



OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER FOR CURRY COUNTY
GOLD BEACH, OREGON 97444

ROBERT AND BETTY VAN LEER, PUBLISHERS

510 N. ELLENSBURG, BOX 766

(503) 247-6643

7-31-83

Ma Prem Isabel, Editor
Rahneesh Times
Box 1
Rajneeshpuram, OR 97741

Dear Isabel:

I was asked to write you a letter concerning the recent report we printed in our newspaper about Rajneeshpuram. I can add little to the report except to affirm that I did write it.

As to whether the Bhagwan is a religious leader, to me this appears self-evident. He brought thousands of you from around the world to the Oregon high desert, some as visitors and some as permanent residents. From conversations with you and others at Rajneeshpuram there seems to be no doubt that all of you consider him the leader and your discipline a religion.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bob Van Leer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "B".

Bob Van Leer

Copy of newspaper report attached

OFFICE SUPPLIES AND FURNITURE

EXHIBIT "A-754"

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NINJA NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION
ASB

Tour of Rajneeshpuram interesting

By Bob Van Leer

Recently, Betty, Molly and myself attended the Oregon Newspaper Publishers association meeting at Sun River, south of Bend. Since we were that close we decided to visit Rajneeshpuram, near Antelope, Oregon's newest, and most unlikely, city. The city, its inhabitants and their leader Bhogwon Shree Rajneesh, have received a lot of publicity in the last couple of years, much of it bad, so we decided to see for ourselves what the situation is.

It is not a place you get to by accident. Located about 30 miles north and east of Madras, the best way to it is through the town of Antelope and a few miles east turn south on a gravel road. The new city is 10-12 miles from Antelope, a tiny city that is now mostly populated by the Bhogwon's followers who have elected a majority on the city council and now run the town. But the main activity is on the ranch.

The ranch is large, 64,000 acres, and with leased BLM land totals 126 square miles. It is not a choice ranch, very hilly and, we were told on the ranch, only 1500 acres are better than class VI soils or farmable land. Two thirds of the ranch is in Jefferson county and the other third in Wasco county. The city itself is all in Wasco county. The ranch is bordered on the east by the John Day river.

The permanent population of the ranch is about 1000 but at the time we arrived a celebration was just winding down that brought 15,000 visitors to the ranch from around the world. The striking immediate impression was thousands of people dressed in every imaginable shade of red or near red. This, we were told, is following the colors of the rising sun and is worn by all the followers, the Samyosin. We checked in at the newspaper office (The Rajneesh Times) with Mo Prem Isobal, the and were assigned a guide, Veena. We had called ahead the week before, of the ranch are available on a regular basis except during the festival. As newspaper representatives we were taken on a tour during festival week and as a member of the LCDC task force were assigned Veena as guide. Her knowledge of the ranch is encyclopedic. (LCDC is extremely important on the ranch.)

A general impression of the ranch-city is that it is extremely well run and an example of what can be done with unlimited manpower, properly directed. Nothing is wasted and everything is done on a grand scale. This is a commune, decisions are made collectively, not individually. Thus, to accommodate the visitors, it is not a matter of each accommodating several but 3625 tents set up to accommodate the 15,000 visitors. I hadn't seen anything like that since military tent cities in World War II, and maybe not that many at a time then.

The city itself is divided into two geographically separate areas, Jesus Grove and Buddha Grove, with Jesus Grove the site of the old ranch house and the most developed. A county road bisects the ranch and along it in Jesus Grove a public area has been developed that includes two stores selling merchandise to the public, a building housing a book store consisting entirely of the Bhogwon's books, tapes,

Our tour of the ranch included the agricultural areas including the poultry and dairy areas. I wanted to compare notes on raising emus as they have a pair. We visited the bakery which was still busy turning out 1700 loaves of bread a day for the visitors, the city hall, where shoes have to be removed before entering and other areas of the ranch. Members of the commune are vegetarians but some livestock is raised for sale.

We did not explore their religion at any depth and no one seemed interested in converting us. The people there seemed quite content. There is not a grim religion on the job they seemed happy and industrious even though Veena told us they all worked 12 hour days seven days a week. Living for all is double-wide mobile homes and A-frame houses made from the tent floors of last year's tent city. There is a considerable amount of holding and hugging for extended periods all through the city. A most unusual and impressive sight is the daily drive the Bhogwon takes just after two p.m. in one of his 25 Rolls-Royces. He drives himself preceded and followed by other cars. On the driver's side of the road for as far as we could see in either direction, about a mile, people were lined up two and three deep and all (except us) dressed in red, for a glimpse of the Bhogwon as he drove slowly by waving and smiling. He now maintains public silence but hours of his recorded words are on sale. He, incidentally, is lending off an effort by the U. S. immigration service to deport him.

