

Rajneeshee land buy concerns Pennsylv

By PETER KELLEY

LA Times-Washington Post Service

BRANCH DALE, Pa. — Tiny coal towns in eastern Pennsylvania have been buzzing lately with talk of "the guru."

Jokes about turbans and pink sheets have been the rage here since word got out that members of a religious sect have bought up a fifth of Reilly Township's 16 square miles in Schuylkill County. But mixed with the laughter is confusion over whether the sect intends to move in — and if it does, what changes could be in store for the township's 800 residents.

This is pine-green, dirt-brown and coal-gray country, where natives can guess each other's home towns by the lilt of their brogue. The new owners of the Blackwood coal lands — 2,140 remote acres where miners have taken high-grade anthracite for more than a century — are disciples of an Indian guru named Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, many of whom live on a commune in Oregon.

When several disciples drove up from Philadelphia in rented Cadillacs the first week of April, wearing wooden beads and lockets with the guru's picture over their business suits, tongues wagged.

Connection denied

Contacted in Oregon, the sect's leaders promptly denied any connection with the purchase. The guru has followers worldwide with businesses of their own, said Prem Isabel, a spokeswoman for the commune, who added that she had never heard of the Blackwood venture.

"Just because some Rajneeshee buys a piece of land, everybody panics," she said. "If anybody has anything to fear, it's the fact that we are good business people, we work hard, and we will give them good competition."

But in the words of Larry G. Felty, the township's attorney, many residents still wonder: "Is this just an investment, or do they plan to operate and bring in people? Are they going to strip-mine, or move in as a cult?"

They've heard that Rajneesh owns a fleet of Rolls-Royces and teaches a blend of Eastern mysticism and Western materialism.

It was national news when the Oregon commune bused in street people from cities across the country last fall.

Isabel's assurance that Rajneeshees have formed colonies all over the world that have no formal connection to the Oregon group does little to stem many residents' fear of the outsiders.

hole in nearby Tremont, there was loose talk of resistance from men who work with dynamite and carry guns in their pickup trucks.

No one seems to have any evidence that the guru's disciples plan a commune for Schuylkill County. Isabel says, "Tell them we're quite happy out here in Oregon and have no plans of moving."

But the new owners are "traveling," their attorney said, and could not be reached.

Meanwhile, a new rumor — that they already have bought out an expensive new coal processing plant on the property — has proved hard to dispel.

What is clear, according to court documents and attorneys for both

sides, is that on April 9 a Pennsylvania corporation called Hava Ltd. bought the Blackwood lands from Ryon Realty Co. of Pottsville. The price was \$420,000 for "all the surface and all the coal beneath the surface to 500 feet," according to the deed.

The deed also says that Hava's surface rights are subject to a purchase option held by the processing plant's owners.

Hava Ltd. was registered with the Pennsylvania Corporation Bureau just five days before the deal went through.

The picture is complicated by the absence of the plant's principal owner, Harry Camm, a globetrotting English businessman who lives in the Channel Islands off the coast of France.

Camm set up the plant in 1982, trucking in a prefabricated breaker from Kentucky and the next spring to recover from the huge banks of refuse area.

His company, Blackwood cite Inc., signed a 25-year lease for surface rights, and a purchase option with Ryon Realty that runs out in 1986.

According to Pottsville's Abraham Frumkin, who negotiates for the realty company, the guru's followers have simply taken over the plant in collecting payments on the purchase option — which was valued at \$4 million.

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land buy concerns Pennsylvania town

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Meanwhile, Camm has shut down a strip mining operation on the property,

and his towering, blue-and-white recovery plant has been idle since December.

In the early 1900s, Blackwood was a thriving village of coal miners and their families. But since the village and breaker were destroyed in a fire, the county has zoned the area for mining or heavy industry — barring residential development except for a caretakers' house or farms.

County officials say the township could pass its own zoning ordinance to again allow homes in the area. In Felty's words, "Reilly Township is politically vulnerable to the tactics they used on that town out in Oregon," a reference to the Rajneeshees' takeover of what was then Antelope, a town since renamed Rajneesh.

