

The NORTH COAST

TIMES



EAGLE

In a dark time the eye begins to see.

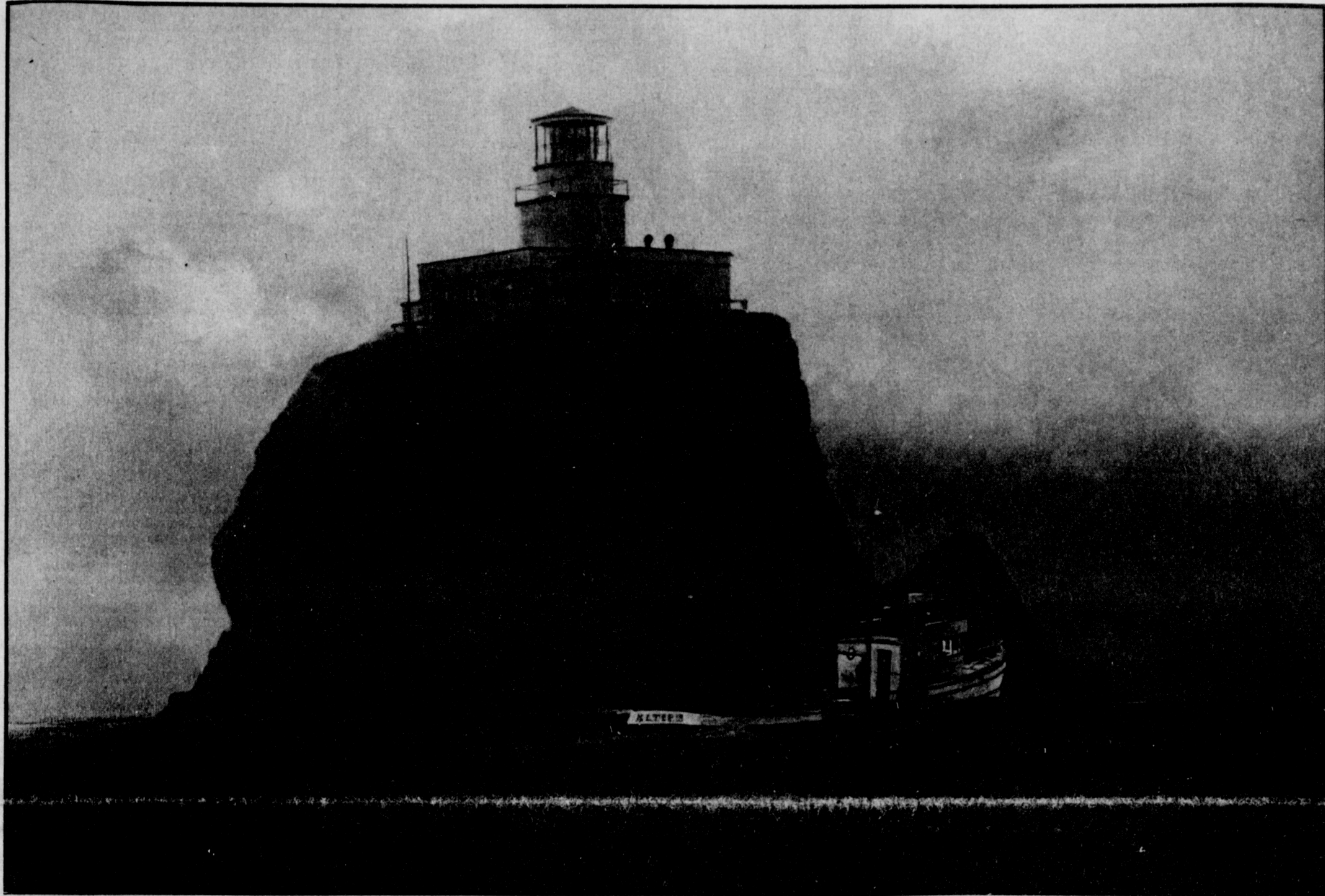
- Theodore Roethke

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Photograph by Hal Denison



FOGHORNS

STEVEN McLEOD

A Maximum of Appearances

by Donald Osborne

A bare fact is something seen outwardly — It can be weighed and measured and it seems to appear the same to all people. (The "same" if we disregard the story of the blind men and the elephant.) In this age of the information explosion bare facts have had a way of becoming complex, numerous, technological, and highly specialized. These "facts" are assumed and accepted and have become a basis for truths, even though they may be seen inwardly differently by different people (professionals often

disagree when interpreting "facts" of law, economics, psychology, and so on).

Artistic truth is an intentional personal bias toward a fact or facts. The arts are chiefly concerned with the way people see differently — with personal vision. Art is an expression of insight made visible, readable, or audible, and must not be mistaken for the physical things from which the art may arise.

If the endpoint of the arts were literal transcription of the sights and sounds which exist in the world, perfect music would be nature noises; perfect sculpture would be taxidermy and arts involving the written word would not exist because words are abstract, man-made incantations.

Art springs from the human spirit — its reactions to the world, not just attempted reproductions of it. Arts enlighten the spirit as well as the intellect.

Artists wage a silent yet deadly war against cultural and spiritual death. It is an age of mediocrity and the trivial: Worth is judged by ledgers of profit and loss and by Nielsen ratings. The power of art diminishes; it is decorative, its value is in endless reproductions of what is regarded as commercially inoffensive and salable. An artist's vision matters less than its retail value; indeed, the vision is subordinate.

Cannon Beach is a community which reflects the tensions between art's

values. It is known as an artists' village, and the best and the least are drawn to its reputation. It is yet a place where artists are not entirely discouraged and are tolerated, which allows them to pursue their compulsions to create, to reflect and interpret the powers of life and death in their works. But the other side is also apparent — art's reduction to commodities, bought and sold; the less vision or power, the less originality, the greater the chances of salability because consumers are expected to have no real understanding of art.

The tension is foremost among the artists who require the market to survive and pursue their art. For the most part the Cannon Beach galleries prefer quality and creativity; yet a pressure to succumb to a mass market increases. A society that is perceived as evasive of inquiry is given the trivial and inconsequential; its appearance is more noticeable when it has replaced works of distinction. Tolerance toward artists declines as fewer believe that the arts are integral and not superfluous. Under such pressures, with an ever increasing need to make ends meet, the artists are in danger of losing a sense of community that has been their bond and exhilarates their creativity. It is for this reason that The Hummingbird's "Showcase 195" came into being.

It is an artists' gallery composed of gifts for the eyes, the spirit and the mind by a community that refuses to be diminished. On its walls, on pedestals or freestanding are intensely private visions gathered for a collective ideal. No one is obligated to like them — the only responsibility is to observe them responsibly.

There are some particularly special pieces on exhibit at the 195. Joe Police's first motorized metal sculpture; Fred Kline's acrylic painting; both are deceased artists who lived in Cannon Beach, and who nourished the arts community with their work and energy.

The gallery has several purposes. Of course the artwork is available for purchase; but the idea for a showcase serves at least three other possibilities as well. The first is that the gallery will be a directory location for clients and artists to meet; it will offer opportunities for art awareness and education; and it will remind us all that we continue to be fortunate that our community is yet a place in which artists want to live and work.

Donald Osborne, whose art is signed Oz, is co-manager with Fred Dwello of Showcase 195. For more on the new gallery, with examples of the works on display, please turn to page six.

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One hundred and eighty colleges held Teach-Ins against the nuclear arms race on Veterans Day. An international movement in protest of nuclear weapons is growing: Pages two and three.