

Rev.
Hults

Editorial Now & Then



Well, things have begun to slow here on the left edge of Oregon. It's a time when the locals stop being asked the way to the public rest rooms, the ocean, the nearest latte, or a damned parking place, and begin talking about things closer to their hearts. The beauty of last night's sunset, the birds seen going south, spending a day on the beach and seeing only a few friends who waved from a distance. (Well, you couldn't really see them, but you could recognize their dogs.) October has always been a favorite month of mine, and not just for the weather, which is usually, strangely enough, pleasant on the Oregon Coast, nor because that most anarchistic and pagan of holy days, Halloween, ends the month.

It is because twenty-one years ago this October 22nd I met my son, James Lucas Rian Massa. I didn't know he was my son at the time, it took me years to find out. I just thought he was my girlfriend's baby. It's a long story and none of your business, but she and I had a deal we made when she was pregnant, and I had made a deal with myself when at age twenty eight I had a vasectomy. The deal is; men should help boys be men, no matter if they are related by blood, or not. For years after he came to live with me, I told people that I was James' "dad" not wanting to show disrespect for his late biological father. Somewhere around his first year in High School, James asked me to stop and just tell people I was his father and he was my son. It made me cry, I'm not ashamed to say. James is now in college, and I am suffering from what is called the "empty nest syndrome" But, I'm very proud to say I have a son who has become a man. Happy Birthday, James!

Mo' stuff

Locals and our visitors might have wondered at a sign on the balcony above the midtown mall this last month; it said, "We'll miss you Rooster." The sign was made and put there by Maggie Kitson. For those of you who have never met Maggie, poor babies, she is a blues singer of wondrous abilities, matched only by her efforts as a human being. She can be heard singing with the Bond St. Blues Band, and seen around town with her daughter and Barkley, the dog who owns her. And a pleasant sight to see she is, what my late father used to call "A real man's woman". And the sign is her way of saying good-bye to an old friend. Gavin 'Rooster' Fox, who was a DJ on KLCC's Blues Power out of Eugene for over twenty years, died of ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease and like a lot of blues fans Maggie was a fan of his. Music is a wonderful thing, it brings people together who may never meet.



Gavin "Rooster" Fox

One of the things a newspaper does is tell us 'who died'. The major media fill the front pages and lead off their broadcasts with the latest death tolls from earthquakes, hurricanes, and the various wars. But if you turn to the back pages you will find the obituaries of the common folk. Short paragraphs summing up a life in simple sentences. "She was a homemaker and member of the church, and is survived by five children, sixteen grandchildren, and two great grandchildren." Or: "He served in the Army in the Second World War and the Korean War and was a farmer until his retirement this year because of health problems." When you happen to know the person being described you want to yell, "There was more than that!!!" On a beautiful Sunday morning I decided to give a call to John Buckley, the former poetry editor of the Upper Left Edge. I knew he had been in pretty bad shape lately, and was in the hospital at Seaside. I just wanted to say hello, and maybe good-bye. The nurses transferred my call to various places and I finally got a young man who said he was John's nurse, and asked who I was. It sounded kind of pretentious, but I told him I was John's 'editor' at the Upper Left Edge. He told me that I'd missed John by a few hours.

Professor Lindsey had introduced me to John, so I called and told him. Uncle Mike says that when your energy escapes the mass of your body and accelerates to the speed of light, you are everywhere at once, all the time, and that's why after people do that, you often feel them close to you, and their energy surrounds you. Your memories of them become vivid. In John's career as voluntary Poetry Editor for the Edge, as a number of poets know, he was not an easy man to please. He ended up submitting old Chinese poems to be printed as examples of the art, in hopes that the youngsters would get it. I once made a proof reading error when I printed one of John's poems and the look in his eyes the next time I saw him is something I will never forget. One of the worst things in life is that we often disappoint people we love and respect. One of the best things in life is they forgive us. I can't write about John's life because I only had the privilege of knowing him a few years, and though I know "There's more than that" I think that he might be happy with the simple epitaph:

John Buckley; poet.