A D-H

4/23/85

Madras woman seeks probe into charges of sex abuse in guru city

PORTLAND (AP) — A circuit court judge in The Dalles received a petition Monday from a Madras woman seeking a probe into allegations of sexual abuse and neglect of children in Rajneeshpuram.

"I'm requesting that the court look into the welfare of the children of Rajneeshpuram," Diane McDonald, a 33-year-old legal secretary, told The Associated Press in a telephone interview.

She said she took the action after spending four years asking state officials to investigate "various rumors and allegations" that the children were being abused.

She said she based her case on affidavits that were filed with the petition, an article in the May issue of Oregon magazine "and my own belief these children are not being taken care of in the manner required by law."

McDonald said the affidavits are related to "incidents," but she declined to elaborate. Baker County Circuit Judge William Jackson, sitting in Wasco County on Monday, sealed the case file after the petition was filed.

Eugene attorney Charles Porter, who prepared the petition, said that since the file had been sealed, "I'm in no position to comment about it." He said the law allows 60 days for officials to investigate such complaints.

Jewel Goddard, administrator of the state Children's Services Division, said a division representative was sent to a meeting with Wasco County officials Monday to discuss the petition.

Oregon magazine quoted anonymous former disciples and "street people" who were bused to the commune last fall as saying the Rajneesh children are neglected and sexually abused.

One former disciple said most of the 12- to 14-year-old girls at the commune were having sexual relationships, the magazine reported.

A street person who participated in the sect's "Sharing-A-Home" project last fall told the magazine he saw a 10-year-old girl being molested by a man on a bus in Rajneeshpuram.

The magazine quoted a 1983 report by the Concerned Christian Growth Ministries of Australia written by an Australian visitor to the commune. The report was quoted as saying commune children did not live with their parents, were encouraged to experiment sexually with one another.

Rajneesh spokeswoman Ma Prem Isabel noted that McDonald already has prompted two investigations by the CSD, which found no wrongdoing.

"They are very happy, well-loved and well taken care of kids," she said. ". . . There has never been neglect or abuse of our kids."

Rajneeshes to appear in court

RAJNEESHUPURAM (AP) — Papers were served Tuesday ordering followers of guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and their children to appear in court regarding allegations of child neglect and sexual abuse. The papers authorized Wasco County sheriff's deputies to remove Rajneesh children from the commune-city, but Deputy Glen Dunsberger said they were not prepared to take that action. Baker County Circuit Judge William Jackson, sitting in Wasco County, also signed a temporary restraining order prohibiting the removal of children from Wasco and Jefferson counties before a May 20 hearing.

A D-H
4/24/85

RAJNEESH



WATCH

**BHAGWAN'S
BOTTOM LINE,
PART 1**

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, who often has extolled the virtues of capitalism, is clearly a man who practices what he preaches.

His name does not appear on any known document of ownership of a single enterprise or piece of property anywhere in the world. But through top assistants like Sheela Silverman and her husband John Shelfer (whose names do appear on such documents), Rajneesh has developed a complex and lucrative international financial empire that belies his claim to be a purely spiritual leader oblivious to worldly affairs.

The heart of Rajneesh's financial empire is the Rajneesh Foundation International (RFI), an Oregon non-profit corporation. According to its charter, RFI is "organized exclusively for charitable purposes and particularly for the spreading of the religious teachings and messages of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh." RFI is the successor to the Rajneesh Foundation in Poona, India, the city in which Rajneesh's community was located until he fled that country in June 1981 with Indian tax authorities on his heels.

The Rajneesh Foundation in India, whose tax-exempt status as a charitable institu-

tion had been revoked, was effectively disbanded when seven of its eleven officers resigned their positions just as they and Rajneesh were leaving for the United States. At the time of their departure, in the words of the highly respected Indian magazine *India Today* (June 15, 1981), the Rajneesh Foundation of India was "up to its neck in income tax arrears, defalcations with the charities commissioner, a major insurance fraud, and a string of cases for criminal offenses which were still being investigated when they left."

