

Views from the Rock

Haunting images from 20 years ago relived

More than 20 years ago I received an assignment to go to Oklahoma City after the bombing of the Alfred E. Murrah Federal Building. Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols conspired to destroy a symbol of government power — without regard for human life.

One-hundred-sixty-eight people were killed and 680 injured in that incident.

The people of Oklahoma City asked themselves, “Why?” and especially, “Why here?”

Jannie Coverdale lost her two grandchildren, Elijah and Aaron, in the blast.

Jim Denny could only identify his 3-year-old son Brandon by a birthmark on the boy’s thigh when he arrived at the hospital.

One of the victims, Rebecca Anderson, was a licensed practical nurse who rushed to the bomb site immediately after hearing the explosion. “She was probably the finest woman God ever put on this earth,” her husband, Fred Anderson, said.

In the weeks that followed, investigators determined that the killers had links with militia groups throughout the country. The militias and paramilitary organizations sought a New World Order and to create division within the country based on racial heritage or country of origin. All in the name of our “constitutional freedoms.”

Scenes of bloodshed also played out in Waco, Texas, and Ruby Ridge, Idaho, where extremists and the federal government dueled in deadly standoffs.

CANNON SHOTS
R.J. MARX



Little has changed since that time — in fact, some militia members have been emboldened by rhetoric in Congress.

Oregon’s Rep. Greg Walden, in urging clemency for Dwight and Steven Hammond — the ranchers jailed for arson on federal property — spoke angrily on the House floor of his constituents’ “tension,” “frustration” and “anger” over federal land management policies.

These are words that inflame emotions, not soothe them. Any sympathy for armed rebellion in Harney County is misplaced.

The lesson I’m learning in Oregon is many good people want to help the Hammonds but not the Bundys.

Our sister paper, the East Oregonian, wisely notes residents in the sparsely populated high desert area are “largely rebuffing” the militant Ammon Bundy and his followers.

“The real question is how that land should be managed and how grazing and natural resource extraction will remain viable and part of the multiple use doctrine that historically governed public lands,” the East Oregonian writes. “Government policy once fostered the timber, livestock and mining industries that became the economic lifeblood of rural Western communities. Current policy — the result of environmen-

tal lawsuits and regulatory and legislative changes — is largely responsible for draining that lifeblood.”

On the coast, we may be far from Harney County, but many of the same issues prevail. We have thousands of acres of timber and coastal land. We have a federal government overseeing and considering approval of a billion dollar pipeline over the will of impassioned citizens of all political persuasions. We have conflicts between Native Americans and management of their tribal lands. Fishermen face national and international regulations that may, to their eyes, defy logic.

All these issues must be vigorously debated and legislated.

But nuance doesn’t play well in a crisis.

The words “good” and “evil” are so strictly defined by each of us in our own way that it’s almost impossible to accept shades of gray. Extremism triumphs.

Events like the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge occupation only set back the conversation — there is little value to legislation from the barrel of a gun or in the aftermath of tragedy.

The bombing of the Murrah Federal Building seems long ago and far away, but the lives lost in Oklahoma City in 1995 are irreplaceable.

“The Oklahoma City blast had repercussions that went far beyond the death toll,” we wrote in 1995. “The American people suddenly got a glimpse of a new terrorist threat — a threat from within.”



AP FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS CARLSON

Ammon Bundy, son of rancher Cliven Bundy, stands outside Metropolitan Police Department headquarters, Friday, May 2, 2014, in Las Vegas. Bundy was in town to file a criminal complaint against the Bureau of Land Management.

“The antigovernment movement has experienced a resurgence since 2008, when President Obama was elected,” writes the Southern Poverty Law Center. Factors fueling the movement include changing demographics driven by immigration, a struggling economy and the election of the first African-American president.

The “inspiration” provided by many in the militia movement is no more of a divine message than that of the jihadists.

We conclude with this message from the Oregon State Police, who issued this statement last Wednesday, on behalf of all 36 sheriff offices in the state. “The sheriffs of Oregon are

united in the support of Harney County and its residents. We are supplying logistical and operational support to the community while the FBI works for a peaceful resolution with the militants at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge,” they said. “We want the good people of Harney County and the state of Oregon to know that we will always unite to provide support and assistance to ensure the safety of our residents, for any length of time, whenever criminal activity or an emergency, fractures the peace and security in our communities.”

It is those men and women, and all those on the front lines of our nation’s defense, who are our real constitutional heroes.

Group presents its top reader picks for the year ahead

As we head into 2016, hopefully feeling invigorated and determined to keep our resolutions, many of us are interested in trying something new — and we at the library would like to suggest joining Cannon Beach Reads, our book reading and discussion group.

The group is beginning its 10th year this month. Long-time member Marjorie MacQueen explains that “Cannon Beach Reads was in part started in order to have a winter activity for avid readers at the library. The mission was to provide a place where people who love to read could come and share their ideas and comments about interesting books.” Eventually, what began as a winter activity became year-round.

For 2016 the group has selected seven novels, two histories, a biography, a memoir and an account of medicine’s potential to enhance quality of life for dying patients.

“The group selects each year’s reading list by ballot from pop-

AT THE LIBRARY
CARLA O'REILLY



ular titles members nominate,” explains Joe Bernt, the group’s current coordinator.

The books to be read this year include:

Jan. 20: “All the Light We Cannot See,” by Anthony Doerr

Feb. 17: “The Heart is a Lonely Hunter,” by Carson McCullers.

March 16: “Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End,” by Atul Gawande.

April 20: “A New Life,” by Bernard Malamud.

May 18: “Go Set a Watchman,” by Harper Lee.

