



My old high school baseball coach began his introduction of the team each year by telling the student body "I'm like a mosquito in a nudist colony. I know what to do; I just don't know where to begin!" This month I find myself in a somewhat analogous position. Hobos frequently dined on "rainbow stew," a slapdash melange of potables thrown together in a common pot. This column may take that shape. A patchwork duck. A crazy-quilt of dibs and dabs. I know my vector but the moss often grows on all sides of a tree around here. If I wander off in circles like a puppy dog on his first trip to the beach, please forgive me.

With an abrupt seasonal wrench this week, we seem to have begun our slouch toward the dark time. The wagon-masters are circling up the Winnebagos for the long trek home, pelicans surf the fall swell south toward the land of eucalypts, wine, and smog. Garden spiders erect their insect gill-nets in dying blackberry vines, bent on the fall harvest of buggish beasts. This week was the short rain. Soon will come the wind and long rains.

So. Enough shilly-shallying. It's time to cut to the case at hand. Last month the Cannon Beach Arts Association notified me that I am recipient of a grant to write what I proposed to be an "anecdotal history" of Cannon Beach. My friend Terence O'Donnell authored a fine history of Cannon Beach for our own Historical Society. Based on documentation and research, his work stands as the current approved record of city history. Now that the rains have commenced its time for me to stop cutting bait and begin to fish. In short, it's time to write. My historical fishing will be slightly different than Terence's. Essentially anecdotal, the material will be filtered through my recollections and imagination, albeit based on contact and conversations with characters, many deceased, who ranged about in Cannon Beach in a time gone by. In my view, all history is by nature to some degree subjective. If I fail mildly in historical veracity, oh well. Custer didn't give much of an account of his skirmish at Little Bighorn, but the Indians and deserters did the best that they could in the aftermath. My scratchings may not be sanitized and tidy like some other accounts of our village history, but trails through human memory are often rough, tangled, and messy. I like good stories. For four decades I've listened to our people talk here at the edge. I think I'm ready to prepare a manuscript that suggests what the flavor of life in Cannon Beach was like in the city's earlier years. I hope not to offend anyone's memory. I'm naming names and nosing around in some scruffy matters. I favor slices of life that are jocular and foibled. You know how your Professor is.

I have about a year to crank this thing up. That's about 100 inches of rain and 12 months time. I'm soliciting your help, dear readers, in locating additional sources of recollection: oral histories, interviews, accounts. If you know individuals I should contact or pertinent material, please contact me in care of The Upper Left Edge, or at home: Peter Lindsey, Box 454, Cannon Beach, Oregon, 97110 (503) 436-1732. Your help will be most appreciated.

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### FROM THE LOWER LEFT CORNER

IMPRINTED ON A LOVING MOTHER  
Victoria Stoppello

"You can't go home again." What is meant by that phrase? You can't go home again because you're no longer a kid and the relationships have changed, because you're unwilling to live the way you used to, or because your memory has fooled you. Things aren't the way you remember them and they never were—you just made it all up with your kiddie brain.

You can't go home again—that's what I think when I visit familiar places which are now so changed as to be unrecognizable. A few weeks ago we visited my grand-parents' house in Clatskanie. Out Swedetown Road, left on Havenacre, then down a long driveway. When I was a kid, this would have been an intrusion because there were only three houses, all occupied by people we knew well. Above the drive was a two acre hillside where we kids played. At the end of that pasture was a line of fir trees and nestled in their shadow was the sauna.

After both grandparents died, the house was sold. When I visited during the 70's, the house and yard were generally unchanged, but the sauna—someone had purchased the uphill property and had pushed it over with heavy equipment. Still intact, the sauna lay on its side, a cast-off. That's the first time I thought "you can't go home again." The happy times, the ritual of grandpa firing up the sauna on a Saturday, the evening bath, the cool walk back to the house in my pajamas, followed by a snack and bed—those are the memories that were shoved aside with the little building and with progress.

Last week, a visit to the same spot didn't arouse the same emotions. The inexorable process of filling in the land has been steady and I've become numb to it. Trying to show my husband the sauna location was difficult—no natural landmarks remained. The big firs were topped long ago. A patchwork of houses and yards have turned the seemingly vast pasture into a small neighborhood. Where there was mystery and adventure, deer and wild kids in the upper orchard, there is only predictability. Grandma's house, however, remains a citadel of memory. Whoever lives there now liked it the way they found it and they're preserving what they found.

The more shocking experience of "you can't go home again" was a drive through Gresham last week after five years absence. When I told others about my experience, they laughed and said "it's a different world isn't it?" In Gresham, I felt the bulldozer of population growth. Houses, apart-ments, strip malls, parking lots filled a landscape that not long ago was some of the best berry growing land in the US. The produce stands that used to be a delightful aspect of the drive to Mt. Hood are now non-existent or so obscured by fast food joints that I couldn't find them. The field where I picked strawberries now has an office building. I was stunned: This is the population explosion and it's finally reached the Northwest. My first reaction was, with all these people and all these houses covering farmland, where are we going to get enough food? But my other, more sentimental reaction was, will there be no part of the landscape that remains intact? Will there be no place near human habitation that will retain its natural features?

You can't go home again. One friend experiences it when she flies back to San Jose and the orange groves and fields of her youth are now development as far as the eye can see. For another couple, it was a road trip around the Olympic Peninsula, her dismay at what she termed "the devastation, the rape of the land," and his advice, "we just can't go back there any more."

Konrad Lorenz in "King Solomon's Ring" described the landscape in his book as "the most beautiful on earth, as every man should consider his own home country." Lorenz coined the term "imprinting", the idea that animals become automatically attached to whoever cares for them at birth. Perhaps I, and so many others, became imprinted on our local landscape when growing up, and it pains us to see it harmed, just as it would pain us to see harm come to a loving mother. The same sad feeling emerges, just as it would if you returned to your parents' house after a death, the sudden emptiness, the feeling of loss, when home will never be the same.