The new foundation in Oregon, i.e. RFI, receives the monies from most of the Rajneesh organization's known sources of income in the United States: sales of Rajneesh books, audio and video tapes, films and paraphernalia; various "therapy" and "meditation" courses offered at Rajneeshpuram and other Rajneesh centers; profits from the annual World Festival held every summer at the ranch in Oregon; and "donations" from wealthy and non-wealthy followers. Although informed observers seriously doubt that these stated sources of income can, by themselves, fully account for the apparently unlimited nature of Rajneesh financial resources, they can, indeed, be quite sizable. It has been estimated that last summer's Third Annual World Festival at Rajneeshpuram netted upward of \$10 million for the city and its various business enterprises.

Most residents of Rajneeshpuram are members of the Rajneesh Neo-Sannyas International Commune (RNSIC), an Oregon "Cooperative Corporation" whose stated purpose is "to be a religious community whose life is, in every respect, guided by the religious teachings of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and whose members live a communal life with a common treasury." The commune provides the

work force to run the ranch, build and maintain the city and operate various Rajneesh businesses. Members of the commune not only work twelve hours a day, seven days a week, for no wages, but also actually have to pay a substantial fee for the privilege of being in Bhagwan's Buddhafeld and performing this act of "worship."

The fee for residing and working at Rajneeshpuram is said to range between \$500 and \$1,500 a month. Apparently new recruits also pay an initial entrance fee that can range between \$5,000 and \$150,000, depending on the person's financial resources and work skills. Any money a commune member has left after paying these fees may be spent in the various high-priced boutiques, shops and restaurants in Rajneeshpuram.

Because it is a cooperative, the commune is tax-exempt. Under Oregon and federal tax laws, members of a co-op are taxed on benefits they receive from their membership, but no income tax is levied on the organization itself. The RNSIC is said to operate at a loss. Even if it made a profit, tax experts say, the income it would pay out would be apportioned to so many members that actual taxes would be very low relative to those that would be owed by a single profit-making entity.

The "profit-making" arm of the Rajneesh corporate empire is the Rajneesh Investment Corporation (RIC), a wholly owned subsidiary of RFI. The investment corporation holds title to Rancho Rajneesh and the entire city of Rajneeshpuram, as well as to Rajneesh properties in Rajneesh (formerly Antelope) and Portland, and in turn "leases" these properties to the commune. These same properties are fully mortgaged to Rajneesh Services International Limited (RSI) in London, a

registered English corporation whose principal function appears to be to transfer money from one component of the Rajneesh international financial empire to another. The RIC also has various specialized holdings in an assortment of subsidiary "trusts," such as the "Modern Car Trust," which manages Bhagwan's fleet of forty-plus "graced" Rolls Royces.

Attorneys and accountants who have pondered the Rajneesh corporate octopus believe that the investment corporation, RIC, serves two different functions. First, they say, because it is a private corporation, RIC's records are not open to public inspection, as are those of its parent corporation, RFI, which is a public foundation. Thus, the investment corporation enables the Rajneeshes to keep details of certain financial transactions confidential, particularly some reportedly large transfers of cash from RSI in London.

Second, by mortgaging all of its real property holdings to a corporation in England, RIC has made these assets invulnerable to court judgments against them in America. The sealing off of other special assets such as the Rolls Royces in RIC-controlled trusts insulates those assets from court judgments as well, legal experts say. One Portland attorney has said that the Rajneeshes have built "a nearly impregnable wall of protection for their assets."

These experts say that the legal function of the Rajneesh Foundation International, the center or head of this financial octopus, is completely obvious: by virtue of its being a non-profit "church," RFI does not have to pay any taxes whatsoever on its considerable income.

—Win McCormack

Next Month: The Exploitation of Man by 'God'

Rajneeshee rites to draw 15,000

By JEANIE SENIOR

Correspondent, The Oregonian

July 1981
Oregonian

Thousands of followers of an Indian guru have begun pouring into Central Oregon for his sect's third annual world celebration, billed as a "time to unite in the presence of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh."

Some 15,000 followers of Rajneesh will visit the town of Rajneeshpuram between June 30 and July 6, the days Prem Isabel, a Rajneeshee spokeswoman, described as the "core of the festival."