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scrambled eggs, fried potatoes, cooked ham, bagels and cream cheese, grapes, and cantaloupe while Steve Earle tunes flowed from inside the house. It became clear that a constant theme of the party was that this group thrives on good food, drink, music and lots of laughter.

Throughout the morning and the afternoon more "interesting people," as Neighbor Robert put it, were trickling in and Tent City continued to grow. The horseshoe pits started to get busy and the Reverend designed a very challenging croquet course that wound around and under several trees and bushes. Tommy, Peg and Dave even started a rousing game of Bocci Ball. The many dogs in attendance started having a merry old time as one of them turned out to be quite a tart. Lines once again formed at the keg. By 5:00 p.m. the flow of new arrivals bringing yet more food turned into a steady stream. With the arrival of Richard Cranium and the Phoreheads, the party was truly afoot. Despite the intake of many spirits and party atmosphere there was a trace of anxiety on some faces. How was the pig doing? Is it going to be cooked enough? When should we dig it up? With the band playing it was decided to pull the plug at 7:00 p.m. -- the guest of honor had been in the ground for 16 hours. Out it came to many cheers and with a great sigh of relief it was found to be cooked perfectly to the bone. Not only that but the chicken and turkey cooked inside the pig were perfect as well as the game hen inside the turkey. It was the damndest thing I have ever seen. The crowd around the fire pit flowed in two directions -- one group to pull samples off the pig and turkey and the other to line-up at the keg in celebration of a job well done. It was now an orgy of gorging on the pit's bounty as well as all the other food that had appeared, swilling ale, and dancing to great music including a Turtle original "Rhino Slayer." After several hours of this, things once again started to get hazy. Maybe it was all the sun, croquet, and horseshoes. Or the Bloody Marys and ale. After some period of oblivion I found myself sitting around a fire near the vacated pig pit. The crowd had thinned out and I was informed that we were now down to the hardcore so it was time to retreat to my Sanctuary.

It is the morning of day three and I am still alive. This time I don't remember walking to my car but the familiar throbbing and queasiness has hit harder this time. Back to the Gold Room, on to the deck, a Bloody Mary shoved in my hand, and it is deja-vu all over again. "We have left over pig," yells the crowd, "more than enough for breakfast and a rib barbecue later." Turtle and Carmen are in the kitchen making what turns out to be great breakfast pork burritos. Taj Mahal is playing in the background and, to many bursts of laughter, we relish last night's events. Questions are fired back and forth. "Did you see Sasquatch try to hump Turtle?" "You bet, ha ha, did you see Carmen pull down Sasquatch's bikini briefs?" "Who was doing the elk call?" "Did you see the girls swooning as Neighbor Peter played the guitar and led a sing-along into the early hours of the morning?" It was evident that nobody wanted to let go of the moment, but the party was winding down.

With the Third Annual Pig Party almost in the record books it was time for the Turpentine Brothers, the original organizers, to reflect on the event. Once again it is abundantly clear to them that it takes a village to pit roast and devour a whole hog. They are worried that handing out "thank you's" is always risky because you might inadvertently leave someone out. But I have broad shoulders so if anyone is missing from the list it is my fault because the Brothers were a little hung-over and talking fast.

Everyone there made a contribution. They brought food, made cash donations, were extremely respectful of the property, and helped clean-up what surprisingly little mess there was. As one person put it, "I didn't run into anyone that I wasn't glad to see." It was a very congenial group that came together and shared a wonderful time. Of course Dean has to be at the top of the thank you list. He has the ideal, park-like setting for a party like this and was more than willing to make it available for the event. And a big thank you to all the neighbors for becoming part of the celebration rather than being put off by it. Neighbor Robert was amazed that 47 cars could squeeze together on the narrow road leading to Dean's house. Richard was everywhere helping with the pit, mowing grass, finding and splitting wood to name a few things. Frank donated over two cords of wood, Redhead Ron helped with the pit and hauling wood, Katie donated money to help cover the cost of the pig, Bill's Tavern donated several kegs of beer, Jo and Corey brought tuna and oysters for the traditional Sunday night pre-party, Maggie and Debbie brought lots of goodies for breakfast, Richard Cranium and the Phoreheads provided the music, Don's granddaughter lovingly raised Turpentine Willie III, Three Finger Ron was there with his "blow machine" and along with Corey helped with carving duties, Jeff provided gobs of organic vegetables, our dad made the Costco run, the Reverend was recreation director for croquet and music, Tommy brought the big coffee maker from the Fire Hall, Ron and Dave brought Tiki torches, Jack was the keg man, Noah brought tables, Robert donated a blender to make the girls' foo foo drinks, Kim reinforced the bridge railing and helped set up the horseshoe pit, and Jim and Shay came back Tuesday night to put the finishing touches on the clean-up. Sally won the prize for coming the farthest to attend the party -- Spokane.

