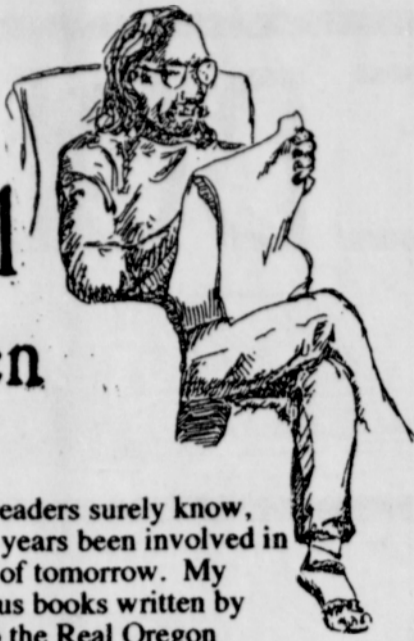


Rev.
Hults

Editorial Now & Then



As our more relentless readers surely know, your beloved Rev. has over the years been involved in various plots for the overthrow of tomorrow. My latest involves publishing various books written by friends, Uncle Mike's Guide to the Real Oregon Coast, Letters to Uncle Mike and Sally's Wildlife on the Edge being the first of these. Having little or no money of my own I have been forced to beg for help from readers and friends. Recently the Ragsdales have, with a singularly rare lack of judgment, purchased Saddle Mountain Press which will be printing more books of this ilk. Realizing that they knew even less about publishing than your beloved, no mean feat in itself, they decided to attend the Pacific Northwest Booksellers' meeting, and suggested Uncle Mike and I attend as well. They promised two nights in a luxury hotel and tons of fun. Uncle Mike, I must admit, advised against it. "I hate those things!" he said. "But, think about the fancy hotel, the fancy hotel bar, room service, hanging out with intelligent amusing authors and bookstore people, perhaps even amusing intelligent female people," I whined.

I finally talked him into the trip, and plans were made for him to meet me at a gig in Lincoln City Saturday night and we would drive to the meeting together. I had asked him to book me a motel room in Lincoln City and when we met he handed me a key. "What's the room number?", I asked. "13" he said with a sardonic smile. An omen? Yes. The room I finally found my way to after the gig was a closet with a dysfunctional bathroom. It took until the next morning's painful awakening before I could figure out how to bring the temperature up to less than freezing. And no, the shower didn't really work.

So, when Uncle Mike arrived I was ready to go anywhere. Well, almost. Have I failed to mention that the Pacific Northwest Booksellers were meeting in Tacoma? Tragic but true. We were going to Tacoma!!! As we proceeded north Uncle Mike said something about my being in the fetal position. I corrected his spelling. I had assumed the 'fatal' position. For those of you mercifully ignorant of Uncle Mike's life style, suffice it to say we were forced to change vehicles before we left the state. The reasons are numerous and classified. The Ragsdales provided a truck with which we were to complete the trip, since Mike's car 'Sparky' refused to leave the state. It became tragically obvious that the gods were not on our side when we noticed that the little red pick-up we were to take to Tacoma was a Toyota Tacoma. Omen #2? Hell, yes. We followed Bob through the 'deliverance' country and reached the west coast umbilical cord, I-5. I can't bring myself to share the pain and fear that ensued. Traffic in hell, Trucks of Death filled with flammable liquids, hurtling at incredible speeds, inches from each other. We begged for quick and certain death. But, no, we arrived at the Sheraton Tacoma intact in body, if not mind. Bob wheeled his beemer into a spot and we parked beside him, in spacewait for it.....#13.

Omen #3? Perhaps? Bob flashed his Lithium jewel encrusted Visa card and we were given little plastic cards that allowed us to enter our assigned rooms. I will not talk about the fact that Mike's room was already occupied by (he says) an attractive woman, and he was forced to move to other accommodations, thus missing the perfect Cary Grant moment. No, I would like to take time here to share with our readers what a luxury hotel room looks like these days. Okay, picture broad striped wall paper in mauve and beige, add to that an overstuffed chair with a diamond motif, which doesn't quite match the rug, except that there are diamonds there as well, and then include matching drapes and bedspreads with a neo-french/faux-victorian pattern with circles and scenes of farmhouses, and it all adds up to a place Oscar Wilde would gladly slit his wrist before entering. I am sure there are warehouses in Nevada that are better decorated. There were instructions on every surface, the in-room bar was locked and there was a note that explained why you would not have hot water if you chose to shower in the morning. Another note celebrated the environmental attitude of the Sheraton Tacoma and suggested you might want to leave this card on your bed if you wanted to save the earth by sleeping on the same sheets night after night. Well, nothing could be done but proceed to the bar with all due speed. Regretfully that didn't help. Several stiff drinks didn't change the fact that we were in Tacoma, and the television set over the bar was showing a Pee Wee Herman movie. The bartender was having difficulty making eye contact and seemed unable to serve the six customers desperately trying to kill their pain. I won't go on about the rest of the evening when we visited a pool hall that Uncle Mike to this day persists in calling a Bowling Alley, or the incredible dosage of drugs needed to bring on sleep, under the circumstances. Suffice it to say, we regretfully met the dawn.

The true test is not whether a man behaves like a gentleman, but whether he misbehaves like one.