The festival is a major money maker for the Rajneeshees, who established their city and commune in south Wasco County three years ago.

The basic fee to attend the seven-day festival is \$500 for shared accommodations in a four-person tent. Accommodations in a mountain cabin with two people per room and shared bath are \$650 per person. It costs \$1,050 per person for a room in the new Hotel Rajneesh, where rooms feature private baths, air conditioning, telephones and a television set that receives videos of Rajneesh's discourses.

The fees include three vegetarian meals a day. Private living facilities such as campers

or tents are not allowed.

During the week-long main event of the festival celebrations will begin at 8:30 a.m. with Satsang — an hour-long mass gathering at which Rajneesh will be present.

On July 6, which is "master's day" Rajneesh, who has taken a vow of silence, also will appear at a second gathering in the evening.

Other festival activities will include meditation sessions, tapes of discourses by Rajneesh and live music.

Isabel said that at least half those attending will be from Europe, with others from the United States, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South America and India.

Most will fly to Portland and be taken to Rancho Rajneesh on the commune's buses.

Prospective festival goers are required to sign a form stating that they are not pregnant, that they will not bring pets, illegal drugs, weapons, non-vegetarian food, incense, candles, cooking equipment or a number of other items to the ranch. They also are prohibited from engaging in any private enterprise during their stay.

The visitors also must agree that at the end of their registered stay, they "will leave

Rancho Rajneesh peacefully and without incident."

Isabel estimated that the permanent population of the city of Rajneeshpuram totals about 1,500, with about 200 more people living outside the city limits. An additional temporary population varies from 400 in the middle of winter to 15,000 in the middle of summer — "that really changes a lot," she said.

In an introduction to the 24-page booklet about the festival, Anand Sheela, Rajneesh's personal secretary, states, in a diatribe against opponents of the commune, "We are going to show these enemy forces, these politicians and religious bigots, that the unity of our love and courage is strong and that none of their actions are going to stop us from creating a beautiful world for our spiritual growth."

"That's why this celebration is even more important than the previous celebration to show these idiotic politicians that their fear is not going to stop the work of Rajneeshees."

Both before and after the festival, visitors can participate in a number of workshops and courses that range in cost up to \$7,500, including food and lodging.



We at 1000 Friends of Oregon are concerned about what is happening at the Muddy Ranch in central Oregon. We want to be clear about one fact from the outset — our concern has nothing to do with religion. Our concern is with the establishment of a new city by means which have subverted both the intent and the letter of the law.

Our land use laws have been written to protect the land for ourselves and future generations and, equally important, to allow for rational and orderly development. We do, however, quarrel with development carried out through deception.

Oregon has gained a national reputation for its unique land use planning program. It is also widely recognized that without 1000 Friends of Oregon, land use planning might not have become a reality here. Today, more than ever, we need your help to see that our laws are enforced.

1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit statewide advocate of Oregon's planning laws. Founded in 1975, the organization utilizes planners and attorneys to assure that these laws serve the public interest.

Oregon's land use planning program encourages industrial development inside urban growth boundaries, and promotes preservation of commercial farms and forests outside the boundaries. The program is designed to help business and industry. Comprehensive plans provide a market choice of zoning certainty for manufacturing and for Oregon's traditional industries, agriculture and forestry.

In recent months, 1000 Friends' work has included:

- **Active support of a 100-acre high technology industrial park in Corvallis.**
- **Lobbying with the Association of Oregon Industries, American Electronics Association and others at the legislature to streamline Oregon's planning laws.**
- **Assistance to industrial developers and local governments in drafting industrial zoning codes which help businesses maintain options and protect them from new neighboring incompatible development.**

This advertising supplement donated by business supporters of 1000 Friends of Oregon.

As with most of its other work, 1000 Friends became involved in Rajneesh matters because local citizens complained to 1000 Friends about violations of Oregon's land use laws. 1000 Friends filed legal proceedings only because state officials refused to meet their responsibility to enforce state law.

September 17, 1981

Margaret Hill, Mayor of Antelope, writes 1000 Friends to ask for advice and an investigation of whether "the most basic goals of our land use laws are being flaunted."