After eating some great barbecued ribs that evening it was time for me to head home with many fond memories and new friends made. I can't wait until next year. In fact, I will donate my Pulitzer Prize money to the cause.

Poetry is not an assertion of truth, but the making of that truth more fully real to us. T.S. Elliot



**OREGON COAST
SUPPORT GROUP**
P.O. BOX 30
CANNON BEACH
OREGON
97110
503 436 0527
503 368 4858
FAX 503 368 7518



The success of the poem is determined not by how much the poet felt in writing it, but by how much the reader feels in reading it. John Ciardi

WHERE TO GET AN EDGE

Cannon Beach: Jupiter's Rare and Used Books, Osburn's Grocery, The Cookie Co., Coffee Cabana, Bill's Tavern, Cannon Beach Book Co., Hane's Bakery, The Bistro, Midtown Cafe, Once Upon a Breeze, Copies & Fax, Haystack Video, Mariner Market, Espresso Bean, Ecola Square & Cleanline Surf
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Eugene: Book Mark, Cafe Navarra, Eugene Public Library, Friendly St. Market, Happy Trails, Keystone Cafe, Kiva Foods, Lane C.C., Light For Music, New Frontier Market, Nineteenth Street Brew Pub, Oasis Market, Perry's, Red Barn Grocery, Sundance Natural Foods, U of O. & WOW Hall
Corvallis: The Environmental Center, OSU
Salem: Heliotrope, Salem Library, & The Peace Store
Astoria: KMUN, Columbian Cafe, The Community Store, The Wet Dog Cafe, Astoria Coffee Company, Cafe Untertown, & The River
Seaside: Buck's Book Barn, Universal Video, & Cafe Espresso
Portland: Artichoke Music, Laughing Horse Bookstore, Act III, Barnes & Noble, Belmonts Inn, Biblot Art Gallery, Bijou Cafe, Borders, Bridgeport Brew Pub, Cap'n Beans (two locations), Center for the Healing Light, Coffee People (three locations), Common Grounds Coffee, East Avenue Tavern, Food Front, Goose Hollow Inn, Hot Lips Pizza, Java Bay Cafe, Key Largo, La Patisserie, Lewis & Clark College, Local Only, Marco's Pizza, Marylhurst College, Mt. Hood CC, Music Millennium, Nature's (two locations), NW Natural Gas, OHSU Medical School, Old Wives Tales, Ozone Records, Papa Haydn, PCC (four locations), PSU (two locations), Reed College, Third Eye, Multnomah Central Library, and most branches of the YWCA
Ashland: Garo's Java House, The Black Sheep, Blue Mt. Cafe, & Rogue River Brewery
Cave Junction: Coffee Heaven & Kerby Community Market
Grants Pass: The Book Shop
(Out of Oregon)
Vancouver, WA: The Den
Longview, WA: The Broadway Gallery
Naselle, WA: Rainy Day Artistry
Nahcotta, WA: Moby Dick Hotel
Duval, WA: Duval Books
Bainbridge Island, WA: Eagle Harbor Book Co.
Seattle, WA: Elliot Bay Book Co., Honey Bear Bakery, New Orleans Restaurant, Still Life in Fremont, Allegro Coffeehouse, The Last Exit Coffee House, & Building News
San Francisco, CA: City Lights Bookstore
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Paris, France: Shakespeare & Cie
Brighton, England: The Public House Bookstore

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UPPER LEFT EDGE

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