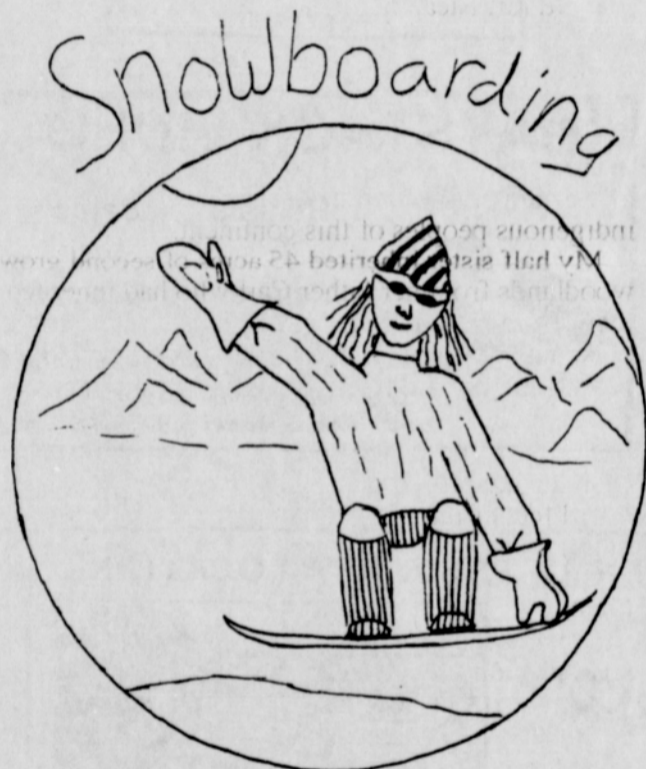




Greetings from Fire Mountain. Most people in this community are probably familiar with the school, but for those who are not, I shall illuminate some of the details. This parent-run educational community sprouted roots in 1983. Through storms and sunshine, trailers and people's houses it flourished under the care of many committed gardeners. After finding its home on the edge of the Oswald West State Park, the school has been nestled in a beautiful structure for many years. New to the school this year are myself, Tracy Bocarde and Jill Hurley. We ebb and flow happily with the new experience as learning facilitators.

It gives me great honor to draw open the curtains onto the creativity and perspective of our eighteen young minds. Each month two or three students will include something they would like to share. Since we practice community building education, it feels important to build bridges between these dynamite students and the "outside world." By the way, we are embarking on the formidable project of writing a book on Oswald West State Park. We see this project as a way to tune people into the importance and significance of that stretch of land, and to make research projects fun and real. If anyone has any pertinent information for us, please call me, Tracy, at 436-2610 or 436-0374. Fire Mountain was in fact named for Neahkahnie Mountain, yet another reason to pay special homage to the park.

Thank you Billy, from all of us, for this opportunity. Here are the first three students.



It looks like it's going to be an early winter. I can hardly wait until I get up there. After surfing all summer the next best thing is snowboarding all winter.

Micah Cerelli, Fourth Grade, Arch Cape

In public school there are too many rules. You have to do a mile run in P.E. every month, even if you throw up. You must eat all of your food at lunch time. There is no carrying on conversations while you eat. There is no sharing food with your friends. In the library, you must keep a distance of at least four feet between yourself and another person. (And absolutely no talking.) In class, we were not allowed to help each other with school work. And we could not work ahead in our books, even if you knew the answer. At my school, no one makes you run a mile, especially if you are sick. We have swimming lessons once a week at the public swimming pool. Once a week a group of students cooks lunch for the rest of the students. If we cook Mexican food, we study about Mexico. If we cook Italian, we study Italy. We have a lot of fun doing it, and no one scolds us for talking. At reading time, the older kids often read to the younger kids. Often someone is sitting on someone else's lap.

These are some of the reasons I feel good about my new school.
Jessica Rogers, Fourth Grade, Hwy 26



Little Miss Claire sat on her hair eating with her friend Beth, along came a bear and munched their eclairs, and scared them half to death.

Allie Waldhaus, Third Grade, Seaside



Dear Camille,

This is the first letter I've ever written you. For eighteen years I've been able to walk down the block, turn the corner at Gogona Street, knock on your door, and say hello. Now you've gone out into the wider world, a young woman, fates cast suddenly to the wind. I am unabashedly proud, yet feel a marked sense of loss. Suddenly, to my surprise, I find myself like Lord Chesterfield or Polonius, in great danger of imparting well-intentioned platitudes and mock wisdom about life and the world. Forgive me please. Forgive me also for not writing sooner, but be assured that you've never strayed far from my thoughts. Eighteen years past this Halloween Eve, your father and mother, Ed and Laurie Beers, invited me into their home to introduce me to a beautiful child, one-day old. At that moment the nicest thing that ever happened to me in my life occurred.