Mayor Hill expresses shock that in August, 1981 the Rajneeshees told county officials they wanted building permits for **50** people, but now the Rajneesh have received building permits from Wasco and Jefferson county for **250-300 "farm workers"**.

October 5, 1981

Sheela Silverman (later Ma Anand Sheela) writes 1000 Friends saying (incorrectly) she has heard Mayor Hill wrote to 1000 Friends expressing concern "about us being in Eastern Oregon."

Ms. Silverman asked 1000 Friends to "advise us how we can continue the work we have in mind."

October 23, 1981

1000 Friends' staff Attorney Mark J. Greenfield and Senior Planner Paul Gerhardt, Jr. meet with David Knapp (later Krishna Deva, Mayor of Rajneeshpuram) to discuss Rajneesh plan for a city.

Mr. Greenfield tells Mr. Knapp: (1) city status would require the Rajneesh to seek an exception to the statewide planning goals because municipal status automatically allows any urban use in agriculturally zoned areas; (2) the exception may not be granted because the land use laws applicable to the Muddy Ranch allows the kind of farm and religious activities the Rajneesh say they want; a city is not needed.

Mr. Knapp says the Rajneesh do not want to seek an exception because he says it is time-consuming and doesn't leave "options" open.

November 2, 1981

1000 Friends' staff attorneys Greenfield and Stacey and planner Gerhardt met with Knapp, Sheela Silverman and John Shelfer (later Jayananda, foreman of the Muddy Ranch, and later President, Rajneesh Investment Corporation).

Mr. Stacey states: "The question here is what are your intentions. Are you going to be a farm, a rural settlement or an urban area?"

Ms. Silverman says, "Our goal is

RAJNEESHPURAM

YOU DON'T NEED A CITY TO RUN A FARM

to farm" but we need "support services" such as four pilots, three engineers, and "administrators". "Where are they going to live?"

Mr. Greenfield says under existing zoning support personnel necessary to run a farm would be allowed without city status.

Ms. Silverman says the Rajneesh want municipal authority "to ensure the land will be protected".

Mr. Greenfield repeats the concerns expressed at the Oct. 23 meeting that, despite the Rajneesh's stated intentions to run a farm, city status automatically allows any nonfarm uses.

Mr. Knapp indicates it would be a **financial burden** on the Rajneeshees to have to drive to The Dalles or Madras to obtain building permits from Wasco or Jefferson county officials.

November 4, 1981

Wasco County approves the Rajneesh request for a city based on Rajneesh testimony that they want to operate a labor-intensive farm.

November 17, 1981

1000 Friends asks Gov. Atiyeh to initiate legal proceedings by Dec. 3 (the 30-day time limit for appeal) to invalidate the Rajneesh's municipal status. The letter states:

"By the rather bold stroke of asking to be a 'city', the Rajneesh

and his followers can neatly sidestep all the LCDC requirements applicable to rural lands which everyone else has to follow."

"Under the goals, a city can allow all kinds of industrial, commercial and economic uses within its boundaries. **If the incorporation is allowed, all the local governments, service districts, ranchers and local citizens lose the protections now available to them to regulate the placement of non-farm and urban developments in an obviously rural area"**.

December 2, 1981

The day before the appeal deadline, an aide to Gov. Atiyeh writes to 1000 Friends that an Assistant Attorney General was considering the matter, and that 1000 Friends would be informed of "any action the department contemplated".

1000 Friends of Oregon, et al. v. Wasco County Court

When state officials failed to act, 1000 Friends filed the above appeal to the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) at the request of four Antelope area ranch families.

Because this is the principal case challenging the validity of Rajneeshpuram, and because it has a long and complicated history, developments in the case are presented chronologically below.

March 12, 1982

LUBA dismisses 1000 Friends' appeal; says creation of new city is not a land use decision.

May 18, 1982

154 Rajneeshees vote to establish Rajneeshpuram.

August 12, 1982

Rajneeshees elect city council.

September 7, 1982

Rajneeshpuram adopts comprehensive land use plan authorizing extensive commercial, industrial, residential and other non-farm uses.

