



## Of a certain AGE

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Columnist

### No place like home

Most every language has a word for “house.” A separate word for “home” is unique to Northern European languages. An attribute common to both house and home is “shelter.” Home was a term invented by the 17th-century Dutch, who regarded home not only as a physical place, but also as a state of being — convenience, comfort, domesticity, privacy, intimacy, and beauty.

For me, the garden has always been part of my home, which imbues my lifestyle with nature’s own rhythms. The garden is as essential a part of home for me as the surrounding walls and roof over my head.

When I consider possibly selling my house to downsize, it’s not the physical structure or neighbors I would miss. Rather, the sadness of leaving my house would revolve around the creek bed that lies beyond my yard, the autumn blaze maples I planted as young saplings 14 years ago, the stately ponderosas in my front yard that were here long before the development of the street, and the abundant birds and wildlife that fly and

wander through my yard.

Off my back deck is a multi-trunked river birch that, without fail, marks the changing of the seasons. Right now it is resplendent in its radiant fall gold with single leaves releasing and fluttering to the earth. All winter it will rest, with branches bare, exposing its skeleton to be covered by winter snows. Come April or May, its tender pale green leaves mark the rebirth of spring as birds build their nest in the resident bird house, their temporary home while they raise their young. Dense green foliage in the summer creates the sense of living in a tree house as I gaze out my kitchen window.

That birch, and the activities of nature surrounding it, is part of what makes my house a home. Wherever I have lived, the yard surrounding the physical house has been an integral part of making the place a home.

My soul connected to nature as a young child, living among apple and pear trees, with a “hundred-acre wood” full of trails, a stream, and numerous forts behind our yard. Weekend excursions with my dad and his hounds broadened my natural world as did long horseback rides across Tualatin Valley farmland with my cousin. A pet raccoon when I was in grade school endeared those masked marauders to me for life. Dogs and cats have always populated my world.

Summer sessions at Camp Namanu on the Sandy River, idyllic days in Camp Sherman, tent-camping on the banks of the Metolius, and pretending to be a cowgirl on my friend’s ranch across from Lake Creek Lodge quenched my thirst for the great outdoors.

Now, living here in Sisters after 33 years in Seattle, I have truly returned home to the state of my birth and the place of my heart. Walks through the woods and along the creek ground me, return me to myself, quieting the bustle of deadlines and “to-do” lists.

In the Bible, Eden is the first home and, quite appropriately, a garden. In many services of burial is the familiar phrase, “dust to dust.” The cycles of life and cycles of the seasons are inextricably tied. I am now in late fall, preparing for early winter, conscious that it is time to shed possessions and prepare for winter. For me, there is a comforting certainty in those life cycles. All is progressing as designed and I don’t have to decide whether or not to return to the dust.

Here in Sisters we are fortunate to be surrounded on all sides by the abundance of nature with our sentinel mountains, crystal rivers, meandering streams, towering trees, and plentiful wildlife all bundled into four distinct seasons.

As Dorothy says in the Wizard of Oz, “There’s no place like home.” I am indeed *home*.

### Outlaws anchor...



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Senior Matt Harris is an anchor on the Outlaws offensive line and at the linebacker position. Coach Neil Fendall told *The Nugget* that Matt always gives a consistent effort, and he has the focus and ability to learn assignments and transfer it onto the field. Fendall added that Matt never gets enough credit for how good he is as a football player.

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