

Celebrating graduation in a tuberculosis hospital

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Graduation will look a little different for the class of 2020, but it is still a reason to celebrate! A sentiment taken to heart by the 8th and 12th grade students who found themselves at the Oregon State Tuberculosis Hospital in June 1937. In the face of treatment for a very scary disease, removal from home and family, the greatest economic depression the country had seen and a very uncertain future, 11 students received their diplomas in a hospital auditorium that year. Despite the circumstances, they celebrated.

In the 1930s, a diagnosis of tuberculosis for many Oregonians meant a prolonged admission to the Oregon State Tuberculosis Hospital, located just outside of Salem in what is now the campus of Corban University. The hospital had a capacity for about 325 patients, with an expected average stay of 17 ½ months. While the hospital could provide treatments ranging from fresh air and light therapy to aggressive surgery, there were no cures or vaccines for this disease. Death rates at the hospital were about 18% of admitted patients. Those who were eventually released, were often readmitted and dealt with lingering health concerns.

The world was also topsy-turvy. The U.S. was in the throes of the Great Depression, but an additional blow was felt that June, as unemployment levels spiked to 19%.

For many students, admission to the hospital meant leaving home behind. Marion County residents accounted for only about 10% of admissions. Patients came from all the western Oregon coun-



1937 graduates (left to right) Mary Yamahiro, Mary Yokota, Daisy Rains and Arlene Clark as they appear in Leona Fast's photo album from the Oregon State Tuberculosis Hospital in Salem. Photo Source: Willamette Heritage Center Collections 2005.015.0001 WILLAMETTE HERITAGE CENTER COLLECTIONS 2005.015.0001

ties (Eastern Oregon had their own hospital at this point). Even far from home, they kept up their studies under the supervision of two teachers, one who was supplied as part of the Roosevelt administration's Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) program.

The hospital hosted a traditional Baccalaureate service for students on the Sunday evening before graduation, with a sermon preached by the Rev. George Swift of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Salem. Then on Friday evening, June 11, the diplomas were handed out in a ceremony to 8th graders: Arlene Clark, James Crandell, Wilton Leach, Delmer Jensen, Mary Yokota and Mary Yamahiro and high school seniors: Jero Kodama, George Simmons, Daisy Rains, Florence Kneeland and Helen Griffith.

Beyond the newspaper accounts and government statistics for the facility, there is very little official documentation of what life would have been like for these young adults in the Oregon State Tuberculosis Hospital or their gradua-

tion day. A photo album kept by a young patient named Leona Fast, now a part of the Willamette Heritage Center's collections, provides a rare glimpse into the lives of these students and what graduation may have looked like. It appears Leona captured many of her friends in their graduation finery. Girls in white flowing dresses with flower crowns in their hair and holding rolled scrolls appear to be the graduates, although Leona's handwritten captions don't explicitly say that the photos were taken on graduation day.

Leona had graduated from Salem High School a year earlier, but the next few months did not go according to plan. The very day of her graduation, her family received a visit to let them know that there was a space for Leona's little sister Martha at the Oregon State Tuberculosis Hospital. Martha left for the hospital the next day. Leona continued to visit until she herself was admitted to the hospital less than a month later, giving up the opportunity for a ste-

nography position she was hoping to take.

The sisters' parents and brother were allowed to visit, but the family didn't have a car and either had to bike the 7 miles to the hospital and back or rely on neighbors and church friends to drive them. The sisters were on different wards, and Leona made as many visits as she could and sent notes when she couldn't. In October that year, Martha passed away. She was just 13 years old. Leona went home to be with the family as they made funeral preparations. She returned to the hospital a few days later and would remain there for much of the next few years.

The difficulties didn't magically disappear for the Oregon State Tuberculosis Hospital class of 1937 on graduation day. The outbreak of World War II would upend their lives again. 8th grade graduate Mary Yokota returned to her Portland home only to be forcibly removed a few years later and sent to Idaho with her mother and brother to be incarcerated at the Minidoka Camp for the duration of the war.

Despite the loss and difficulty, there are so many expressions of joy, camaraderie, friendship and hope in Leona's photobook. I find it a good reminder that no matter what the circumstances, you can usually find something to celebrate.

Want to learn more about Leona's life at the hospital? Check out her diary, photobook and more and join the conversation on flipgrid.com (Flipcode: 0b3b59fc).

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Miller

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Survivor, apocalypse edition

Scientists tell us that the toughest species on earth is the tardigrade, an eight-legged microscopic animal also known as the water bear or, no kidding, moss piglet.

They can survive extremes of hot and cold, lethal-levels of radiation, dried-brine-shrimp desiccation, starvation-level food deprivation and lack of oxygen.

After laying in the vegetable beds, my vote for end-of-days durability is the tomato.

Even after a year of baking and freezing during seasonal weather changes along with the grass clippings, vegetable trimmings, coffee grounds and lay-

ers of soil, in the black, plastic Earth Machine dome composter, the seeds of *Solanum lycopersicum*, ranging from Sungold – especially Sungold – to Better Boy survive, nay thrive.

And seeds sprout like clockwork, en masse, when the overnight low temperature hits 50 degrees, popping up like a mini-lawn among the newly planted green bean, radish and carrot seeds.

Yep, when humanity is collectively composting, the tardigrades and Leo-

na's toes will be around, along with the other legendary survivor, the cockroach.

FISHING QUOTE OF THE WEEK: Originally about golf, this truism applies equally to fishing: "The reason that beginners are so good at it is that they haven't learned how difficult it is."

Contact Henry Miller, recovering wildlife offender, via email at HenryMillerSJ@gmail.com

Matterhorn

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Grande along Highway 82, a winding road that follows the Grande Ronde and Wallowa rivers as they slice into canyons that gradually rise into titanic Wallawas.

