

UPPER LEFT EDGE

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FREE!

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Chance favors the prepared mind.



*Note: This installment of your Professor's column is another in his "Historical Series." In his lazy way, he feeds two sparrows with one crust of bread.

I expect its time to take a whack at those hardy souls who cart and siphon off our unspeakables: the nightsoil engineers and garbage toters. In pioneer times, all the world was a dumping ground. Homesteaders simply located a convenient depression or stream bed close to their cabins and whucked the trash into the undergrowth. A tangle of blackberries and salal quickly healed over any clutter or ickiness, and that was that! Once the bottles and bones disappeared in the shrubbery, slipping indecorously from view, they sloughed out of mind as well. In the village of Cannon Beach, a burgeoning population and civic pride dictated some loftier end, an exclusive repository for cast-offs.

A dump was established in the hills northeast of town. The men who trundled waste from homes and cabins were a colorful lot. In my youth, the Elsasser family had locked up the garbage trade. Chris Elsasser owned the franchise and drove truck. His assistant was a young lanky chap named Cliff Hickle. The locals all called him "Dirty Knees Hickle," an endearing jibe, not malicious, because the incessant drip of putrefying garbage scoured his canvas pant legs, indelibly staining the coarse material. Cliff wore the stains and nickname amiably, a badge of his public service and tribulations.

Our garbagemen served proudly. In what became a village tradition, our garbagemen always possessed a good measure of savoir faire, a philosophical nature, jocularly as a specific against disgust. The men who move garbage form a unique guild. Like the members of Masonic Lodges, they have special knowledge. Imagine your garbageman picking through the weekly discards! Oooh,La! The secrets they discover! A keen garbageman can read trash like a book. Overdue bills, diapers, old love letters, padded undergarments, girly magazines, cheap wine bottles, soiled sheets, all reveal volumes. Like high priests they interpret these auguries as commentaries on the nature of life.

Dickie Walsborn took over the route from his stepfather, Chris. Dickie ushered in the Golden Age of garbage collection in Cannon Beach. Dick loved a joke, especially a practical joke, and he revelled in trash collection. He called his crew "the G-Men." A long succession of red, hand-me-down vehicles bore the calligraphic title "Miss Cannon Beach." If we were working at some job site, Dickie's arrival signalled a pause in the action. He always shared with us the latest collection of blue stories, jokes, and bits of gossip. As he drove by, he'd yell at us and make a gesture like someone milking a cow.

"How long are you boys going to milk that job?" he'd ask. Dick also initiated the dog treat program. Dick rounded up all the stale loaves of bread he could scrounge from village bakeries and distributed them to the neighborhood dogs on his route. Dogs harbor some sort of innate disgruntlement with garbagemen, and the bread handouts soothed their beastliness.

My favorite garbage story involves Dick and a failed batch of bread dough. Dick got an emergency call late one night from a local baker, Mr. Berger. Dick had neglected to empty the dumpster at the bakery.

"Dick," Mr. Berger's voice spoke excitedly on the phone, "could you come down here quick. I've got a problem in my dumpster."

Dickie drove down to the bakery grudgingly.

"When I got there, you wouldn't believe it. A huge mass of fermenting bread dough had filled up the dumpster and was moving down the street! It looked like the Blob that ate Cannon Beach. If we hadn't hauled it off right then, I don't know what might have happened."

When Dick hung up the route, his son Rich, Jim Malo, and Tommy Misner took over. In their hands collection became high art and high jinks. The men festooned the garbage vehicle with found objects. When it rumbled down a gravelled side street, the truck looked like some tinker Gypsy's wagon bound for a fair. During one period, the old red truck sported an enormous red lobster on the left front bumper and a large naked doll on the right. Life-size cut-outs of Larry, Moe, Curly, and Rodney Dangerfield shared the driver's cab. Rodney's head stated a plaint common to garbage guys "I don't get no respect!" A huge green dragon affixed to the truck licked the air menacingly. These guys wore short pants year round. No can drips on short pants. To lighten the task, the boys would stunt around with your garbage can.

"Better check your can," they'd tell me. "We were by today. That fish you left in there must have been two weeks old! Whew! Paybacks are a bitch."

I'd rush home to find my can hanging high up in a pine tree, with, maybe, some discarded underwear dangling there too.

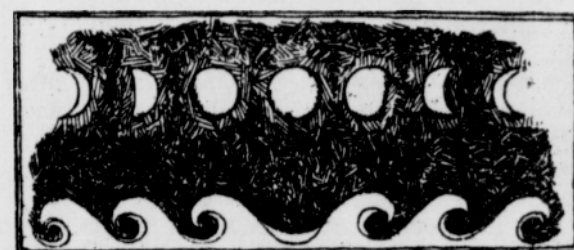
Sadly, those times have passed. Some firm in McMinnville quietly and officiously drags off the ruck these days. They appear to lack significant imagination.

