advocates who can serve as liaisons

between the geographically concentrated plow jobs and our team of plow operators. We have a rather interesting and hopefully good thing going raising respectable dollars and public awareness and appreciation of the Sisters Trails Alliance..."

STA member Ann Richardson reported that \$750 in donations had been earned as of Monday morning.

Individuals interested in forming a neighborhood group of persons needing snowplow assistance are invited to contact Calvin by email at Kris@earthwoodhomes.com. Phone messages are problematic because he is out plowing most of the time. Persons without access to email can leave a telephone message 541-549-0924.

The Sisters Trails Alliance is an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit community organization dedicated to the planning, constructing and maintenance of walking, hiking, cycling, and equestrian trails in Sisters Country. The STA believes that trails are an indispensable ingredient for the quality of life and economic vibrancy in Sisters Country. Volunteer help and new members are always welcome.

For further information about STA or performing volunteer work on trails or other outdoor-related projects, contact the organization at 541-719-8822. Additional information can also be found on their website at [www.sisterstrails.org](http://www.sisterstrails.org) or follow STA on Facebook at Sisters Trails Alliance.



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