The members of the commune are older than we would have guessed. Veena said the largest age group is 33-37 years of age and the second largest 38-42. Visual observation seemed to confirm this. The membership is international with about 300,000 world wide. On the ranch foreign accents are common, perhaps even the rule. Isobal the editor is a French national raised in Chile. Veena was born in Britain, raised in South Africa, and spent 12 years in India alternating there with setting up a group in England. She also taught high school for three years in Canada and became the most animated when describing the commune's educational system. There are 55 children on the ranch with 10 teachers and state-certified through grade 12. But the direction of teaching is for different from other schools. Children do not compete with one another, but each as an individual. Asked as to whether this kind of an education would ever allow them to join the outside world Veena adamantly insists that the children grow up secure in themselves and are thus able to handle anything that comes.

The relations of the commune with the neighbors are a mixed bag. A reporter at the Madras Pioneer, newspaper in the nearest sizeable town, said the paper's relationship with the commune has been good. The reporter had been on the ranch several times and was given a call when there was something newsworthy. Some of the churches in Madras were not reconciled to the ranch. We found an uneasiness among some about the commune but others who had no problem with it. The reporter said there were bad feelings about commune members taking over the Antelope city government and there are others who view the city as a way of getting around the land use laws. The reporter said the Bhogwon used to drive to the weight station of Madras to turn around on his daily drive but abandoned this offer a potentially troublesome situation grew up.

People gathered to heckle the Bhogwon, the commune began sending busloads of members for his support, a trucker blocked his turnaround, officers come to maintain order and finally he stopped driving to Madras. There is not much social mixing between the samyosin and others off the ranch. Two doctors, a specialist in internal medicine and a psychiatrist from the commune, have set up some practice in Madras. There are five physicians in the commune which seems weighted to professional people.

Members of the commune seem embattled, and with some good reason. They are harassed by 1000 friends and the immigration service, and viewed with suspicion by some of their neighbors. However, some of this reaction is brought on by Ma Anand Sheela Silverman whose title is personal secretary to the Bhogwon but in a private business would have the title of chief executive officer. She can be adroit and makes few friends by describing opponents as "stupid" and worse on television appearances. This brings her little criticism from the commune members we talked to who gave the impression they really wish she wouldn't but describe her manner as that of a mother tiger when her cubs are under attack and they as the cubs are on her side.

Conclusion? Basically the Rajneesh appear to be good people doing a good job. As a closed society they are likely to have some problems with neighbors always. But in many ways they are better than most.

Letters To The Editor ; Tremendous job, Pickle circus says circus rained out Wed.

July 17, 1983

Curry County Reporter
Gold Beach

Dear Sir:
All of us in the Pickle Family Circus wish to extend enormous gratitude to the residents of Gold Beach. An incredible job was done by the Gold Beach Child Development Center - Cathy, Alexandra and Frank - three cheerleaders, a double-backflip and a round of applause to you.

Pickles have been performing throughout Oregon for the past 7 years and though we wish to believe that the sun always shines on the circus, occasionally an incredibly "heavy fog" will descend upon our modest arena and make performances impossible. Such was the case last week in Gold Beach. Many of you bought tickets and never got to see the show. We were very disappointed. Performing to audiences in Gold Beach is a warm and rewarding experience.

The most upsetting aspect of being rained out is what it means to the Gold Beach Child Development Center whose members worked hard for months to bring the circus to town; found us showers in people's homes; cooked us a salmon dinner; found us a warm, dry place to wait out the rain; and even arranged a great speed boat trip at Jerry's. For their efforts they were left with soggy popcorn and a phone ringing off the hook for refunds on the rained out performance.

Unfortunately, the circus must continue on its way north, but we would like to urge you to remember that good, loving, dedicated child care is important for all of us. We hope you will see the price of your ticket as a small contribution to the generations to come.

Finally, you are all invited to any of the performances of the Pickle Family Circus in 1983. Whenever we are, your ticket will be honored. Here's to sunny days in Gold Beach!
With love,
The Pickle Family Circus
Zoe Leader
Pickle Family Circus
400 Missouri St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
Need a mechanical pencil? There are many to choose from at the Curry County Reporter.

Dear Pickle Family Circus Fans,
Due to typical Curry County weather conditions, the Wednesday night Pickle Family Circus performance was cancelled. We share your disappointment.
Your tickets will be accepted at any Pickle performance this season.
Both the Pickle Family Circus and the Gold Beach Child Development center are non-profit organizations and, if you wish, you can consider any ticket purchased a tax exempt donation.
If you require a refund on your ticket purchase, send a stamped self-addressed envelope and your tickets by July 25 to: TICKETS, P.O. Box 38, Gold Beach, Ore. 97444.

Students attend SOSC academy

Rebecca Ellenbecker of Wedderburn, Barbara Forry and Nancy Starkweather of Gold Beach were among the approximately 200 students who attended the annual Academy '83, a program for talented and gifted students in grades 5 through 9. Classes offered included Creative Problem Solving, Leadership and Communication, Microcomputers, Shakespeare. In the Theatre, Math/Astronomy, Creative Writing and The Magic of Theatrical Make-up.
(More letters on page 6)

PUBLIC MEETING

Curry County Board of Commissioners
Monday, July 25, 1983, 10:00 a.m.
District Court Jury Room,
Courthouse, Gold Beach

Agenda will include:
Public hearing regarding the proposed formation of a special district to be known as the Curry Health District - 10:30 a.m.
Road Inspection Fees.
Wednesday, July 20
City of Brookings request for reconsideration of Oceanview Mobile Estates resolution - 10:00 a.m.