March 2, 1983

Following briefing and oral argument, Court of Appeals reverses

LUBA and orders LUBA to determine if Rajneeshpuram violates state land use goals.

March 31, 1983

Rajneeshes ask Oregon Supreme Court to review Court of Appeals decision: 1000 Friends files brief in opposition.

June 29, 1983

Oregon Supreme Court denies review.

July 11, 1983

Rajneeshes ask Oregon Supreme Court to reconsider denial.

August 16, 1983

Petition for Reconsideration denied.

September 8, 1983

Case returns to LUBA.

September 14, 1983

1000 Friends files brief; LUBA hears oral argument.

September 26, 1983

LUBA issues proposed order that Rajneeshpuram violates state land use law.

September 30, 1983

LCDC agrees with 1000 Friends arguments that Rajneeshpuram violates Oregon land use laws four ways, not just one; strengthens LUBA order accordingly.

Rajneesh appeal LUBA/LCDC order to Oregon Court of Appeals.



Housing projects at Rajneeshpuram

YES, I'm Concerned About Rajneeshpuram

I would like to make a contribution to help take this case through the courts. Here is my name and address. Please keep me informed as the case develops.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE _____

Please make checks payable to:

1000 Friends of Oregon

Mail along with this form to:

**1000 Friends of Oregon
P.O. BOX 40367
Portland, Oregon 97204**

Here is my tax deductible contribution of \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 \$_____ (other)

1000 Friends Needs Your Help To Fight Against The City Of Rajneeshpuram

At the request of Wasco County ranchers, 1000 Friends of Oregon has shouldered the burden of seeing Oregon's land use laws enforced at the Muddy Ranch.

I am a native of Wheeler County and a landowner straight across the John Day River from the Muddy Ranch. Without the hard work of 1000 Friends, we might all one day find "cities" in our back pastures.

Since Tom McCall founded 1000 Friends in 1975, the organization has helped people all across the state to see that our land use laws are not ignored. They work with local citizens in county courthouses, city halls, state agencies, and in the courts — where they've won 92% of their cases.

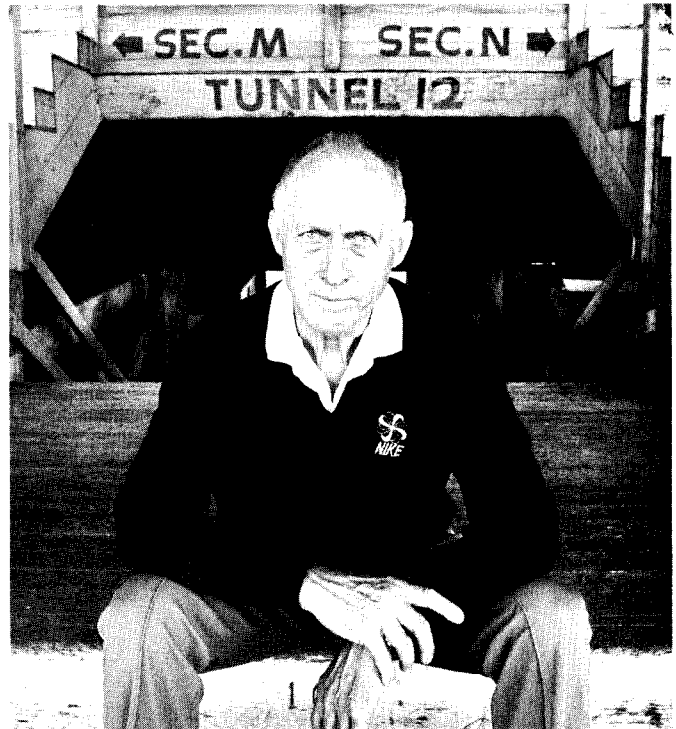
1000 Friends — a membership organization funded by individual contributions — has never charged anyone a dime for this work. When their Board of Directors decides the issue involves statewide precedents, they make their lawyers available.

The effort to ensure that the Rajneesh comply with Oregon's land use laws has proven to be far more expensive and difficult than anyone ever imagined.

