

WALTZING TOWARD THE EQUINOX
(NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITY GARDEN)
AUGUSTA BENEDICT

river as an analogy for the flow of an individual's days. The River of Life, moving towards the great and oceanic collective unconsciousness. I like the metaphor. It allows for the cascades, eddies and runnels of the individual in the here and now, while connecting to the omnipresence of the universe.

A proposal seems in order here, concerning the daily flow of our lives, the common weal and our collective presence in this habitat. To the west of our living area, attention has always been upon that body of water and its geologic monoliths. Yet flowing modestly from the eastern slopes of our community a number of rivulets deserve an equal amount of attention. Does one of these waterways flow next to or through your neighborhood? Do you know its source point? Do you know if the waterbed is in need of restoration to its natural state? For that matter, could you properly attend to such a project? Restoration of habitat is somewhat more than clearing out dead underbrush and removing kitchen appliances dumped there. Adopt your local streambed. Join with your neighbors and assure your waterways are well maintained. Watershed quality isn't easy. But, it is engaging and satisfying work. The frogs will appreciate your efforts. And, the river of life will flow more sweetly.

O.K., I'll take my walking cane, hop off the soapbox and return to the garden. There are nasturtiums to be watered.

(If you would like to become a Community Garden member and begin growing your own vegetables, flowers, and herbs, the volunteer-operated garden welcomes new members. Regularly scheduled work parties are held at the garden each Sunday morning from 9 am to 10 am. No experience, tools, or horticultural enlightenment are required. The garden's Sprout Queen, Leslie Sroufe, can be reached at 436-0738 for more information. The garden is located at the east end of Madison Street, in the Grove.)

This month I feel moved to set aside spade, hoe and mattock. Hand me down my walking cane, for I believe this column is shuffling up to the soapbox. By way of thematic direction for this month's article the much-beloved Reverend and Editor Huits suggested, "water as an element of gardening." Ah, the abundant possibilities! Whetting my plume, I considered the homages written about this, the baptismal element of a gardener's Holy Trinity, earth, sun, water. Paragraphs could be written on the mercurial and mesmeric arc of water streaming from the mouth of a garden hose at dawn. Passages could flow from the blossoming heat of a July morning and water-darkened soil exuding the close, humid aroma of transformation.

Rhapsodies could flood a page about the tactile purl of cool water trickling over one's hand and spattering below, in the crusted dryness of a nasturtium bed. Narrations could drift forever about the epic inspiration and respite to be found in water swallowed from cupped hands parched by toil in the midday sun. Odes, fluent in their line, could echo in the hiss of grey drizzle seeping through the drawn twilight between dense pine needles.

But then, let's be sensible. There are those who, as the song laments, don't miss their water until the well runs dry. Denny Smith, gubernatorial aspirant here in Oregon, is one of those people. Only, he won't miss his water until the river runs dry, in this case the Columbia River. The Colorado River is literally being sucked dry and Lake Shasta actually drained into puddledom through mismanagement of bioregional resources. You'd think this would give pause to our blithely arrogant candidate before offering to sell off our bioregion's water to such profligates.

Not hardly. Mr Smith chooses to align himself with any number of land pimps who squander the resources and treasures of our habitat for their personal aggrandizement and monetary gain. By selling Mother Earth's bounty into the whoredom of profit motive, these profiteers damage and diminish all. Most certainly the land suffers. Their avarice supplants any true interest in the common weal of localized community.

Speaking of local, what do you know of your own watershed? It's fun to poke at the festering foibles of statewide or bioregional maniacs. It's also too easy. Let's do something a tad more difficult. Watershed issues bring matters to more immediate focus. Can you walk up to and point at the source of your tap water? What happens to your toilet water when you flush? How much rain fell on the pitcher's mound at the city park in 1992? 1991? 1990? What percentage of water washing on our beach from the mouth of the Columbia also flowed past the Trojan electricity generation plant? Describe four different types of water catchment containers. Name ten water conservation measures easily implemented in your own dwelling? What is a grey water system? What costs more to produce, a gallon of water or a gallon of gasoline? Which of the two is worth more? A number of rivulets empty into the Pacific Ocean along our beach. Can you trace their courses to their origins? What wetland areas are within the urban growth boundary of Cannon Beach?

You could care less? No doubt there are a number of people in this watershed who think of water quality issues about as long as it takes to turn on their lawn sprinkler. But then, it's not for fopish fad that bottled water is consumed so heavily in certain watersheds around this globe. At one point those folks didn't care either.

Any number of traditions make use of the

WILDLIFE ON THE EDGE



Busy parental BARN SWALLOWS, with orange tummies and dark backs, live in the eaves outside our bookstore. Hours can be wiled away watching the harried couple taking turns stuffing hungry mouths and collecting insect lunches. Barn swallows are just one of several Swallow varieties we enjoy here during the summer.



The OREGON SALAMANDER is small with an orange-brown back and pale belly. It can only be found if you happen to be poking under wet, rotting leaves. It walks as though it has nothing but thumbs.



Two beauties in bloom this month are the FOXGLOVE & QUEEN ANNE'S LACE.

Foxglove, with its pretty purple/pink (or white) blossoms is medicinal like many plants, but large doses are deadly.

Queen Anne's lace, though named after a long-dead great British monarch, is no more than a wild version of the common carrot.



By Sally Lockart

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