IN MEMORIAM:

open to the public. The rest of the ranch is private and non-members may only visit accompanied by a guide. An exception to this is the airport at which, Vanda said private planes are welcome and a few are now landing there as a lunch stop. The ranch has its own airline, Air Rightest, which includes two engine DC-3 transports. The importance of LCDC is that the city has been, and still is, in a continuing struggle for its existence because of land use planning. Henry Richmond's organization, 1,000 Friends of Oregon, working with some local ranchers, is trying to prevent urban development at Rainierashburn and declare the city invalid and has had some success in the courts. On the other hand, we were told that LCDC July 2 approved the city's plan for 13 of 14 goals, requiring modifications only in the Urban Growth Boundary to be more compact. Agricultural land was excluded which LCDC said should have been included to make the city UGB more compact. A general overview of the ranch is that these people are good stewards of the land - actually their development of the property would seem to be more of a model to be pointed out as the way to do it. Creeks running through the ranch are the normal eroded + washes except areas now stabilized and we are told this work will be completed. The ranch was purchased only two years ago but already a 40 acre lake has been created with a dam and several miles of creek stabilized with check dams to slow runoff, banks have been sloped and seeded with grass and shrubs and at water level junipers have been stocked to prevent bank cutting.

About 3000 acres have been cleared and cultivated and planted to wheat and barley with peas being tried. Irrigation is all from surface water - wells are used only for domestic water. Examples of the recycling prevalent all over the ranch is the junipers cleared for cultivation are not piled and burned but used for posts, railings and the tops for streambank protection. Wastewater is treated, stored in a reservoir and used for irrigation. Incidentally we were told that wastewater treatment was another fight with 1,000 Friends which wanted the city to use septic tanks instead of reusing the water. On a bench on the John Day the commune has a large truck farm, irrigated from the river on an old water right, which supplied the greens for the 15,000 visitors with a surplus available. Leftover greens are used for chicken food.

Much of the tent city is on flat agricultural land. As the visitors go home the tents are to be lifted, stored, and the site, in the next few weeks, will be cultivated and planted. Given the way these people are treating the land the zeal with which 1,000 Friends is trying to block their activities raises questions of motives. We have a distinct feeling that if the Bhogwon was a white Protestant who had attended an Ivy League school he would not be subjected to this continuing harassment.



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Work session, not hearing

one middle-aged guru who brought millions in resources with him. The groting style of Steven Silverman adds to the commune's problems instead of solving them. The most troubling situation is that of Antelope where the commune, quite legally, has taken over the city by buying property and registering to vote and voting. Perfectly within our democratic rules yet if I were one of the residents of Antelope before the commune arrived I'd not be real happy with the present situation.

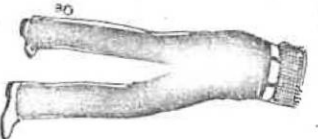
01342 Winchuck River Road
Brookings, Oregon 97415
July 15, 1983
Curry County Reporter
Box 786
Gold Beach, Oregon 97444

Thank you for being fair to your readers and to Rep. Bill Bradbury when you reported the story about the so-called "Marginal Lands Bill" last week. By telephoning Bradbury for his views on it and not simply playing up a partisan blast by a local politician, as your colleagues on the other county papers did, you showed yourself to be a newspaperman worthy of the name. Evidently, however, you did not ask Rep. Bradbury for his reaction to Commissioner John Mayea's comments on the legislative "heating" he had attended, which he called a "disgrace" and said Curry county officials had difficulty winning time to testify.

GB police news

Betty Crooks
Chairman, Curry County
Democratic Central Committee
(Phone 469-4215)

July 16 - Richard Bauer reported burglary I to his home. Missing are a large amount of power tools and miscellaneous items worth over \$550.00.
July 18 - Donald L. Nida, courier for the Curry Coastal Pilot, reported their II to the paper box in front of the Gold Beach postoffice. Thirty-nine papers to cover up the ineptness of Curry valued at \$9.75 are missing.



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07-11-83

Born - March 4, 1946

Born - June 30, 1945

On silent wings so high we fly,
Across the boundless blue;
Our bodies free - so now we flee,
Pausing not - for life is through.

Above the condors and craggy peaks,
We see the white of snow;
High meadows there and chilling air,
But onward our souls must go.
Forward through the ages of time we'll tread,
Where pioneers' trails begun;
Their victories are unmeasured now,
For true freedom now they've won.

The burring sands below could tell,
Of our race against the sun;
We see the place where many fell,
Their race of life they'd run.
The rolling clouds are now our home,
The stars all seem as one;
Our master called us home today,
Our journey has just begun.

Dale M. Gifford - 1983

In honor of two outstanding young men - of whom we were very proud.

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