



Bill and Andy first presented the situation to the regulars yarning and jawing over lunch on Osburn's porch--the usual assemblage, once referred to by the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce as "those jaybirds." A dog had fallen Sunday from the sheer bluff north of Indian Beach. Its owners had returned to Portland. Storm conditions prevailed for four days. Now on Friday the 14th, five days later, it was hoped a party could be assembled to retrieve the animal. Hikers claimed to have seen the young Boxer dog scuttle into drift logs at the cliff's base.

Dean Bonde agreed to join us. He would bring his son, Gabe, and meet us at Indian Beach. Steve McLeod rode by on his bicycle accompanied by the venerable dog George, veteran of many forays over beach and woodlot in Steve's company. Steve and I had saved a dog in similar straits back in the early Seventies. He and George agreed to sign on too. Gary Moon's tow truck pulled up across the street. Gary spoke to us on the bench.

"Steve has the day off. He'll rappel down to the beach with the fire department's ropes. Can you help him pack the climbing gear to the cliff? He'll be getting ready at the fire hall."

I found Steve Moon at the fire hall packing ropes, safety harnesses, and signal flares. Mike Johnson dropped by to let us know he'd also follow us to the site and lend a hand.

At 1:30 p.m. we converged at the Indian Beach parking lot. Mike Covert hailed us as we approached the beach's north trailhead. He agreed to paddle his surfboard around the headland north of Indian Beach and reconnoiter the beach and driftwood. Steve McLeod, Dean, Gabe, and I shouldered the rope gear and humped briskly north on the Tillamook Head Trail.

We scrambled up the afternoon trail, switching back and forth through old growth columns of hemlock and spruce; an odd motley with time available for a lost dog: an artist, a jeweler, a student, a mechanic, and a carpenter. We would be joined anon by a surfer, a gardener, and the Cannon Beach Chief of Police.

At the first overlook, some 500 or 600 feet above the beach, Dean and Steve Moon scrutinized the small shingle of beach below. No dog. Dean tested the air with several whistles and "woofs" muted by surf chattering against rocks.

After consultation, we decided to follow the trail an additional mile north, then drop down through a ravine and watercourse to a rock outcropping 300 feet above the beach.

Steve McLeod lent his considerable local trail and beach savvy based on numerous combing sorties of the beach and headland terrain. At his direction, we dropped down a long muddy defile of bracken, salal, and rotten stumpage. George the dog growled an occasional note of encouragement and hope. Steve Moon and I shared some misgivings. Perhaps our Boxer dog had not survived the 600 foot fall or had succumbed to exposure.

Far below us a fleck appeared in the sea -- Mike Covert rounding the tip of Indian Beach's north point on his surfboard. The radio I carried in my pack crackled to tell us Police Chief Dave Rouse approached our location. He checked to confirm our position. Mike Covert beached his surfboard below us and scoured the beach

north and south. No dog.

"Check the driftwood piles!" Dean yelled down to him.

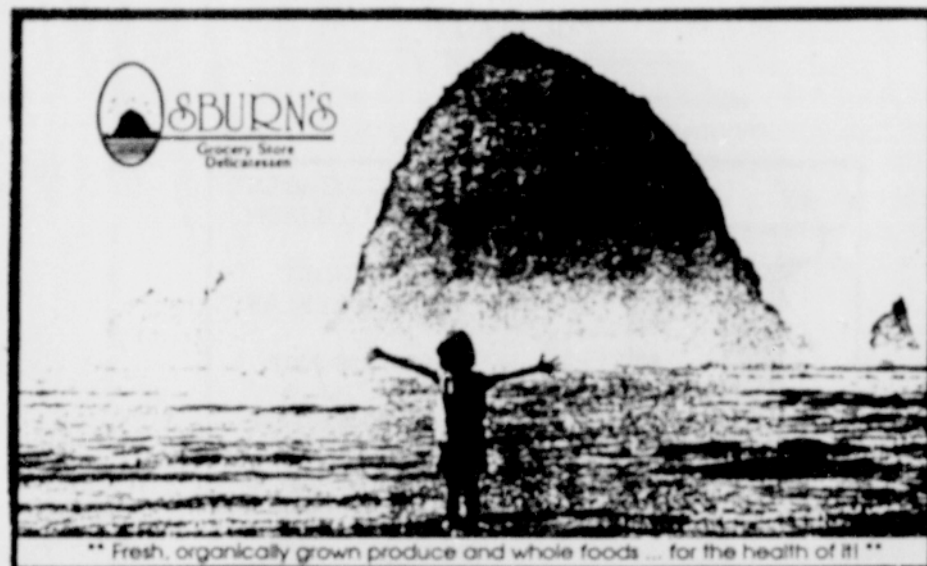
Fifteen minutes later Covert appeared cradling the young dog in his arms far below. He scaled the scree below us to within a few hundred feet of our position clutching the dog. In 1989 his dog had vanished on Tillamook Head forever. I reflected on the irony of circumstance. Dave Rouse and Steve unfurled the climbing ropes to meet him. Dean and Steve McLeod helped transfer the dog to a place of safe purchase.

Bernice, female Boxer, age 18 months, returned with the rest of us to the parking lot at Indian Beach on her own feet, bruised and scratched, but indefatigable. For five days she had huddled in drift logs with no food or water, following a 600 foot tumble to the beach. Three days of north coast storms preceded her rescue.

