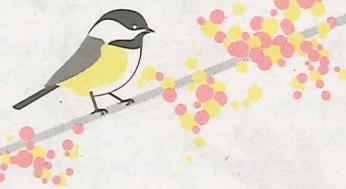


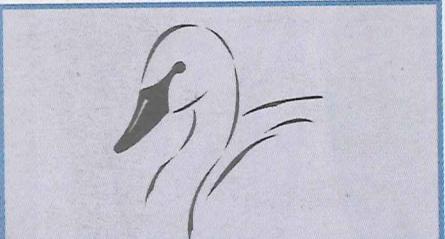
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## She Said What?!

Author of [shesjustsaying.com](http://shesjustsaying.com) blogs and lives to tell about it

BY MELISSA HOCHILD

I've lived in Bend for 15 years. I've built a house, adopted a son, collected pets and ex-boyfriends. I've started an adoption club, my own business and a knitting group. It never occurred to me to write about it, although people often told me I should. However, in April 2008, when my job at Edge Wireless was being phased out by AT&T, I decided blogging would be a marketable skill to learn.

I was already following a few blogs so I stole some ideas, picked a free template on Blogger and "She's Just Saying..." was launched. I thought I'd write about knitting and personal stuff for my friends and family – I didn't expect any other readers.

At first, my family and friends didn't read my blog at all. That annoyed me until I realized that you either read blogs or you don't, and that most blog readers are actually other bloggers. It was a surprise to discover that they're mostly a friendly, accepting bunch, happy to share knowledge and encouragement. There's a nicey code in the local blogosphere (blogging community). You read each other's posts (online articles), you comment, you cheer and commiserate. There's a curious intimacy. I am now "virtually" close to a number of other bloggers though we never meet IRL. ("In real life," of course.)

I write about myself and random thoughts because I find them amusing and I like to share. (You have to be somewhat of an egotist to blog, honestly.) I originally focused more on knitting, but even as a devout knitter I find knitting blogs seriously boring. So I try to keep things interesting to non-knitters. And to non-parents, non-singles, non-women and non-locals. Over time I learned some HTML, switched to Typepad (another blog-hosting site), refined the look of my site and found my "voice." For me, the main point is to entertain, because why else would anyone read a blog?

My blog doesn't fit into the usual "mom blog" mold. Many mom blogs are all family, all the time: lots of shots of pets, kids and housewares. Then there are the cheerful domestic-goddess blogs: winning ways with beets, living the vegan life, how to store 50 pounds of millet under the bed, etc. And the crafty blogs: scrapbooking (which is really very meta: aren't blogs just virtual scrapbooks?), sewing, decorating and yes, knitting.

(Disclosure: I have written about family, beets and knitting. And chicken sweaters.)

Blogging offers an immediate form of feedback: I post and wait for responses. Sometimes there are none, sometimes a lively dialogue starts up. Through comments received both on- and off-line, it became evident that bosses, ex-boyfriends, my mom, co-workers, neighbors and complete strangers were reading my blog. So I follow a blogging creed: be nice (or at least not downright mean), keep it PG-rated, and only embarrass myself (and immediate family, of course). I also toe the politically correct line, as this is really a small town.

I can say that blogging truly has changed my perception of life. I now assess my experiences through the filter: "is it blog-worthy?" Funny, sad, trivial, annoying and otherwise forgettable events now become useable fodder. Maybe that happens to writers IRL as well – I don't know, as I've never seen myself as a real Writer.

What I do know is that through my blog I've begun to feel a bit like a (lower-case) writer. I've found a challenging creative outlet and am able to explore my writing voice, its nuances and tonality. I am able to use my blog skills at work and I now count chicken farmers, photographers, new dads, wacky survivalists and tech geeks as some of my very close, though virtual, friends.

Melissa Hochschild has lived in Bend for 15 years, after having escaped LA and NYC. She is currently the VP of Communications at the High Desert Museum and lives with her son Henry and various animals. Her blog is [www.shesjustsaying.com](http://shesjustsaying.com).

