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## Author explores nature

(AP) — Writer Barry Lopez explains the difference between his fiction and non-fiction in musical terms.

"An essay ends with a major chord. A short story ends on a minor chord," Lopez said in an interview. "It's another way of saying an essay ends on the page. A short story ends somewhere in the reader's mind."

Lopez is best known for his non-fiction work in natural history. He won the National Book Award in 1986 for *Arctic Dreams*, which grew out of his earlier book, *Of Wolves and Men*.

But throughout his life, he also has written fiction. His latest offering is a collection of short stories, *Field Notes*. The book completes the trilogy started in 1966 by *Desert Notes*, followed by *River Notes* in 1979.

Since he was a boy, growing up in Southern California's San Fernando Valley, Lopez has looked to wildlife and the landscape to help him answer big questions, such as why is there human suffering?

Later, a professor at the University introduced him to the culture of the Navajo.

"Once that door opened, I realized that what I wanted to know, I would learn by going outside my own culture and coming back in," Lopez said. "I was very interested in bringing back a story, of one sort or another, that was useful to my own people, about other people."

In the opening story in *Field Notes*, "Introduction: Within Birds' Hearing," a man runs out of water hiking across the desert and collapses, near death. He is led to water by the song of a canyon wren. An extra note in the wren's song tells the man that the bird knows of his suffering.

In "Pearyland," a lawyer stops within his hectic life to reflect on how he once met a biologist at a fogged-in airport in Greenland. The biologist told a hauntingly incomplete story about finding a place where the spirits of animals go while waiting to be reborn. The native man who watches over them tells the biologist there are fewer spirits all the time,

because people have stopped saying the prayers for the animals they kill.

"Homecoming" tells the story of a biologist who has forgotten the names of the plants in his own backyard while chasing around the world seeking scientific glory. His young daughter leads him back home.

"In a certain way, *Field Notes* is about hope, that our condition is more hopeful than we imagine," Lopez said.

The idea of hope is also behind Lopez's book in progress.

"Toward the end of the work I was doing in *Arctic Dreams*, I realized what I was up to was looking at the relationship between landscape and imagination. How do we imagine where we are? And how does where we are shape the way we imagine everything else?"

"Where that led me is to wonder what is the connection between emotion and landscape. And the emotion that I am most interested in is hope."

Lopez studied aeronautical engineering at the University of Notre Dame, but realized that what he liked about science and mathematics were the metaphors they posed for life. He then switched to literature.

After college he entered a Trappist monastery, but left to pursue his career as a writer. He came to the University for a master of fine arts in writing, and settled far from the city along the McKenzie River, where the river cuts through the big Douglas fir and vine maple on the western slope of the Cascade Range.

Throughout his life, a touchstone has been Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, the classic story of Ahab's quest to kill the great white whale.

"It seems to me the quintessential work of American literature, because it brings together elements of the extraordinary physical landscape that so permeates everything in American life with the big questions, like what is the relationship between an individual and God," Lopez said.

## Youths claim abuse from ranch

OLYMPIA (AP) — Jason Hatley was only 12 years old when he arrived at the O.K. Boys' Ranch, a group foster home for troubled youth.

He was initiated into the violence of the place his first night while he was taking a shower.

Teenagers threw a blanket over Hatley's head, and he was hit and punched while others urinated on him and threw feces at him. Hatley said they dragged him outside and left him naked on the roof.

When he told staff members about the attack, they told him the ranch operated under "the law of the jungle," and he would have to fend for himself.

When the boys found out he had told the staff, he was beaten again, he said.

Hatley, now 21, and 14 other youths from the home successfully brought a lawsuit against the home, which the state closed last week. The settlement Thursday has reached

to \$8.5 million and could increase to more than \$21 million.

The suit claimed sexual abuse was rampant at the O.K. Boys' Ranch for troubled youth from 1985 through 1993. It said the state and the Olympia Kiwanis Club, which operated the foster home, knew of the abuse and did nothing to stop it.

The settlement included \$4.175 million from the state, \$3 million from the Kiwanis Club of Olympia and \$1.36 million from a ranch insurer.

The boys sought nearly \$12.5 million from two additional insurance agencies, said Jack Connelly, one of the attorneys for the youths.

The state Department of Social and Health Services has launched an investigation into the boys' ranch. So far, a regional administrator for the department's children's division has been fired.

"It's very regrettable and should not have happened," said Kathy Spears, spokeswoman for the department. "We want to make sure it never happens again."

Staff members let older boys discipline younger residents, Hatley and other youths said in documents filed with the case in Thurston County Superior Court.

"These boys were taught to react with violence and anger at all threatening stimuli," said Richard Kelley, one of Hatley's attorneys. "This was *Lord of the Flies* gone berserk."

A few times, staff members put boxing gloves on the boys, ordered a fight and wagered cigarettes on the outcome, Hatley said.

Currently, Hatley is serving a sentence at Thurston County Jail for violating probation and a no-contact order protecting a former girlfriend.

## Police officers aren't wanted in Falls City

FALLS CITY (AP) — Residents in Falls City figure they don't need any help fighting crime.

The town of 830 people does not have a police department or a contract with the County sheriff's office for full-time law enforcement.

And most residents like it that way.

In the Sept. 20 election, voters rejected proposals to hire a full-time city police officer or contract with the Polk County sheriff's office. They cited two reasons: money and a lack of crime.

Both ballot measures would have required \$186,000 over three years. The owner of a \$60,000 house would have paid more than \$210 in extra taxes annually during that period.

"Who can afford it?" resident Hazel Frink asked. "We get along fine this way."

Moreover, residents said Falls City is a nice, quiet town with no serious crime issues for a full-time officer to address.

"It's just a typical small town," James Yurkievich said. "I don't see that we have that much of a problem. If things got too crazy out here, I think a lot of residents would take care of it themselves."

Falls City does have 911 service and the sheriff's department does respond to calls, even though it takes deputies anywhere from a half an hour to two hours to do so.

City officials and Polk County Sheriff Ray Steele doesn't like it.

"I can't say that Falls City has more crime than any other place," he said. "But they do have crime out there and they need to have the ability to address that crime in a timely fashion."

Polk County does not keep statistics on crime in Falls City or the number of calls it responds to there. But Steele said his deputies respond to an average of two to three calls a day from the city, ranging from burglary and domestic disputes to speeding and barking dogs.

There are only a few incorporated cities in Oregon that lack a regular law enforcement service. But Jerry Freshour, deputy director of the State Board on Public Safety Standards and Training, said the state does not keep track of which ones they are.

Oregon law does not require cities to have their own law enforcement services.