June 15: “West With the night,” by Beryl Markham.

July 20: “Cat’s Cradle,” by Kurt Vonnegut.

Aug. 17: “The Wright Brothers,” by David McCullough.

2016 Book List

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SEPT. 21: “Falling from Horses,” by Molly Gloss.

OCT. 19: “Amsterdam: A History of the World’s Most Liberal City,” by Russell Shorto.

NOV. 16: “Death Comes for the Archbishop,” by Willa Cather.

DEC. 21: “Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania,” by Erik Larson.

Sept. 21: “Falling from Horses,” by Molly Gloss.

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Dec. 21: “Dead Wake: The

Last Crossing of the Lusitania,” by Erik Larson.

The group meets from 7 to 8:30 pm. on the third Wednesday of each month at the Cannon Beach Library, 131 N. Hemlock. New members will be welcomed warmly! Stop by the library to pick up your

copy of the schedule, along with a description of each book. We keep one copy of each book at the library, and the Cannon Beach Book company has the books available to buy. Come join us for 2016!

And why not ring in the new year with an eBook? Drop by the front desk for instructions on how to join, and our own incomparable Office Manager Buddie Anderson Deni stands ready to give assistance.

The Cannon Beach Library is also a wonderful source of information. We sponsor free programs for all ages. There are special speakers, a lecture series, and various children’s programs throughout the year. We also feature books on eating a healthier diet, getting organized — for whatever new year’s resolutions you’ve made! Feel free to drop by and explore some afternoon or to pick up a book or two from our used book sale room.

The staff of the Cannon Beach Library would like to wish a very happy 2016 to each and every resident and visitor to our little town.

LETTERS

Nicholson proposal must meet code

Andrew Tonry’s “Planner Deems Nicholson PUD ‘Complete’” did a good job depicting some of Friends of Cannon Beach members’ objections/frustrations, but stopped short of indicating why the application is incomplete and why that matters.

The applicant simply didn’t want to follow the rules governing steeply sloped lots, threatened the city legally and was offered a call-it-something-different solution (i.e., Planned Unit Development or PUD). But now, he doesn’t want to follow the PUD rules either. Other developers must follow the rules, so should this one. For example, his plan states that he intends to build one house on a sand dune with an underground garage, using only conventional shallow reinforced concrete foundations.

His preliminary geo-tech report says this is OK, when

it obviously won’t work. Moreover, his preliminary plans imply that he intends to build another two-story house with a garage underneath but intends to start measuring the house height at the first occupied level — which could be 20 feet in the air on piling support — instead of adhering to the code like other developers are required to do. This house could be as tall as 48 feet making it the tallest building in Cannon Beach! It makes one wonder if the councilors who voted for this reviewed the full-sized plans to see the small print details and realized what they were preliminarily approving.

The code requires PUD applicants to provide detailed building plans, detailed landscaping plans and elevations. He has provided none of these. Moreover, he has not submitted the required homeowners’ association, required performance bond, required development schedule or

required driveway/parking details.

This is the city’s first attempt to use the code section for PUD and it doesn’t appear to be well thought through. Decisions made for this first PUD will most certainly set precedent for future PUD’s.

The PUD code is very different from that of a regular housing development. Allowing some flexibility upfront, there is more scrutiny and more requirements for final approval on the back end. This developer clearly wants to have the best of both worlds and get the flexibility of building on his steep slopes, but avoid the back end diligence by not submitting the required items for final approval. Instead, he simply wants to get approved and make whatever changes he wants later. That’s not the way the PUD code works. If he applied as a PUD, he should be required to follow the code for a PUD. Why should other devel-

opers be required to follow the rules but not this one?

Jeff Harrison Cannon Beach Nicholson plan not complete

Andrew Tonry in his Jan. 1, Cannon Beach Gazette article headlined “Planner deems Nicholson project ‘complete’” captured well the spirit of citizens’ opposition to the project. However he failed to mention that the plan is indeed not complete. Friends of Cannon Beach are dismayed that the applicant, after gaining preliminary approval by the Cannon Beach City Council to create a Planned Unit Development consisting of four houses, is now failing to follow the requirements that the Zoning Code has in place for a PUD.

Section 17.40.040 C.1 of the Zoning Code requires “detailed building and landscaping plans and elevations.” Further, it states, “The final plan shall be sufficiently detailed to indicate fully the ultimate operation

and appearance of the development.” The submitted plans do not provide any of this. There are no building elevations only “conceptual footprints” and no detailed landscape plans. Landscape Plan L1.0, as listed on the cover sheet, is missing. No elevations are provided to show what the houses would look like, where the two vehicles per house would park, or how they would gain access to the parking spaces.

The Zoning Code also requires the creation of a non-profit homeowners association. Since the four houses will have common areas, an organization of homeowners is essential to determine responsibility for maintenance. Can, for instance, the owner of house one create a garden on the common area belonging to the lot where house four is to be built? The applicant is claiming he won’t need a homeowners association, but the code requires one.

In addition, a performance bond is required by

the Zoning Code in order to “ensure that a development proposal is completed as approved and within the time limits agreed to.” Again, the applicant claims he doesn’t need one, but the code requires one.

Why City Planner Mark Barnes has declared these final stage three plans as ‘complete’ is a mystery unless he is afraid of the lawsuit that the developer continues to have pending as leverage over the city.

Because this is the first Planned Unit Development ever granted to a developer in Cannon Beach, Friends of Cannon Beach are anxious to see that it is done right. Otherwise, the precedent set by sloppy planning policy will present problems that are easy to anticipate. We urge all who are concerned about effective planning practices in Cannon Beach to attend the Planning Commission meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 28.

Diane Amos Cannon Beach

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