Rare Ernest Hemingway letter finds a home at Clackamas Community College

By Steve Mayes, The Oregonian

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An unpublished 80-year-old letter written in Cuba by author Ernest Hemingway has been donated to two Oregon City institutions.

The eight-page letter -- written in pencil on four sheets of Inglaterra Restaurant-Café-Bar stationary -- is addressed to a friend and hunting and fishing partner, Charles Thompson. Hemingway discusses deep-sea fishing off Cuba, his car he left in Key West, Fla., and of postponing an upcoming trip to Africa. Written in 1933, it is believed to be one Hemingway's few unpublished letters.

Lake Oswego attorney Larry Peterson gave the document to the Clackamas Community College Foundation and the Alden E. Miller Law Library of Clackamas County.

Peterson, who collects Hemingway memorabilia, bought the letter at auction in 1993. "I'm a great fan of the community college," said Peterson. "I'm pleased the letter will be a part of the college where so many people go to get a start in life," he said.

"The learning opportunities with such a gift are enormous," said Greg Fitzgerald, the foundation's executive director. "We are working with our English Department faculty, as well as Hemingway experts in the state, to plan activities to unveil the letter. There may be tremendous research opportunities. We're looking at all possibilities."

The college foundation and law library are preparing an agreement that details how they will share ownership of the letter.