### Blogging tips

from [www.shesjustsaying.com](http://www.shesjustsaying.com)

1. Start on Blogger.com – it's free and easy. Once you get serious, you can export your blog to a better (paid) service like Typepad or Wordpress.
2. You really don't need to learn HTML – I just did because I'm a control freak.
3. Post at least three times a week – quantity is as important as quality.
4. Don't make the posts too long. We have very short attention spans out here in blogland.
5. Add photos or graphics to every post. You can use other people's shots, but always credit them. You'd want them to credit you, right?
6. Don't write anything you don't want your mother, your ex or your boss to read, because they will read it.
7. Remember who your readers are and try to speak to them, though not all at the same time.
8. Other bloggers are your best audience. Read and comment on other blogs and reciprocate blog links (called your "blogroll").
9. Encourage comments and reply to them. Be nice.
10. Jot down thoughts whenever they happen, because they'll be gone in an instant.
11. Link and list your blog on Facebook, [bendblogs.com](http://bendblogs.com) and online blog catalogs.
12. Use lists, memes (blog games), random blog links, silly news and such if you run out of content ideas. It's a blog, not an op-ed editorial.

This is assuming you want to build your readership and community. If you don't care about that, write whatever and however the hell you want! It's your blog!

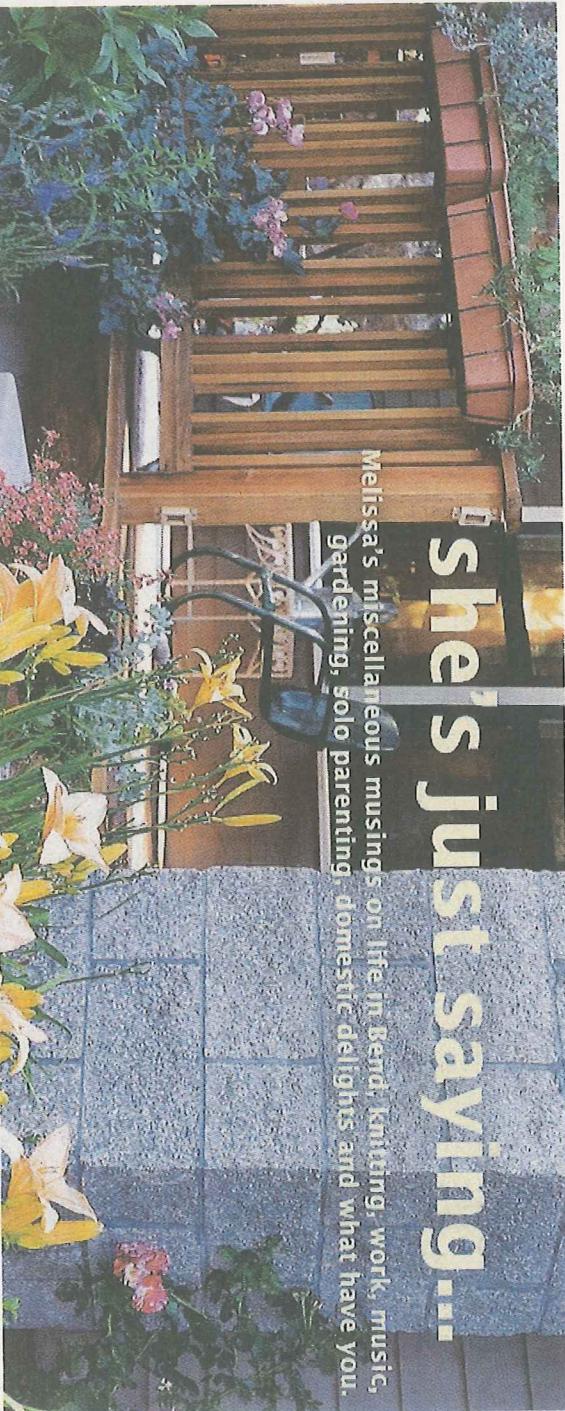
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# she's just saying...

Melissa's miscellaneous musings on life in Bend, knitting, work, music, gardening, solo parenting, domestic delights and what have you.



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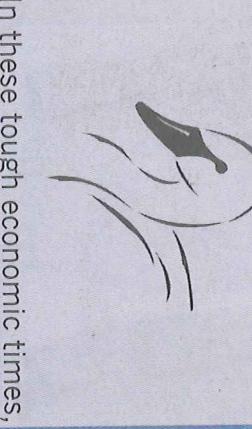
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