Counter Culture by Sandy Rea

I spring from a culture that celebrates the absurd, canonizes the odd. It is a chosen culture, one with universal perimeters. The now-trendy phrase "Don't GO there!", is verbatim. Of COURSE, we would go there, in a damned jet, on skis, in a covered wagon. Some of my generation would sell tickets. It is not, as some have labeled it, being contrary simply for the sake of argument. In fact, some times it is as necessary to our form of democracy as the constitution -- which, incidentally, was written by a whole bunch of 24-karat fruitcakes whom King George would gleefully have had committed, given the opportunity.

During the '60s I was involved in civil rights marches and demonstrations against the war in Viet Nam. The issues were separate, but the bottom line was the same: Someone without power was being steamrolled by someone with lots of it. The Great Steamroller pressed on for decades, crushing any in its immediate path. I still grieve them. Critics of both these movements claimed that the participants were only in it for "fun". A second war was waged at home against those of us who didn't perceive the John Wayne genre as heroic, who questioned the true purpose of our children's deaths. It wasn't "fun" seeing the vivid hatred for me in the eyes of a stranger who resented my inability to hate blacks and/or

I am now considered a political activist (although those of you who have seen me know that "active" has no meaning in my life. I recently found and bought a T-shirt that says "TEAM HAAGEN DAZS", proclaiming my athletic preference to the world). Seriously, the ethics that were instilled in the '60s have continued to have meaning. Here, political activism, when necessary, usually has to be achieved via a letter to the editor of one of the local papers. Sometimes the papers have failed to print letters that tread on the toes of the Little Steamrollers in the county. Lately, that practice seems to be abating. Huzzah!

The Upper Left Edge, along with the North Coast Times Eagle, has chosen to walk alongside the

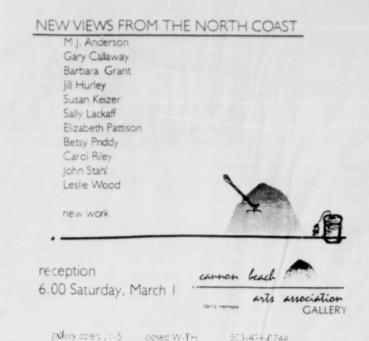
Steamrollers, taunting them from the sidelines without being smashed flat. It takes cojones in Clatsop County. Censorship, even at the local public radio station, is more the rule than the exception, and is practiced without the public ever becoming aware of it. in most cases. I am honored to have been asked to join this endeavor, and thank the whole gang for letting me play. By the way, if you have wondered how controlling ULE has been with its columnists, here's the scoop: The Beloved Rev. Billy (whom I have yet to meet) instructed me thusly; "Write anything you want.

So, true to that tradition, my last column for him will deal with the predictably underhanded stringpulling in which the Seaside chamber of commerce is currently engaged.

To make a long story short, the chamber, in yet another attempt to leech tax dollars of the city (and not have to account for how they are spent), is hiding behind a fictitious group called something like Citizens For Responsible Siphoning Off of Tax Bucks. Sounds pretty straight when you read it, until you realize it is a decoy for the chamber, which BY LAW, is prohibited from participating in any political campaign, which would jeopardize its non-profit status with the state. The front man -- a GEARHART resident -- was presented as the author of an amendment to the Seaside city charter! (Truth is indeed stranger than fiction.) In writing about this to local papers, I have been roundly sliced and diced by the chamber's executive director's husband, but have never been able to coax the so-called author out of hiding, even when he was invited to appear with me on Marty Wacj's "Behind the Mike" on KSWB February

To my fellow Seasiders: This particular amendment to the charter would do much more good to your vegetable garden than the city. It is a bogus political campaign being waged by the chamber, it looks like a duck, walks like one, and DARNED if I didn't step in something that I could swear came out of a duck. Put it out back, vote against this quacker.

And to B.R.B. et. al., vaya con Dios, mis amigos y amigas.







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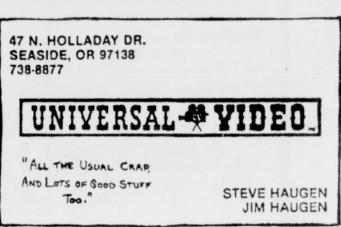
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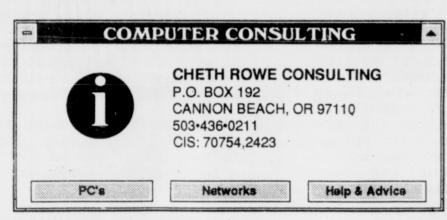
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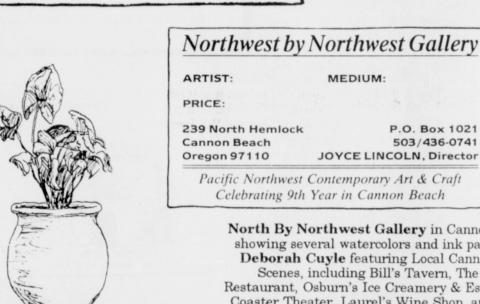
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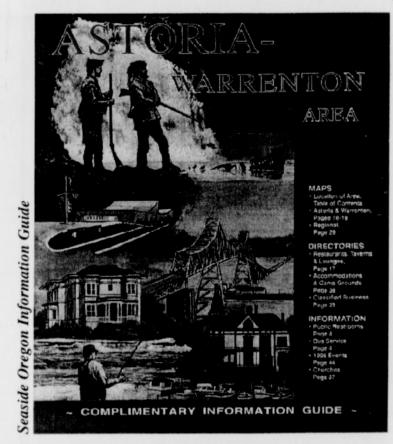
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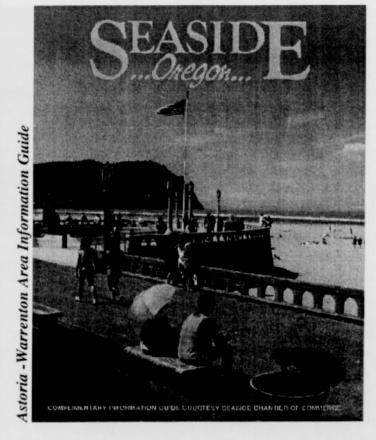
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