



Photo by Tom Dumas



Photo by Stephen Maher

The hut in which Dumas lived a few years ago was located 50 yards east of the Autzen Stadium footbridge (left). He lived there for more than a year. According to Dumas (right), the hut was constructed with materials found discarded.

building" for two years before the eviction notice put a stop to his residency.

Dumas said he was evicted because other people began living in the adjoining four garages and created a ruckus.

"They were doing it blatantly and openly, fighting and drinking, which didn't do my situation any good."

"One morning I noticed eviction notices on all the garages and that was the end of that," he said.

After that he decided the Willamette River greenway was more to his liking.

Choosing a well-hidden spot underneath a tree near the Autzen Stadium footbridge, Dumas constructed a nicely furnished hut. The structure was 5 and a half feet high, 15 feet wide and 12 feet long and included sliding glass doors, carpeting, foam-mattress beds, shelves, wall hangings, pictures, a mirror and an oil lamp.

The roof was made from 10 wooden beams covered with carpet wedges, dried leaves and plastic; the walls from layers of leaves covered with plastic and surrounded by a chain-link fence.

Dumas lived there for more than a year before he came face-to-face in July 1986 with University officials who were searching out the area because of reports of transients. But unlike the tree house incident, Dumas was given a two-week notice to clear out.

Dumas more or less remained living down along the river, and during the past summer resided in a large A-frame tent big enough for four people.

Although some people might argue otherwise, Dumas said he doesn't consider himself a transient. "Not by any means," he said, with a tone of defiance in his voice.

"I have absolutely nothing in common with those people. I just have a slow currency flow these days," he added.

"What I've done seems to be very popular with the population of Eugene," Dumas said, adding: "I suppose people admire it for the aspect of risk involved."

When not busy with carpentry, Dumas draws "fantasy illustrations," repairs and recycles discarded items, and teaches wilderness skills.

Dumas said he plans to write a book on a particular wilderness skill — fire by friction. He has taught the skill at the Oregon Country Fair and to individuals, he said.

"I intend to write a book and hopefully from that will come financial aid to progress myself to a better situation," Dumas said.

And with a twinkle in his eye, Dumas added, "I've been unattached for the last couple of years, and I'm lookin'."

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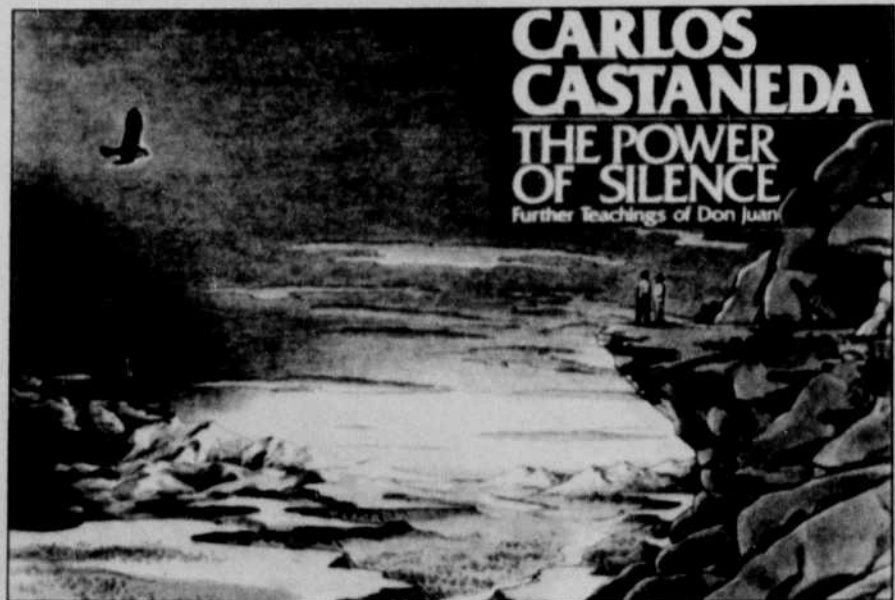
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