"Meet your new God-daughter Camille," Ed told me. I was completely flummoxed, teary, and without words. Through the years, in my otherwise childless life, I have been as proud of you as if you were my very own. I get a bit schnuffly right now remembering that night. As a Godfather, I fear I have sadly neglected your spiritual up-bringing. My sense is that you've handled that rather nicely yourself. I once told your friend James Massa that I expected him to tighten up and make me proud of him. "One day I'll be gone," I told him. "I don't have any children of my own. I've decided that you will be my replacement. Don't mess up."

You, too, Camille, will be one of those who takes my place. Perhaps you can cast a brighter light on the world than my generation and its predecessors.

The years have drifted away swiftly like fluffs of dandelion on a fall wind. Only yesterday you were swaddled in blankets, smiling peacefully in that tiny dory-boat crib my brother made you. Now you've passed beyond kindergarten, school plays, soccer matches, the senior prom, and your first Mustang.

Cannon Beach has always been a little town with great stories. We love our characters, their shortcomings and triumphs. In flights of imaginative fancy we magnify and intensify their small triumphs over the average, humdrum, and quotidian. Both you and I share that heritage and good fortune. A friend once told me that my life was like a poem, the various verses and stanzas composing a life work of intense and rarified emotion. In my life many of the memorable and most lyrical passages transpired during my tenure at the University of Oregon, the place you have chosen for advanced schooling. I'm quietly pleased that you will scuff through those same pathways of fall leaves I once trod, haunt some of my old haunts, ponder the perennial questions we once pondered.

You may think me a doting old sod, but my one regret is that I can't join you for a campus walk and tell you how things were. First I'd show you the ancient ginkgo tree that sits near historic Deady Hall. On fall days I would stare up at its branches and dream of the mythical golden raintree and a peaceful world.

On October 8th, 1970, I left the war in Vietnam. On October 10th, 1970 I began graduate courses at the University of Oregon. The week before I arrived, students had installed craters on the grounds of the R.O.T.C. building to demonstrate against the war. I would try to describe for you the restlessness on campus, the student dissatisfaction with a world gone dark, a dream that had died. In those years our heroes appeared on campus in Eugene, people who spoke out against inequities and social injustice, Senators Wayne Morse and William Fullbright, young John Kerry of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Ron Eachus who had travelled to Hanoi with Jane Fonda. We students tasted change in the very air we breathed. We could make a difference. Nixon and the old hypocrisies were shrivelling and failed.

We could visit Minnie Washburne Park and the steps of Condon Hall where Steve Prefontaine, David Knight and I would fraternize on soft spring days, free of care, mercifully denied prescience and a vision of things to come. I would certainly show you Hayward Field and try to conjure the electricity and roar of the '72 Olympic Trials. The flashes of yellow and green circling that unique venue during the 1970's raced through the annals of track and field history. Jim Ryan, Dave Wottle, Kenny Moore, Lasse Virens, Francie Larrieu, Emile Puttemans, Lee Evans, Bruce Jenner, and the rest left their footprints on that oval. Bill Bowerman stalked the infield in his slouch hat and overcoat, forever the coaches coach.

If you were a few years older, we'd visit Maxie's and Taylor's for a pint or two. The walls of those venerable public houses have acted as sounding boards for students' ideas, dreams, and fears for generations and appear destined to do so in your life as well.

Finally, I'd take you to the library. I lived in the University of Oregon Library, Camille. It was a place of dreams made manifest. All the voices that ever spoke in the world were there, some obvious and accessible, some furtive and elusive. They talked to me, strove to clarify the abstract concepts and queries posed by my professors. In the spring of my life, the memories of those hazy hours spent in the soft murmur of the library indelibly etch my recollection of college days. Perhaps I can visit you one spring day when the flowering plums and tulip trees grace the campus grounds. Those were the moments that break the spirit's sleep.

My love to you,
Peter



UPPER LEFT EDGE NOVEMBER 1997

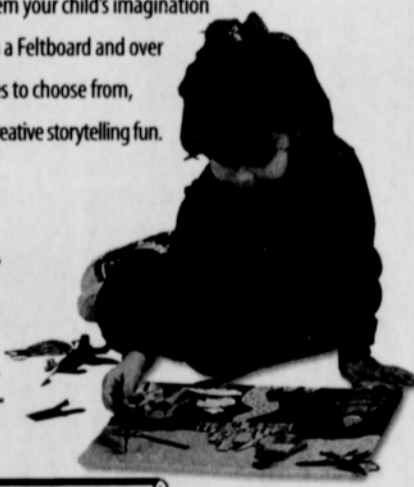
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There would be 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 from the Western Hemisphere (North & South) and 8 Africans,
51 would be female, 49 would be male,
70 would be nonwhite; 30 would be white,
70 would be non-Christians, 30 would be Christian,
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