

Commentary... Cancer and me: Homeward bound

By Jim Williams
Columnist

It's been awhile since the last installment of this series chronicling what seems like a never-ending battle with cancer. In that last column, I expressed my desire to return "home" to Sisters, and my reasons why.

Well, I'm happy to say that we're packing up the plantation and returning. We are indeed, homeward bound.

Much has happened in the interim. The treatments that were supposed to cure my cancer, pretty much did. What we didn't count on was a spread within the same general area, into a couple of small lymph nodes in my back. Once in the lymph system, you're pretty much at the mercy of the Cancer Gods as to one's survival.

I cannot be cured.

I am currently undergoing treatment for these nodes with chemotherapy and the associated side effects that entails. The goal at this point is to get rid of these bad actors and hope I don't recur anytime soon. So far, results have been promising, although I've grown weary of treatment, and wish to put the whole experience behind me. But, as cancer survivors know, you never really put it behind you.

Since the new diagnosis, and with my inability to work, Katie and I spent more time thinking about where we wanted to spend the rest of our lives, and why. The more we thought about it, the more it made sense to return home. I don't know how much time I have left, but I sure don't want to spend it in Portland. We can no longer afford to keep two households, and the pull, always having been strong, predicated the move back, and we couldn't be happier. Katie has already found a job in town, and our Oregon

City residence is on the market. It won't be long now.

When I think about returning, I think about the reasons we left, and other than my illness, our reasons for wanting to return home. In hindsight, we left for all of the wrong reasons. Portland is where I grew up, and where we thought we'd like to retire. When the opportunity arose, we went for it, again, for all the wrong reasons. A crappy job situation; disenchantment after 17 years, and a spat with my daughter all factored into the decision. All things that could have been remedied with a little more thought.

I'm glad we came, though. In the two years we've been in "the Valley," we've come to appreciate all the things we took for granted. We've also come to understand what Portland is, and is not. Portland is a big town now, with big-town problems. Not something we want to deal with anymore. Don't get me wrong:

it can be a great place. Lots of food and entertainment options you can't get in Central Oregon, but if you want or need those options, they're only three hours away. In fact I always told myself I liked Portland now as a place to visit, not stay. How true that has become.

So with that, we're homeward bound, once again, for the last time. I can't wait for fall, and the beauty that is Sisters that time of year. I can't wait to arise in the morning to a brisk sunrise, and a smell that I still can't describe. I long for the snow, and a chance at a White Christmas. The drive I never got tired of from town out to Crossroads, and that incredible view. And of course, friends and loved ones that we have missed so much, and the support Katie and I have received during this now-near-year-long ordeal from all of them.

Yes, we have longed to be — and are — homeward bound.



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LETTERS

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raked by damage and Hayden Homes continues to ignore the obvious fact that they are the root cause.

Sean Palagyi

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To the Editor:

I am very fortunate. I was able to spend time in Sisters, Oregon!

This wasn't my first visit to this charming town. I was anxious to revisit the old and explore the new shops that had opened upon my return.

I entered a new place of business. As I browsed through the shop looking at some locally made apparel, I attempted to unravel a scarf from the shelving it was displayed on. I was the only customer in the store at that time and my struggle seemed incidental to the merchant. I intended to purchase it, but decided otherwise when it didn't seem to matter. In addition, when I asked a question regarding the quality of a brand of gear, it was met with a trite reply. I left with a few meager purchases, when my initial intention was much larger.

My next stop was into a retailer where I had been previously. I returned home with apparel that reminds me of Sisters every time I wear it. I couldn't wait to see what she had to offer this time around. After looking through the racks with no help from the clerk as hangers fell to the floor, I left the shop. No keepsakes this time around.

Last stop was purchasing a pair of shoes for my friend. Hospitable the woman behind the counter was not. She finally ventured out to assist us and we did make a purchase. We both remarked on the uncongenial behavior of the clerk. If we had the time to go elsewhere, we would have.

As visitors, we want to support the local business! We would like to be acknowledged. We want to know your name! Spend time with us and share your expertise about your wares. Thank us for our business. It really does make a difference.

Judy Tracey

Happy Father's Day!



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