Love, Truth and Videotape (Everything I know I learned from Video Rodeo) or, How the VCR Saved Western Civilization by Sarah Vowell

Bill Murray was on stage at Chicago's Goodman Theater last week. It was a hometown thing, one of those armchair conversations. He was promoting his new book "Cinderella Story: My Life in Golf." As for why on earth his publishers would ask for such a tome, he said, "You could write a really bad book about golf and it would sell a lot of copies. And they thought I had that talent." One of the most curious moments of the evening -- aside from playful jabs at the late Gene Siskel ("He got his") -- was when Murray's interlocutor, the host of a local TV morning show, asked him about the enduring appeal of the 1980 golf movie 'Caddyshack.' Murray, who famously played the demented, gopher-hunting groundskeeper Carl in that film, attributed its continued cultural presence to two things: first, its clever social commentary, the way it pits the blue collar caddies against the wealthy yahoos of the Bushwood Country Club. "Take away the candy bar in the swimming pool," asserts Murray, "and it's a class story." Second, he credits cable television. "You can see 'Caddyshack' six times this month somewhere," he said. "These things have a life." It was a beautiful thing to say, really, the idea that a work of art could keep on working. Not to mention that Murray's words would have been unimaginable as recently as 20 years ago. Before cable and then satellite television became household norms, before video, seeing a movie again was a random event. Aside from revival houses or, on television, the late show and -- remember this? -- things like the "ABC Sunday Night Movie," the average citizen had no say whatsoever in picking and choosing which movies to get (re)acquainted with. Murray's words might have struck a chord in me because "Caddyshack" just so happens to be the first movie I ever saw on video. That was the featured entertainment at Laura Seitz's 13th birthday party circa 1982. I had never seen a VCR before, and now I hope for their sake that the Seitz family went with VHS instead of Beta. I remember being extremely distracted from the movie -- even though it was my first R rating, too -- because I couldn't get over the sheer fact that Laura had decided she wanted to usher in her adolescence with an ensemble cast including Chevy Chase and Ted Knight, and she and her mother went to a store and brought it home. I was there to celebrate Laura's rite of passage, but I couldn't help but get the feeling I was moving on to something better myself. Just as our parents were the last generation to remember a time before the family TV, we would be the last generation to remember the first time we saw a VCR. It would have enormous consequences -- personally and educationally. Television in general and video in particular have mostly deserved bad reps. But before the VCR, an informal film education, especially away from the cities, was impossible. And because my hometown had a wildly intelligent, revered video store called "Video Rodeo," which featured sections broken down by director or country of origin, my twin sister and I worked our way through Hitchcock and Scorsese and, for our 16th birthday, the scant four films of one James Dean.

For obvious and tragic reasons, electronic media are under fire for their undue influence over children. I understand concerns over the depiction of sex and violence, but I feel obliged to say that in my youth, cable TV and video were a good thing, a saving force. Even a moral one. I didn't realize how much until the other day. I was flipping channels and got sucked into "Reds" on Showtime. I had seen the film only once, on HBO when I was maybe 13, around the time of my friend Laura Seitz's birthday. It all came rushing back. I had forgotten, maybe never known, how much influence this movie had over me. And not the political plot, when Warren Beatty's John Reed quits journalism to join the Russian Revolution. I was enormously swayed by the small stuff, how Diane Keaton's Louise Bryant made her way in the world. There is a series of vignettes in which Louise, a libertine in her native Oregon but John Reed's blushing shadow in New York, is asked her opinion but doesn't have one, and says she's a writer but doesn't really write. Her constant embarrassment and frustration galvanized me. At 13, I resolved to never be like that, to always have an opinion, to stick up for myself when a bully like Emma Goldman isn't taking me seriously. I didn't want to go through that, and I didn't want to be in some man's shadow, even a man as appealing as Warren Beatty. That was Feminism 101. But the deeper lesson I learned from "Reds" was more traditional, and more profound. I have never forgotten Keaton's scenes with Jack Nicholson as Eugene O'Neill. Louise and Gene, as he's called, have an affair while

(Continued on back page)



