

Rev.
Hults

Editorial Now & Then



We have been, as our constant readers may have noticed, experimenting with longer and longer headlines that are less and less relevant to the rest of the paper. We promise to stop soon. The idea was to use a headline as a complete thought, or an underlying theme, that would be referred to indirectly elsewhere in the paper. For example, last month our headline was Dylan Thomas' line "Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light." A typical upbeat holiday season headline for the Edge (last December our head was, "He who is not busy being born is busy dying"), and inside was a piece on how to behave at the death of the world. Our headline this month comes from an old Cornish piece by our favorite author, Anonymous. We first saw it quoted on the bottom of a Family Dog Poster, in the sixties. Professor Lindsey did some asking around and Valerie at Cannon Beach Book Co. came up with the more; "From ghoulies and ghosties and long leggety beasties, and things that go bump in the night, Good Lord, deliver us!"

Yes, the winters here on the Oregon Coast are perhaps similar to those in the southwest of England in the days of the Celts. The dark times. The folks that used to live here, about the same time as the Celts were living there, use to gather in the longhouses and sing, perform elaborate theatrical presentations, tell the stories of the people, and gather together for warmth of many kinds. And still today, we notice our little village awake with activity in the modern longhouses. Our hunting, gathering, building, is slowed by the sheets of rain, wind, the darkness. We gather by the fires, tell the stories, renew the bonds of the people, and protect each other from those "things that go bump in the night".

As we begin our new year we have thoughts about the last three years before twenty ought hundred. When your beloved editor was young, most folks believed that by now we would be well into exploring other solar systems, flying around futuristic cities on "Buck Rodgers" rockets with atomic wrist watches, and would have formed one world government that ended all war. Well, not quite. With just three years left in this century it might be wise to look back at how far we have come since 1897. In that year McKinley was inaugurated President of the United States, and the King of Korea declared himself Emperor; H.G. Wells published "The Invisible Man"; "The Katzenjammer Kids", America's first Comic Strip, was published; severe famine hit India and the Royal Automobile Club was formed in England. In the next three years discoveries in science began to build the foundations of today's world. The Curies discovered radium, the first photographs were taken in artificial light, and Zeppelin built his first airship. We were able to record and transmit the human voice, Freud had published his theories on dreams and something called quantum theory was formulated by Max Planck. The United States had gained a great deal of real estate in a "lovely little war" with Spain, and was entering what has been called "The American Century" with confidence.

As we sit at our Mac and surf the net from the left edge of this country, we wonder what will happen in the next thirty six months. Will there be an Upper Left Edge? What will it look like? Will there be your beloved editor, what will he look like? Young James will be able to join in vespers at the Church of Bill's, what will Bill's look like? What will Cannon Beach look like? Stay tuned.

We must say that we are humbled and delighted by the support shown by our community and our readers in response to our pleas for help in publishing "Uncle Mike's Real Guide to the Oregon Coast" by Michael Burgess, with disturbing illustrations by Steve McLeod, "Wildlife on the Edge" by Sally Lackaff, and "Letters to Uncle Mike" by Michael Burgess. Our event at the Chamber raised almost \$3 grand, and the benefit at the Legion brought in \$12 hundred, and we received an anonymous donation of one thousand dollars. This means that we have the money for the first printing of 1000 copies of Michael's book, and we hope to have it on the shelves, or in the hands of everyone who paid in advance, by Valentines Day. You can still reserve your copy, autographed by Michael and Steve, by sending a check for \$20 (for each copy) to: The Left Coast Group, Box 1222, Cannon Beach, OR 97110. (If you would like to take a tax deduction for your continued support of The Left Coast Group [a non-profit corporation in Oregon] make your donation check payable to the Manzanita Creative Arts Council, write, "The Left Coast Group" on the memo line, and send it to us.)

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Some of us have known for a while that there is a plan to tear down this heart of our daily life. Bill's Tavern, where memories were made, lies told, and dreams born, where the wood stove warms cold and wet folks up from the beach in the winter. Where locals can find a few days' work from a contractor who is treating his crew to an after work beer. Bill's Tavern, where free live acoustic music is played by local folks, for local folks Bill's: the place where everybody knows your name, and what you do for a living, who you keep company with, how much you lost at poker last week; and don't seem to worry about it too much. Bill's: where white haired women of substance sit a table away from green haired young folks and both groups are drinking local micro-brewed beers with relish. Bill's holds so many memories and a few fuzzy recollections for all of us. Your beloved Reverend has a vivid image of one day, long ago, between the time he foolishly left this beautiful spot to vainly search for someplace better, and his wise return some seven years ago. There were many trips here in those years to gather rocks for carving, to renew the spirit and or body, and often as a stop on a journey elsewhere. This one visit was one of those. Soaked to the skin after hiking back from Indian Beach in a full gale hauling a pack heavy with rocks to carve, your beloved rev. had reached the safety of Bill's, and the fire in the stove. It had been perhaps years since the last visit so no one tending bar looked really that familiar. A beautiful young woman approached (all the female bartenders at Bill's are beautiful and all the male bartenders are brave, and visa versa.), she looked at the puddle forming under the coat, hat, pack and boots arranged by the stove and the not to prosperous looking customer before her. "Can I help you?", she said. But her eyes were saying, "Can anybody help you?" She took a mumbled order for stew and a Bud, and left, but she kept the Bud coming. It took the better part of the evening for everything to dry out, and by then the power to form a sentence had returned to your beloved rev., for a short period, and he had learned that the beautiful woman was named "small bird" ("It's from the I Ching, look it up."), he also had run up a tab well into two figures. Small bird stood looking and the now warm and fuzzy rev. with a look about her that said, "I'm not feeding this stray dog, and he's not following me home." "So, you want to settle up?," she said? From deep inside his wallet the rev. pulled out the last money he had to his name. Luckily it turned out to be a \$100 bill. Small bird's eyes widened, she shook her head and she laughed. And he laughed. And he fell in love. It has happened since to many people, we have attended several of the weddings. It didn't happen to small bird, but it was still nice.

Getting belatedly to the point, we all have places that remind us of love, and Bill's is certainly one. Bill's is in the long tradition of the 'public house' in American, and in fact world history. Where the 'public', friend and stranger alike, gather to imbibe edibles and potables and gage the mood of the people. The public house has been the scene of some of the major discussions in the life of this world. A place of freedom of expression. A place of potential romance. A place of life. We will miss it. We humbly second Professor Lindsey's call for a round on the house. And sadly wait the last, "Last Call!!".

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