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Bob Welch's passion for writing is evident in everything he does

Bob Welch, a retired journalist, received a football set as a gift when he was five and played with it constantly. "When it finally broke, I just recreated the game myself," Welch said. "I made the field and even spread dirt on it to make it look real. I would pretend to be the announcer and I would narrate the whole game. That led into my interest in sports reporting."

When Welch was in elementary school, his mother sent one of his poems to the local newspaper, the *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, where it was published. In middle school, he was a sports editor for the school paper. In high school, he flipped through dictionaries during down time at his job.

"I worked with a friend on a tractor, so there was a lot of sitting around," Welch said. "My friend and I would quiz each other on words in the dictionary and I still remember a lot of them, too. I've just always been interested in the whole process of writing. I always wanted to learn more about it."

His involvement in school publications continued throughout his four years of college at the University of Oregon, where he was a sports editor for the *Daily Emerald*.

Married and fresh out of college, he got a job as a sports reporter at *The Bulletin* in Bend. "I actually got pretty lucky," Welch said. One of his former UO professors was the managing editor, and called Welch to tell him about a job

opening. After the interview, they offered him the job and he started working that night.

“Things were different back then. Nowadays, that probably wouldn’t happen.” Welch eventually took over the sports editor position and worked at *The Bulletin* for seven years, the last two as a Sunday editor. “Sports started to feel restricting,” Welch said. “And I wanted to spend more time with my son.”

He started working as a features writer for the *Journal-American* in Bellevue, Washington in 1976, then as the features editor and columnist until 1989. After another short break, he moved back to Eugene in 1999 to write for the *Register-Guard*, again as a features writer, features editor and columnist. He retired in December of 2013.

Out of all the publication jobs he had, he said being a columnist was his favorite. “I loved it because you get to go where you want to go,” Welch said. “You don’t have to walk into the office to have your editor say, ‘Oh, you need to go to a city council meeting today,’ or anything like that. You know every week what you’re responsible for and when it’s due. There’s just more freedom to go where you want to go and lots of room for expression.”

In addition to journalistic writing, Welch has written 18 books on various topics, from anti-materialism to children’s stories. He also conducts writing workshops in Yachats called the “Beachside Writers Workshops,” does inspirational speaking and teaches at the UO School of Journalism and Communication.

The advice he offers to journalism students is to stay hungry for knowledge. “I don’t know where journalism is going, but I know the foundation of it will always

be writing,” Welch said. “Stories have always been told with writing and photography; they’re pegs on the stool. Immerse yourself in the process like I did. Soak up everything you can.”