

JUNE'S GARDEN

"Village of Flowers" (cont'd.)

Jubilation Park, a pocket park Judy and Will Osburn and their employees created on the south end of their grocery store in 1976, was a small park in which to sit and peacefully enjoy a cup of coffee, an ice cream cone or a sandwich from the store deli ... an oasis in the summer during the peak of tourist season.



The park was planted with an alder tree, fern and other small plants that they gathered from the nearby forest. They added rhododendrons to bloom in May, and in the summer planted a variety of annuals. One year Judy had to add a sign, "I'm Nemesis," as the clerks were kept busy answering the question, "What's the name of that plant?" Nemesis, an annual, blooms in many colors. The Carnival strain produces exceptionally large blooms and grows successfully in acid soil that retains moisture throughout the summer. The bright colors of these annuals enhanced the small park.

The name, "Jubilation," which is also the name of the Osburns' corporation, was derived from both their first names (Ju for Judy and Bill for Bill) and the fact that they were so jubilant to live in a beautiful place like Cannon Beach when they moved here from Dallas, Texas.

Bill Osburn's career had been as a medical illustrator and he was an Associate Professor of Medical Art at the University of Texas in Dallas. They not only changed their life style, but Bill also decided to become known as Will. He liked the name better and felt it was more appropriate for the owner of an old, small town grocery store which had previously been owned and run by many different families since approximately 1915.

During the 1970's the City's comprehensive plan was being drafted. In the finished draft in March, 1979, under "Downtown Guidelines and Recommendations," #1 reads, "The viewpoints and pocket parks should be improved through the use of landscaping and benches." #10 on the same page reads, "New construction or extensive remodeling of existing buildings should include open space for landscaping and walk-through areas between buildings." Jubilation Park was used as an example.

The pocket park was Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield's favorite place to hold court with groups of citizens while enjoying his favorite food, an ice cream cone from Osburn's Ice Creamery.

In the early 1980's an important decision was made in that park that changed the direction of the future for a friend and myself. The two of us and a realtor met at the park to enjoy a cup of Osburn's coffee and talk over a real estate transaction. We had just looked at a piece of property that included a falling-down building. We were trying to decide if my friend and I bought the property whether the building was salvageable to rebuild or if we should tear it down to provide enough space for shops and an art gallery. As we were talking, my friend startled the realtor and me. She suddenly stood up, put her hand on top of her head, and proclaimed, "That does it. I

don't want to buy that old building!" Some droppings from a flock of seagulls had landed in her hair. I went back to a dependable job as a clerk at Betty Dueber's store, The Buttery. My friend married the realtor.

In 1974 when the Osburns bought the store, among many other things that needed redoing was the front porch. In 1976 they rebuilt the whole porch, added more length and width, railings and old school desk chairs where people could sit and enjoy food or the view.

This new porch gave Will another duty. A long red apron called "Willy's Chili Apron," a bowler hat, a garter on his arm, with a broom in hand, was the uniform he chose to wear to keep the new porch swept clean.

During that time the Osburns' daughter Susie, who had just graduated from the University of Texas, spent the summer running the new ice creamery the Osburns installed south of the grocery store. That summer Judy planted baskets of red and white striped geraniums and hung them in front of the ice creamery. The geraniums and the small pocket park full of brightly colored flowers complemented the building, which was painted red with white trim. She also added pots filled with annuals on the steps.

Will Osburn, known for his talented musical renditions on his washboard attached with cymbal, bicycle horn and a "uga horn," encouraged other local musicians to use the small park during the height of the summer tourist season, and the porch for a gathering place to serenade the town. In 1976 Spud Siegel, mandolin; his brother Kid, guitar; and Danny Clifford, fiddle; came to our town as the famous "Potato Group." Later, with the Beerman Creek String Band: Jeffrey Hull, fiddler; Big Larry, bass; Knox Swanson, banjo; and Larry Moore, guitar; to name a few, and Will and his washboard; the music was enjoyed by locals and crowds of visitors. For the finale, Will stepped up in front, bringing laughter to the audience, and announced that this fine group's next gigs could be heard at Portland's Crystal Ballroom or Radio City Music Hall in New York or Top of the Mark in San Francisco; or invited the crowd to migrate with them to listen to music at the world-famous Bill's Tavern.

When the Osburns bought the store, they learned they also inherited some of Cannon Beach history. In 1932, many years before Barbara married Ed Charles, she and her sisters as teenagers would sit on a crudely-made bench on the porch of the grocery store, to tag a ride home from Ed Charles. At that time Charles, a college student, spent the summer delivering groceries for the store, which was then owned by the Sheets family. Barbara's mother brought the girls down to their cabin every summer where they enjoyed horseback riding, skating at the old roller rink, and snacking on home-made doughnuts from the shop owned by Betty Charles (Ed's mother), which was in the same building as Sheets Grocery. Barbara said she and her sisters were probably a nuisance to Ed, but the bench became a daily meeting place for them to get a ride home. Barbara and Ed were married in 1944. Thirty-four years later, when the Osburns replaced the old bench, they gave it to the Charles couple, in memory of those early years. I wonder how many nails and new lumber were used to hold it together to

survive all those years. Will, who loved to putter, must have had to reinforce the bench each year.

Osburn's Grocery and Ice Creamery is now owned by their two sons, Steve and wife Emily, the grocery and deli; Jim and Yvonne, the ice creamery. These last several years Steve has added seasonal annuals, perennials and shrubs for sale. The displays of these plants add even more charm to the old building.

Each May on the north side of the store the creamy-pink-tinted flowers of "Lamb's Monarch" rhododendrons beckon people to ask about these shrubs. This rhododendron is an excellent choice for coastal gardens. If you're interested in buying this plant, contact Steve.



The small Jubilation pocket park is no longer there. South of the store is a new complex called The Landing. The grocery and ice creamery have remained. This building is one of the few original buildings left. It is a tribute to the Osburns who continue to give it constant care, even though the ice creamery is sinking, and the old structure creaks and groans with underpinnings of shifting sand.

If only the old store, the porch, and the parking lot could tell us all the stories from the past, the true history of Cannon Beach would then unfold. What secrets lie beneath the boards and layers of paint, plants, soil and sand?

Spring Garden Seminar at Astoria High School, April 4th with Ketzal Levine call 503-325-8573 if you wish to participate.

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