

(This was my final column in the Canby Herald newspaper.)

It seems like only yesterday I walked into the Canby Herald office as a 22-year-old, wide-eyed journalism graduate looking for work as a reporter. It is hard to believe nine years have passed since I signed on as a 30-hour-a-week reporter.

I can still remember my first assignment. I was dispatched to Willamette Falls Hospital in Oregon City to interview a Canby woman who just had a baby. The catch was her husband was unable to attend the birth of their first child because he was serving our country as part of Operation Desert Storm. I took a photo of mom holding her new baby and miniature American flags while resting in her hospital bed.

The story and photo – somehow I got a good shot off, despite having little experience with a manual 35mm camera – appeared on the front page of the Herald.

So began my tenure at this newspaper. On Friday, that tenure comes to an end. I am leaving the newspaper business for greener pastures, I guess you'd say. I will be working for the Oregon Association of Nurserymen Inc., which represents 1,500 nursery businesses of varying types and sizes across the state. I will serve as the managing editor for its publications, which includes the monthly "Digger" magazine.

It is a challenge I need to tackle, and an opportunity I know I must seize.

Leaving the Herald and the journalism business is one of the hardest decisions I've ever had to make. I consider the people I have worked alongside of – some for a short time, and a few for as long as I've been here – not only to be great people to work with, but they are my best friends.

I have learned so much the past nine years. Not a day went by when I didn't learn something new. I will always have a soft spot in my heart for this unique community called Canby. As corny as it sounds, this truly is a special place filled with special, caring people.

Canby has changed during the past nine years – I think for the better. But I see Canby at a real crossroads today, and it is my hope the Canby I have grown to love in my short time here (and nine years is a very short time compared to most citizens) will retain its unique character.

The following are my hopes for this community:

- I hope the Canby School District \$30.8 million maintenance bond will pass. While I believe more yes votes will be cast than no votes on May 16, I am not confident enough registered voters will turn out to achieve the double majority needed in non-general election votes. The time is now, folks. I have seen the leaky ceilings, the dilapidated exteriors, and the lack of proper basic fixtures (such as outlets in science classrooms). Conditions will only get worse and, without a bond, monies will need to be diverted from programs and staffing to maintenance. A classroom ceiling will get replaced, but more students will be crowded beneath it trying to gain the teacher's attention.
- I hope Canby's smaller businesses, many of them run by citizens of this community, will survive the addition of Fred Meyer. I hope Canby citizens realize just how lucky there are to have hometown businesses to shop at. I know at least a few, most likely more, of these businesses are feeling the pinch since Freddys

- swung open the doors to both its entrances last month. I hope all of these fine businesses can ride out initial losses, get their footings again, and continue on.
- I hope the many talented and hard-working people who are employed by the city of Canby know how much I appreciate their efforts, and I know most citizens do, too. I hope that a recent dip in morale among some of the union employees will be followed by a spike full of pats on the back and much-needed support from management and rewarding discussions with the Canby City Council – especially when contract negotiations begin again in December. The city is in a real danger of losing some quality people. Only open communication and open minds will prevail.
 - I hope that city, county and state officials can find a way to keep the area safe as Canby becomes the poster child for the rock-mining industry. I am the first to state that the need for aggregate is high, and without it, roads, foundations for housing, and other building projects go nowhere. But if the extraction of the needed material comes at the expense of the quality of living for Canby, Aurora, Barlow, Charbonneau, Donald or any other resident of this area, then it is not worth it. I hope the staff of this newspaper does not have to take photos of or write about an accident involving a truck hauling rock from one of the existing, expanding, or future mining sites. When an “I told you so” is attached to a tragedy, it is the worst kind.
 - I hope Canby seizes the opportunity it now has at hand as the leadership of this community changes. The city has a fairly new city administrator, the school district has a fairly new superintendent, the Canby Area Chamber of Commerce has a new director, Canby Business Revitalization soon will have a new director, the Clackamas County Fair has a new manager, and the newspaper has a new editor. That is a lot of change for a community in a relatively small time period – some of it simultaneously. I hope you, the citizens, will speak up and be heard and help these leaders guide this community into the future.
 - I hope the people of other cultures, particularly Canby’s Hispanic and Latino citizens and noncitizens, are embraced by Anglo residents. We need to break down the barrier between us, and it will require work by both sides. Again, communication – even if through an interpreter – is key. I believe issues, such as how the school district spends its English as a second language funds, need to be discussed openly. I applaud Superintendent Deborah Sommer for placing the issue up front. Her candidness and openness are refreshing, and I encourage everyone to listen to what she has to say, and to trust each and every word she says.
 - Lastly, I hope the citizens of Canby will continue to turn to the Herald as the best and only local news source. I’ve jokingly said over the years, “If it’s news in Canby, it’s news to us.” While we don’t always know everything that goes on, we certainly do our best to present what we do know in the fairest and most objective manner. I know that tradition will continue. I leave you in the hands of a capable and professional staff, and new editor Tom Morlan -- a dear friend and most respected colleague -- will not only receive the torch, but he will light a new and improved flame, I am sure of it.

Thank you for the ride, Canby. Thanks to all of the sources who have allowed me into your offices, homes, businesses and hearts over the years. The best part about journalism is all the nice people you get to meet, talk with, and write about – from the man in Township Village who makes replica model boats as a hobby and displays them at the Canby Public Library once a year, to the Zion Mennonite Church women’s quilting group who share their love for the hobby with each other each week and with the public once a year, to the Canby High School Key Club students who collect toys and food for the needy each Christmastime.

Those are real people, and that’s what real journalism is all about.

Cam Sivesind started at the Canby Herald on March 7, 1991, as a part-time reporter, becoming editor in 1993 and then managing editor of the Saturday edition in August 1999. He hopes his car will know how to steer to someplace else other than the Canby Herald office when he begins his new job.