



The Eagle Has Landed

The only corpse successfully revived in recorded history was that of Lazarus, who was said to have lived for several years afterward. Jesus Christ is reported to have arisen from the dead, but even the most ardent supporters of his resurrection admit he was on earth only forty days; and Jonah was still alive when the whale spit him ashore. Countless other claims of resurrection or rebirth have been made, not least among them Count Dracula and Richard Nixon. With such inspired precedent, the North Coast Times Eagle is born again.

It is born again because First Amendment newspapers have become as rare as the nation's symbol, the Bald Eagle. The independent press has virtually disappeared, homogenized into the huge corporations that also control the country, and probably the world.

In this age of the great systems devotion to any principle other than perpetuation of the status quo seems quaint and naive, and faintly dangerous. Yet even the most random demographic survey of this wild and stormy coast would show that loyalty to the metallic demands of the corporate structure is not a prime aspiration of its inhabitants. To the contrary, this rare splinter of sand and spruce between mountains and ocean has traditionally served as a refuge for those seeking the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. Men and women of all ages and preoccupations who were raised here and stayed or who have emigrated here demand personal responsibility for their own lives.

But even that has come into conflict. The enormous pressures of population and economics threaten the way we live. The great contradictions between freedom and property have finally reached us.

Like everything else the role of the press is in question. There should be no doubt. The press should represent no other special interest than the First Amendment. This becomes patently impossible when the press is controlled by corporations whose interests are often in conflict with the Constitution. A. J. Leibling, a renegade to the news establishment, once said that the press was free only to those who owned one.

Exactly ten years ago a space capsule named the Eagle landed on the moon, and for the first time in history a human being stepped onto a planet other than earth. It was history's most spectacular moment. Our expectations since then have followed the course of Skylab which fell out of the sky.

We live in an increasingly nasty time. The petroleum age races to its end. Inflation and recession tumble over each other. The country crawls with greed and corruption while its leaders impose bitter controls over the liberties of its citizens. Preadolescents are thieves and murderers. Perhaps the war to end wars will occur soon. Even the world's weather is getting colder.

Twice out of the egg and once out of the crypt, the reborn Times Eagle will attempt lighting matches against a darkening wind.

— Lead article, Times Eagle, Vol. I, No. I, 20 July, 1979



WAR & POETRY

Four years ago the born again North Coast Times Eagle was raised out of its crypt and since then it has flown on unsteady wings, almost four thousand dollars in debt, an ad-line that barely pays two-thirds of the paper's expenses, a continuing delay in starting subscriptions, and a plague of smaller problems and discomforts. Its local coverage is terrible. Its distribution is uneven and irregular. It is unashamedly opinionated and is an intensely personal reflection of its editor's public prejudices.

Some comments might be made in its defense. It has a slowly growing readership thinly stretched along Highway 101 between Astoria and Yachats. Most of its advertisers have continued through the years without any evidence that a nickle's worth of merchandise has been sold as a result. It has sought to display or publish the works of artists, writers and poets who live on the Oregon coast. Its readers submit a large portion of its material. It has attempted to transmit information its editor or readers believe pertinent to coastal residents, often in the form of reprints from other publications. And although its political stance is more than a stumble to the left, it attempts to be honest in its dialogue with its readers.

Its fifth year begins with an awareness that its predecessor the original North Coast Times Eagle, which was published weekly in Wheeler from 1971 to 1976, lasted no longer than five years. It perished in an ignominious manner, deeply in debt and spiritually compromised by its final publisher. Its shabby death had much to do with its resurrection three years later. It had been a good newspaper, irreverent and honest, seldom cowed by power brought against it. Its founder was a prickly dreamer who fought for justice; his successor was a charismatic crook who manipulated the paper's reputation for honesty and poverty to defraud staff and contributors.

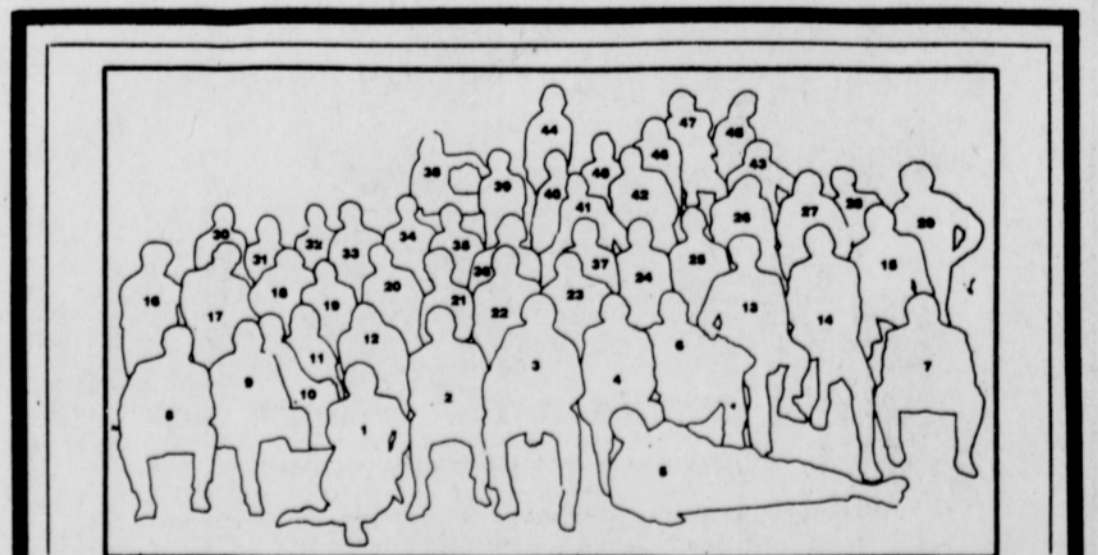
Reviving a corpse simply because its death was not satisfactory is a foolish enterprise. Yet its death had been too early, like a child hit by a car. It is not the same newspaper, of course. Much of the excitement and timeliness are missing, as are the poor souls who were the old bird's revolving staff, about two hundred in all who stopped by and were used up within weeks or months. The new bird is more isolated; it does not shout as much nor does it possess its predecessor's humor. It has not grown as wildly nor as precociously and it has not lived up to the promise it showed in its earliest days. It has had a rough time trying to learn what a good newspaper is. But hardwon lessons often take deepest root.

At any rate, we are four.

— Michael Paul McCusker, editor and publisher



Bill Gneill, whose ink drawing "Timber Eagle" fills out page one, is a Montana artist (his address is P.O. Box 1333, Livingston 59047). Shay Williams and Jim Weathers, who provided the final page of this issue, are Cannon Beach residents.



A few of the Famous who read the Times Eagle.