Our group approached the road home as the light waned. All of us saluted Bernice and her strength. George barked approval. I took quiet pleasure in knowing I lived in a place where eight people devoted a Friday afternoon to saving a dog's life.

I commend them.

In a world fraught with heartlessness and disdain, I am often proud of my town.



Village Alive

The demise of rural communities and the degradation of the environment are beginning to galvanize concerned citizens all over the world. In 1993 thousands of farmers in India and in France demonstrated against the new international trade pact known as GATT, because it eliminates agricultural subsidies to small farmers adversely affecting their healthy rural communities. In the past few weeks, peasants in Mexico have organized in Chiapas against the government over their small farms which they fear will be taken over by international agribusiness interests. Peasants and farmers in the Third World are literally fighting for their very survival -- the right to grow their own food.

Although the issues we are concerned with along the Oregon Coast are not immediate life and death issues as they are in the Third World, they are a microcosm of the current paradigm of greed and exploitation of our natural resources throughout the world. Private property interests, coupled with unsustainable development, at the expense of nature and communities, are the root cause of environmental degradation and poverty. Private property rights advocates, such as Covenham Forest Industries, are against the Fort Clatsop expansion. The company fears that if the government is successful in purchasing land from private owners, even if it is for the good of the community, the purchase may set a precedent. The rental issue in Manzanita is the same thorny problem. The ability of property owners to rent their property short-term is being challenged by those who believe that this erodes the very nature of the community and prevents local residents from finding affordable housing. Short term rental advocates believe that their private property rights should be held sacrosanct.

If we look at the revitalization of rural communities in Finland it may serve as a model for those of us living in rural Oregon. This success story will not sway the Covenham Corporation, but may serve to inform and educate those who may be conflicted about the rights of the individual versus the integrity of our land and natural resources -- our common heritage.

During the 1960's and the early 70's, Finland experienced rural depopulation. In 1976 a University professor, Lauri Hautamaki, started to work with municipal

authorities and five other Universities to evaluate the potential for revitalization of rural communities. Professor Hautamaki wrote a book called "A Living Village" which was a guide to village action which sold thousands of copies. He then started a series of training radio broadcasts which had 200,000 listeners. By 1992, three thousand Village Committees had been formed covering more than two-thirds of Finland's villagers. The villages initiated projects mainly in the areas of culture, tourism, communications, services, housing and economic development. Because of their intimate knowledge of local resources, the Committees became important new channels for public investment, positively affecting the lives of over 500,000 people.

These Village Committees are an expression of small-scale collective actions over individualism. Communal facilities are emphasized or restored, such as "The School as the Center of Village Life". Public and social services such as health and transportation services were also initiated. A Finnish professor wrote in 1986 that, "Although village activity has achieved much that is of positive value, its importance lies much deeper. In the long run its greatest importance is in the change in people's attitudes. Such a change in attitude would never have come about simply by providing information and training or by increasing government aid".

The pressure for change in the rural communities of Finland came about because of increasing insecurity in all walks of life, and because of the diminishing faith in continued economic growth. Planning was changed from being dominated by the experts, to a new approach which stresses the value of the individual.

Sunset Dinner Menu

Served 4:00-5:30 p.m.
Sunday - Thursday, except holidays

Walnut & Cranberry Stuffed Chicken
Breast of stuffed chicken, baked and topped with orange cream sauce.
\$9.75

Ground Sirloin
Tender steak, ground and cooked to perfection. Served with mushroom Madeira sauce
\$8.75

Sole a la Wayfarer
Fresh Oregon sole steamed and topped with Bay shrimp & lobster Hollandaise sauce.
\$10.25

Beef Bourguignon
Tenderloin of beef sauteed with mushrooms, garlic, and red wine. Tossed with pasta and served with garlic toast.
\$9.50

Seafood Newburg
Fresh seafood sauteed with garlic in a sherried mushroom cream sauce.
\$11.75

Dinners include soup or salad, choice of starch, vegetable of the day, and coffee, tea, or decaf.

Reservations Suggested
Wayfarer - Oceanfront Dining!
1190 Pacific Dr.
Cannon Beach 436-1108

The Village Committees activities include arts and crafts, furniture-making, herb production, printing, photography and video production are done locally using resources and talents in the community. Farming extension classes are also reviving especially in the field of organic agriculture. Some villages are introducing telecottages providing information technology to enhance village communications and strengthen the local economic base. The Committees' principal strength is their knowledge of and love for their village and its natural environment.

Each year a National Village Action Festival brings about 1,000 activists together around a chosen theme and chooses a Village of the Year. The 1992 theme for village activities was "The Village and International Relations".

In 1992 a National Council of Village Committees was established to provide a national base for the increased determination among rural people to preserve the quality and variety of their lives against the continuing trends of urbanization and loss of rural local control and self-reliance.

This movement is of immense significance because it shows how people in rural areas can reverse rural decline and regain control over their lives. The implications are enormous for other industrial countries as well as the Third World. It might even inspire us in Oregon to revitalize our own rural communities. I don't think we can count on our government to help us in any significant way. If we are going to successfully protect and improve our communities we must begin to take charge of our own destiny.

Michelle Syverson, Executive Director
Environmental News Network
Manzanita, Oregon

The Environmental News Network is a non-profit clearinghouse of environmental news stories.