The small towns along this highway, especially Enterprise and Joseph, are worth a stop. They feature a cultivated art scene, craft food and brew pubs, music and history.

We had everything we needed thanks to a grocery stop in Enterprise, but upon reaching Joseph, the last stop before the trailhead, we realized we'd forgotten something crucial: whiskey.

Yes, yes, I know, getting hammered in the outdoors is a terrible idea. But I also know that on difficult backpacking trips, it helps to have a little flask of strong drink for post-dinner relaxation, and a small dab of whiskey and water is my preference.

We were in luck. In downtown Joseph, Stein Distillery sells locally produced spirits. We bought a bottle of rye whiskey with the thought that buying local — instead of Jack Daniels — would bring us good fortune. It did.

Ascent to Ice Lake (8 miles one-way, 3,400 feet of climb)

Surrounded by the two tallest peaks in Eastern Oregon and filled with rich blue water, Ice Lake sits in a multicolored basin 7,800 feet in the sky.

The beauty, high elevation and close access to the Matterhorn and Sacajawea Peak make Ice Lake a perfect base camp for climbing the Wallowa's two highest summits.

But getting there is nowhere near easy. Beginning at Wallowa Lake Trailhead, the hike feels a bit like a frog being slowly boiled. The difficulty comes not all at once, but in a slow uphill grind that gradually sucks all your energy.

The first 3 miles follow the roaring West Fork Wallowa River before a cutoff for Ice Lake Trail takes you across a log bridge and uphill.

With heavy packs and boiling temperatures — we arrived in the middle of a heat wave — by afternoon we were drenched in enough sweat to fill a small reservoir.

The view through sweat-soaked eyes was outstanding, though, full of meadows speckled with wildflowers like Indian paintbrush and bachelor button. The best spot was mile 5.4, where Lower Adam Creek Falls thunders into the canyon and Upper Adam Creek Falls can be seen in the distance above.

The air felt thinner, and our legs



Alpine views green hikers around every turn on Ice Lake Trail in northeastern Oregon's Eagle Cap Wilderness in the Wallowa Mountains. ZACH URNESS / STATESMAN JOURNAL

heavier, as we climbed through the high county meadows and finally arrived at Ice Lake. We set up camp on the lake's east side and spent the evening stuffing ourselves with beef jerky, dried fruit and freeze-dried spaghetti and meatballs, all the while enjoying the view of the mountain we planned to climb the next morning.

Ice Lake to the Matterhorn (4.4 miles round-trip, 2,117 feet of climb)

For decades, the Matterhorn was considered the tallest peak in the Wallowa Mountains and Eastern Oregon.

It lost the title only recently, when a re-measurement showed that nearby Sacajawea Peak is 12 feet higher at 9,838 feet.

The Matterhorn is a bit easier to reach since a climbers' trail takes you within striking distance of the summit, but we'd also planned to bag Sacajawea, which can be reached by following the ridgeline at the top.

We awoke to a perfect morning, bright blue and with just a few scattered clouds in the sky. The last weather report indicated nothing but hot sunshine.

The Matterhorn climbers' trail begins from Ice Lake's northwest shoreline, crossing a tumbling creek and heading uphill to a grassy meadow filled with blue wildflowers. Above, the route moves into the brightly colored alpine region above tree line.

At 9,051 feet, we hiked below a massive U-shaped basin of swirling white

marble with a teardrop pool among patchy snowfields. We stopped for snacks and spied a mountain goat in the distance, making its way along the cliff face.

The next push climbed a section of loose, crumbling, reddish-brown limestone — probably the toughest part of the climb — and over a ridgeline we got our first view of Ice Cube Lake, blue and sparkling among the snow in a meadow below.

In the final stretch the trail disappeared as we worked our way up the marble of the Matterhorn's summit block, reaching the ridgeline with panoramic views across the wilderness and finally the summit.

From the summit, the Wallowa Mountains spread out in a wilderness of uniform spikes, of valleys and blue pools too numerous to place. Even with the gusts of wind, and despite being just below 10,000 feet, it was so hot that motivation for more climbing began to wane.

"You know what sounds good?" I said. "A swim in that tiny lake, trying out that whiskey back at camp and a nap."

"The whiskey does sounds good," Gonnerka said.

And so we headed down the mountain — declaring victory on the Wallowa's second-highest point — for a quick swim and relaxing afternoon.

Almost the moment we got down to the shores of Ice Lake, dark clouds rumbled in, high winds picked up and it began to rain, and then rain a little harder, and even harder. It would have been a miserable and dangerous thing to be

high on the ridgeline in that weather.

We decided, after taking shelter back in our tent, that this was the first time in memory a bottle of whiskey got us out of trouble as opposed to the reverse.

Eagle Cap Wilderness: Ice Lake to Matterhorn

In a nutshell: A difficult backpacking trip into the Wallowa Mountain backcountry, to spectacular Ice Lake and up the summit of the Matterhorn, the mountain's second-tallest peak.

Length: 20.4 miles (16 miles round-trip to Ice Lake, 4.4 to Matterhorn summit)

Climb: 5,517 feet (3,400 feet to Ice Lake, 2,117 to Matterhorn)

Open: Mid-July to late September

Permits: Must fill out a free wilderness permit

Restrictions: No campfires around Ice Lake. Only camp at established sites, 200 feet from the water's edge.

Directions (to Wallowa Lake Trailhead): From La Grande and Interstate 84, follow Highway 82 east toward Wallowa Lake. Once you reach the entrance to the state park, veer left at the campground entrance and follow the paved road to a large parking area and trailhead.

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