Suits are now pending in the Oregon Supreme Court, and the Oregon Court of Appeals. The Rajneesh are now saying they will file yet another appeal, in the U.S. Supreme Court — 3,000 miles away.

This is an enormous financial burden for a small, non-profit group to bear for the benefit of all Oregonians who want to see the laws applied equally to everyone.

I think 1000 Friends has done a good, conscientious job of presenting my concerns to the people who should



hear them — to decision makers in Salem and in the courts. The Rajneesh situation is by no means the first time that 1000 Friends has stood up for firm, even-handed enforcement of Oregon's laws and there will likely be more times in the future.

1000 Friends deserves your support. I hope you will become a member and contribute, as I have.

Bill Bowerman

W.J. "Bill" Bowerman

We Need Your Membership Support

Here is my tax deductible contribution of \$_____.

Please make checks payable to:

1000 Friends of Oregon

Mail along with this form to:

**1000 Friends of Oregon
P.O. Box 40367
Portland, Oregon 97204**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE _____

I would like to become an active supporter of good land use planning. Please enroll me as a member of 1000 Friends of Oregon. I understand I will receive 1000 Friends' Newsletter and quarterly publication, LANDMARK.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Guarantor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Supporting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 500 Sponsor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 250 Patron | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Retired/Low Income/
Student |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 100 Sustaining | |

Check Enclosed Bill Me Quarterly

Please Charge: MC VISA

Exp. Date _____ Phone _____

Signature _____

Paradise Now, II

The conclusion of our look at life on Rancho Rajneesh

BY RICHARD FLEMING

ACCORDING TO *The Sound of Running Water*, a history of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and his religion, Bhagwan was born in India on Dec. 11, 1931, as Rajneesh Chandra Mohan. In the book, he says he struggled for many lifetimes, working on himself, disciplining, denying his ego, "doing whatever could be done." He continued this struggle in this lifetime until he was 21, when he became discouraged with the whole thing and became a regular guy.

"A moment comes when you see the whole futility of effort," he says. "In sheer helplessness, one drops all search, and the day the search stopped, the day I was not expecting something to happen, it started happening."

A few days later, as he sat under a maulshree tree in the middle of the night, he experienced enlightenment:

All questions fell away and a great void was created. . . . All matters on which questions could be asked became non-existent. . . . That night I became empty and became full. . . . The first thing I did was laugh. I laughed and laughed for days. I was laughing at myself, at my efforts to become enlightened. It was so ridiculous. Because everyone, you see, is already enlightened. Everyone is already perfect. We don't have to achieve anything. We don't have to do anything. We just have to be.

The thing is, modern man won't let himself be. That's where Rajneesh and Rajneeshism come in. But for Bhagwan to help you, say the books and sannyasins, you have to love him, surrender yourself, trust him.



Continued from 1

I wonder how to love someone who drives a Rolls-Royce around while I work on his ranch all day. I wonder how to surrender myself to a guy who tells me, "I am very unreliable; you can never rely on me. I myself cannot rely on me." How can I trust a guy who says to ditch your mind — you won't be needing it for this ride; just do what I tell you?

I talk to a woman who was at the Poona commune with Rajneesh back in the ochre-robe days. I ask how you fall in love with this guy.

"For me, it was instant," she says. "I saw something in his eyes and I knew. That is all it took for me to love Bhagwan. I looked in his eyes. For you it's different. You might need a longer, more intellectual approach. It's different with each person."

The trouble with the intellectual approach is that it's not worth shit, according to Rajneesh. "The intellect always misunderstands. . . . It always errs." He says his best disciples are those who do not question when he tells them something ridiculous. That is to him an indication of their ability to proceed toward enlightenment.

Bhagwan was shy about telling people he had reached enlightenment because Indians are even touchier than Americans when it comes to accepting someone who claims to be divine. Instead, he became a university philosophy professor and began traveling the country giving lectures in which he blasted institutions such as religion, Mahatma Gandhi, democracy, and socialism. In a few years he had managed to offend millions of people. "I cause wounds," he said, "to keep you thinking." His iconoclastic style had also begun to attract young followers.

