

SCRATCHPAD

Artists who live two lives

By ERICK BENDEL
FOR COAST WEEKEND

A feature story this week focuses on Arvi Ostrom, an Astoria man who owned and tended a bar in Uniontown while, unbeknownst to his loved ones, he drew thousands of striking pictures before his death in 1995 (see Page 6).

Ostrom's grandson, a musician named Ken Carlson, said: "I don't think a lot of people understand artists have to live two lives."

The notion of workaday

folks cultivating an artistic alter ego stuck in my mind as I spent Sunday evening in a Cannon Beach park watching a man named Konrad Wert, a 40-year-old singer-songwriter from Boerne, Texas, shred the guitar, banjo and fiddle during a Tolovana Arts Colony concert.

His music was breathless and heartfelt, the lyrics punctuated by staccato "Heys!" and "Ho's!" and passionate, prelinguistic cries. Half the fun was the specta-



cle of Wert himself: his eyes shut, head wagging, body heaving in his chair, and left foot rhythmically pummeling something he calls a "clog-stomper."

At times, the one-man folk band felt like a full-blown ensemble. Wert's manic virtuosity rivaled that of any live musician I've seen.

Yet his music is, in fact, a side gig to his 20-year profession as a special education

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PHOTO SUBMITTED BY TOLOVANA ARTS COLONY

Konrad Wert — better known by his stage name, Possessed by Paul James — performs in Cannon Beach.

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