Sydney Tremayne

There were numerous workshops to chose from. And not much else to do, so we found ourselves standing in the back of meeting rooms listening to the horror stories of others in the book business. Comments on in-store promotions, like "it's not about selling books" inspired Uncle Mike to make statements that can not be printed in a family newspaper, or this one either. Poor Bob left each workshop more depressed and confused than the last. Finally, by noon, he concluded that no one in the book business knew what they were doing and he was going home. I begged to be taken along. Uncle Mike's "I warned you" was getting on my nerves, but then so was everything else. I was back in the bar by 2pm, and by dinner time, I was a much nicer person to be around, or so I thought, until I looked up and found myself completely alone in the only smoking section in the hotel without a television set. This was fine with me because the spectacularly dismal view of downtown Tacoma was fading into darkness and the lights were all you could see of the dysfunctional landscape.

Uncle Mike and Susann finally found me, and demanded I 'join in' the festivities planned for the evening, which included standing in long lines to get autographs of people you've never heard of and listening to more horror stories about the book business, a term that Bob had declared to be an oxymoron. I managed to find my way to the festivities and joined several conversations uninvited until words like 'hotel security' began popping up, and I escaped back to the empty smoking section at the top of the hotel, and the comfort of my new favorite bald headed bartender, David. Bombay and Tonic did their job and another day was mercifully gone.

The following morning was the one event that made the whole trip, if not worth while, at least not a complete waste of time. The big book give-away. Publishers, distributors, authors, anyone with a book related product had set up tables piled high with their 'products' and our job was to chat with them while they handed out copies of 'uncorrected proofs' and 'readers' copies' of their offerings for the season. I had just about filled my free book bag when Uncle Mike appeared. "Look at all this free stuff!" I said. I had failed to note the look that he gets in his eye before the police are inevitably called. "I can't be here," he mumbled, "we must leave, now." People were giving us a wide berth as soon as they saw Uncle Mike's furrowed brow and squinting eyes, and hear his labored breath coming out in hisses. "Yeah, sure, uh, let's go find Susann and make sure she's in good hands, and get the hell outta here," I suggested.

The wonderful Val Ryan from Cannon Beach Books was in attendance and was showing Susann the ropes. Val is an old hand at this and was taking Susann under her wing. We knew she had a good heart, a quick mind, and obviously an iron constitution since she has attended hundreds of these things. We grabbed our stuff and ran to the pick-up, and headed south. We didn't even think of looking back. "Lot's wife was never in Tacoma," Uncle Mike said. We reached the mighty Columbia safely and found our way to Vernonia where we changed vehicles with the speed of a pony express rider changing horses, and finally were back at my Ocean. When Mike had pulled into the driveway I raised my fist in defiance, and shouted at the gods, "I made it! In spite of all the omens I'm home safe and you can't hurt me now!" I then stepped out of the car and into a pile of dog shit. The perfect end to a perfect trip.

My advice to our gentle readers is to never yell at the gods, and to never, ever, ever, ever go to Tacoma.

Mo, stuff...

It was eight years ago this month that your beloved Rev., the humble Ms. Sally, Dr. Karkeys, Spud and Uncle Mike started the Upper Left Edge. Our web site began almost four years ago thanks to Liz Lynch, and thanks to Myrna Uhlig, it's still up.

Over the years we have met many wonderful people, writers, artists, and friends who have helped the Edge survive and become a different kind of newspaper. We are proud to have been able to share the works of the famous and the unknown with our readers. We have tried our best to offer an alternative to the corporate media, and to the alternative media for that matter. We have tried several times to stop publishing, but you wouldn't let us. Thanks. Now, to the point of this whole thing. It's tax time and the books of the Upper Left Edge look like an unsorted recycling container. Our billing records are chaos. Our files are piles. Somewhere amongst our readers there must be someone with a lineal mind, a love to organize, a need to sort, a passion for order, who would be willing to take on this Herculean task. Volunteers should call 503-436-2915. There's no money in it but you will have the eternal gratitude of your beloved editor and a life time subscription to the Upper Left Edge.

Now for some election news. As many locals and those who visit www.upperleftedge.com know we are having our first annual election for Village Idiot on April 1st. We used to take turns, as we still do for the position of Town Drunk, but since we've grown so fast in the last few years it was decided to have an election. Well, the race has heated up and it looks like we might end up in a tie between the Chamber of Commerce party and the Ambulance Chasers, who's "Paved the Beach" platform has resonated with voters. Of, course if there is no clear winner the whole election might end up in the courts. Stay tuned.

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986-1187 (from Salem)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/>

Governor Kitzhaber: 503-378-3111;

<http://www.governor.state.or.us>

Sen. or Rep. (Legislator's name),

State Capitol, Salem, OR 97310

Oregon PeaceWorker: 503-371-8002;

www.teleport.com/~opw/pwnow.html

UPPER LEFT EDGE

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Corvallis: The Environmental Center, OSU
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Astoria: KMUN, Columbian Cafe, The Community Store, The Wet Dog Cafe, Astoria Coffee Company, Cafe Untontown, & The River
Seaside: Buck's Book Barn, Universal Video, & Cafe Espresso
Portland: Artchoke 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, Locals Only, Marco's Pizza, Marylhurst College, Mt. Hood CC, Muske Millenium, Nature's (two locations), NW Natural Gas, OHSU Medical School, Old West Tales, Ozone Records, Papa Haydn, PCC (four locations), PSU (two locations), Reed College, Third Eye, Multnomah Central Library, and most branches & 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
Rainier, WA: Rainy Day Artistry
Nahcotta, WA: Moby Dick Hotel
Duvall, WA: Duvall Books
Bainbridge Island, WA: Eagle Harbor Book Co.
Seattle, WA: Elliot Bay Book Co., Honey Boat Bakery, New Orleans Restaurant, Still Life in Fremont, Allegro Coffeehouse, The Last Edit Coffee House, & Bulldog News
San Francisco, CA: City Lights Bookstore
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