In the late 1960s he let some friends in on his enlightenment. Soon after, they decided to establish a commune where he could teach, and in the '70s a few more Rajneesh communes were set up in India. But Rajneesh's health was frail. Diabetes, asthma and a heart condition bothered him. Not content to wait until those problems took care of him, an Indian religious fanatic tried to knife him during a lecture in the spring of 1981. Rajneesh decided to leave the increasingly hostile atmosphere of India and go to the United States, where he could receive expert medical attention and get his huge commune in Oregon off the ground.

One evening, I'm winding vegetarian spaghetti on my fork and mulling over my discontent. I tried dynamic meditation and worship for three days, until I got that cold. Now I'm much more disgusted than happy.

Across from me is a wiry Chicano in his mid-30s. We say nothing for a while. A talkative sannyasin sets his dinner down at our table and introduces himself. He says not to bother trying to get his name right. "Just call me P.K." — the initials of his sannyasin name. He's in his early 30s and wears a mustache and short hair. In a three-piece suit, he could pass for a young banking executive.

The Chicano says he's from Grants Pass, New Mexico. Kerr-McGee has shut down the uranium mines and there's no work there. "I gotta make some money," he says.

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"If you guys are worried about money, you ought to stick around and see how we make money," P.K. says. "This is prosperity consciousness. Look at Bhagwan and his cars. See, materialism and spiritualism aren't opposed. Bhagwan says they're just the flip sides of the same coin — life. Materialism is the outer aspect of life and spiritualism is the inner. He says not to become too caught up in either one. Let them balance out. With those cars of his, he's telling you, 'You can get one of these if you want, but don't pursue it to the exclusion of your spiritual side. It's not something to get attached to. It's not some goal to work toward. It's just a happening, a gift of existence.'"

He pauses for some spaghetti. "We're all Bhagwans, you know. You, you, you, me. We just haven't let ourselves be yet. We're all enlightened beings. He's helping us discover that.

"See, this is an energy field here. Bhagwan's created an energy field for this commune. When you meditate or worship, you tap into it. You can feel it. Everyone

what's going on."

That night I watch a videotape of Ma Anand Sheela's appearance on ABC's "Nightline." A background report includes a look at the cathartic stage of dynamic meditation: there is a clip showing a roomful of what appear to be twitching, flailing, closed-eye zombies. America must be eating it up.

Wayne Fawbush, a state legislator from Wasco County, is seated in the same studio with Sheela. In answering questions from Ted Koppel, he gives every appearance of being a mild-mannered, reasonable man.

But with her first answer, Sheela comes after Fawbush like a Tartar who wants his head for a game of polo. Twice she calls him a fascist, and a few minutes later, a snake. Fawbush remains calm, ignoring Sheela as best he can and addressing himself to Koppel's questions. After a seemingly innocuous Fawbush statement, Sheela snarls in her heavy Indian accent, "You're full of sheet!"

Koppel reprimands her for vulgarity and threatens to cut off her microphone. But Sheela, a cauldron boiling with mysterious fury, refuses to let Fawbush finish his comments. Koppel finally cuts her mike.

No wonder people in Wasco County are acting fidgety and checking their ammunition.

I'm amazed at the sannyasins' response to the tape. They applaud her. "I've known Sheela for six years," a woman at the reception center tells me, "and she's a warm, loving person. I think she's courageous, protecting the community the way she is." Another woman says, "She's only doing what's necessary to protect us. I admire her very much."

A sannyasin tells me, "Sheela meets with Bhagwan every evening. She's his personal secretary. They discuss everything happening with the community. One night Sheela complained that she was tired of being such a bitch with the press and politicians. And Bhagwan told her, 'You're not being enough of a bitch.'"

My eyes bug out.

Repeatedly, I've seen the sannyasins calmly and caringly defuse the explosive tempers of street people angry over lost laundry or bad heating in their cabins. Why would Rajneesh cast a fire-breathing harpy as the representative of a community that runs on understanding and compassion?

I keep shaking my head over it. Then I remember how he once described the reason for the Rajneeshes' clothes: "... It gives them something to think about. They can be either for it or against it; they cannot

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