



Tales from a Sisters Naturalist
by Jim Anderson

My marvelous mentors

Editor's note: Long-time Nugget columnist Jim Anderson is hanging up his spurs and moving to the Willamette Valley to be closer to family. His final columns for The Nugget celebrate the mentors who helped him along the path of a long and fulfilling life in nature, aviation, and journalism.

My life has taken many turns because of the wonderful people I've met along the trail who have mentored, influenced and cared about me.

In 1945, while serving on the USS PCS 1384, my shipmates and I decided to ride the bus from Key West to Miami and celebrate my advancement in my motor mac rating. That trip was one of the dumbest things I ever did.

When I awoke behind a sofa in the Sheraton Hotel, my whites a mess and feeling like I was going to die,

I panicked. When I discovered it was Sunday afternoon and I was about to miss (or already had) the bus back to the Navy base in Key West I thought my world was coming to an end. The little sub-chaser was heading out to sea Monday morning and if I missed it that meant a court-martial for me.

I ran to the bus stop with all I had, and lo and behold, as I turned the corner where I hoped the bus would be, not only was it still there, but the driver was waiting — on the sidewalk.

When he spotted me running he shouted, "Hey, Andy, come on, boy, we're waitin' for ya'. I told your pals you'd make it!" I don't remember his name, but I can still see that wonderful Black man waving me on.

People who care make life worth living...

I was so fortunate to have crossed trails with so many commendable individuals who exerted great influence on my life as I stumbled along.

My first son, Dean, is named for my Oregon foster dad and mentor, Dean Hollinshead of Hollinshead Park in Bend. Ross, my second son, for a hero I met who drove an ambulance in World War I, took care of his sister all her life, and collected birds with two of my birding heroes, Finley and Bohman of the early 1900s. And another son, Reuben Phillip, for Reub Long, who wrote "The Oregon Desert,"

and Phil Brogan who I'm about to tell you about.

By 1959 I was a budding writer for the *Bend Bulletin*, under the guiding hand of my mentor in geology and newspaper writing, Phil Brogan — another person who cared about people — author of "East of the Cascades" and hundreds of stories for *The Bulletin* and *The Oregonian*.

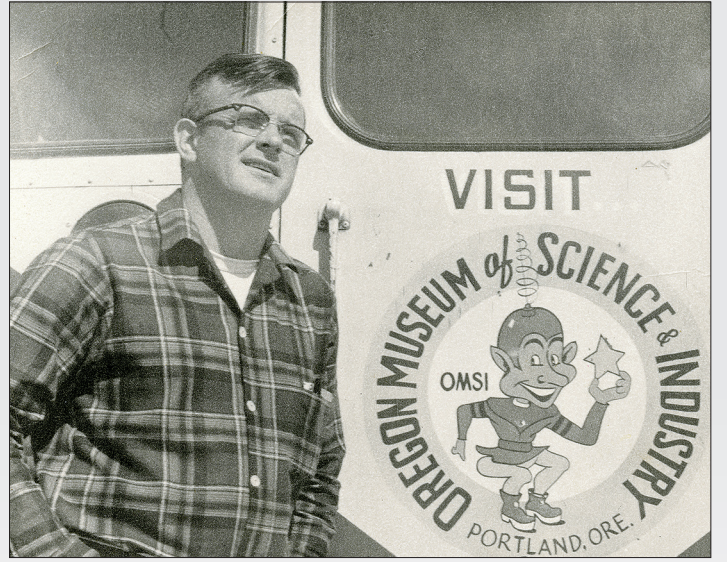
Phil and I became pals shortly after I rolled into Bend in 1951 on my trusty 1947 Harley. I became a powder monkey for Bill Miller — another man who cared about people — in his pumice mining operation west of Bend, close to where William E. Miller Elementary School stands today.

I was continually discovering volcanic "things" that completely mystified me as my working partner Darrel Stevenson and I were drilling blasting holes in the volcanic ash overburden concealing the pumice Bill was after.

Phil Brogan became my walking and breathing geological encyclopedia and enriched my life beyond description.

In the long years we were pals, Phil also discovered something about me I didn't know: I was looking for something more fulfilling. Chasing coyotes, owls, and eagles wasn't quite enough; I needed another dimension.

He pushed me into writing. But not being trained,



Jim Anderson and the OMSI Space cruiser, the museum's 26-passenger Ford bus.

it was difficult for me to dot the i's and cross the t's. I can still recall one incident: Phil had given me the task of writing what "cub" reporters called, "The police beat," the recent activities of the local police department.

I was working hard on the piece, pounding away one finger at a time on the typewriter, trying to make sure I was doing it write (pun intended), when Phil came up behind me.

Phil stood there looking over my shoulder, then, with a soft sigh, reached over, pulled the paper out of the old Royal, sighed again and said, "A naturalist you are, but a reporter you

ain't" (sic), and with pencil in hand, sat down and began to edit what I had typed up (write or wrong)...

But he never let up, and slowly the words I put on paper began to mean something. He gave me more to do and seemed to be more satisfied with the results that opened more doors for me to explore in the world of journalism.

I can still recall the congratulatory call I got from him in the mid-1960s when *The Oregonian* published my first nature column about the arrival of snowy owls in Portland in the paper's new magazine section.

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