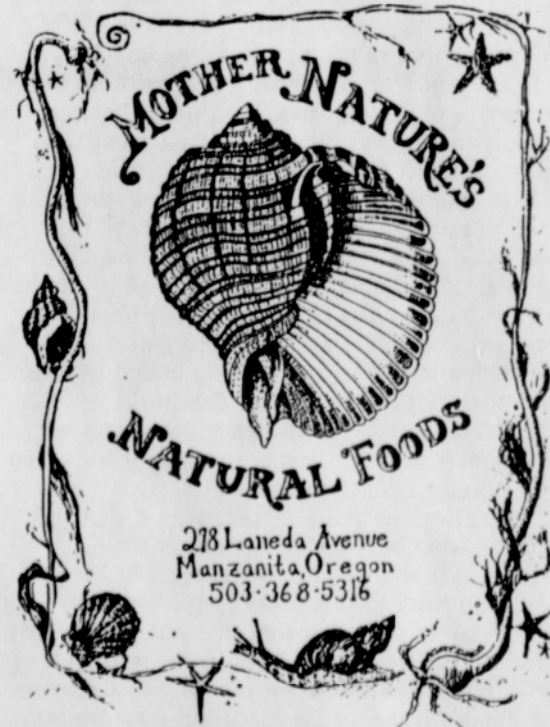
MOONS & TIDES

WASHINGTON & OREGON COASTS
1999 Corrected for PACIFIC BEACHES

DATE	MOON	HIGH JULY				LOW JULY			
		TIME	FT.	TIME	FT.	TIME	FT.	TIME	FT.
1	Thur	2:02	8.4	3:43	7.2	9:09	-0.8	9:09	2.7
2	Fri	2:42	8.2	4:20	7.3	9:43	-0.7	9:52	2.6
3	Sat	3:25	8.0	4:58	7.4	10:18	-0.5	10:40	2.5
4	SUN	4:15	7.5	5:39	7.6	10:58	-0.1	11:36	2.3
5	Mon	5:14	7.0	6:25	7.7	11:43	0.3		
6	Tues	6:26	6.5	7:15	8.0	0:41	1.9	12:36	0.8
7	Wed	7:47	6.2	8:08	8.4	1:51	1.4	1:35	1.3
8	Thur	9:07	6.2	9:02	8.7	3:01	0.7	2:39	1.7
9	Fri	10:18	6.4	9:55	9.1	4:07	-0.1	3:42	2.0
10	Sat	11:22	6.7	10:48	9.3	5:06	-0.9	4:44	2.1
11	SUN	12:20	7.1	11:40	9.5	6:01	-1.5	5:43	2.1
12	Mon		1:14	12:34	9.6	6:53	-1.8	6:39	2.1
13	Tues	0:31	9.5	2:04	7.6	7:42	-2.0	7:33	2.0
14	Wed	1:22	9.3	2:52	7.7	8:28	-1.9	8:26	1.9
15	Thur	2:12	8.9	3:37	7.8	9:13	-1.6	9:18	1.8
16	Fri	3:02	8.5	4:21	7.8	9:55	-1.1	10:10	1.8
17	Sat	3:52	7.9	5:04	7.8	10:36	-0.5	11:03	1.8
18	SUN	4:46	7.2	5:48	7.7	11:18	0.1		
19	Mon	5:44	6.5	6:32	7.6	0:00	1.7	12:01	0.8
20	Tues	6:50	6.0	7:19	7.6	1:01	1.6	12:49	1.5
21	Wed	8:01	5.7	8:07	7.6	2:05	1.4	1:42	2.0
22	Thur	9:11	5.7	8:55	7.7	3:08	1.0	2:39	2.4
23	Fri	10:15	5.9	9:42	7.8	4:06	0.5	3:35	2.6
24	Sat	11:10	6.2	10:26	7.9	4:57	0.0	4:29	2.7
25	SUN	11:58	6.4	11:09	8.1	5:42	-0.4	5:19	2.7
26	Mon	12:42	6.7	11:51	8.2	6:24	-0.6	6:05	2.6
27	Tues			1:23	6.9	7:02	-0.8	6:49	2.4
28	Wed	0:31	8.3	2:01	7.1	7:38	-1.0	7:30	2.3
29	Thur	1:11	8.3	2:36	7.2	8:12	-1.0	8:11	2.1
30	Fri	1:52	8.3	3:10	7.4	8:45	-0.9	8:52	1.9
31	Sat	2:34	8.2	3:44	7.6	9:19	-0.8	9:35	1.6

A.M. TIDES LITE TYPE * BIGGER THE DOT - BETTER THE FISHING * P.M. TIDES BOLD TYPE
DAYLIGHT TIME

It is every citizen's duty to support his government, but not necessarily in the style to which it has been accustomed.
Dr. Lawrence Peters



BASEBALL

The Cubs continue playing bungee baseball, diving for the cellar they spring back to second or third. Sosa is still hitting for the fences, and we aren't even to the halfway point, there is a lot of baseball yet to be played.
Go Cubbies!!



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