

Trouble brews in Antelope

Non-Rajneeshees tired of waiting

Special to The Weekly Reminder
by BILL DRIVER

Residents of the Antelope community have taken about all they can take from the followers of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh.

"More and more people are saying it's time to quit talking," said one disgruntled resident recently.

Frustration, anger, bitterness, and disillusionment have been building now for almost two years among the folks (non-Rajneesh) in that area. They have taken a lot of abuse — emotional and legal — since July of 1981 when the few orange-clad "farmers" moved into their community.

Until now they have waited. Waited for the media to dig beyond the public relations facades and tell the real story of

"They want the whole damn town and they're going to get the whole damn town. By hook or by crook, they're going to get it."

what is happening to the Antelope community. Waited for the Wasco County Court, the LCDC, and the state legislature to respond to their warnings and appeals rather than to the well-financed lobbying efforts of the Rajneesh. And waited for the legal system to provide protection for their rights rather than what appears to be loopholes for the Rajneesh and their expensive legal corps.

They are tired of waiting.

ANTELOPE CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS

Recent actions of the Rajneesh-dominated city council in Antelope have brought the Rajneesh controversy close to the exploding point.

Over the angry objections of the non-Rajneesh members of the community, the council seems to be doing exactly what the old residents feared would happen when

"Don't quote me directly whatever you do."

they tried to dis-incorporate the city last April.

"They are trying to tax us out of town," says one. "And what's even worse is that all our tax dollars will be funneled right down to Rajneeshpuram."

In recent meetings, the council has:

(1) Contracted with the city of Rajneeshpuram Police Force to provide "emergency" police service to Antelope.

(2) Contracted with Ma Prem Sangeet to be city attorney for Antelope at a rate of \$100 per hour. Sangeet is also the city attorney for Rajneeshpuram.

(3) Authorized itself to contract with the city of Rajneeshpuram's Community Development Department to provide various building inspections.

(4) Authorized itself to contract for the provision of a city garbage and recycling service to be paid for out of the general tax fund. The garbage and recycling service in Rajneeshpuram seems a likely prospect for this contract.

(5) Quadrupled monthly residential fire rates.

(6) Doubled monthly residential water rates.

(7) Agreed to lease four city-owned lots to Rajneesh Neo-Sannyas International Commune, of which Antelope Mayor Ma Prem Karuna is vice-president.

(8) Agreed to finance major improvements in the city water, road, and fire services.

(9) Agreed to submit a property tax levy to voters in May which would more than double current property tax levels.

(10) Agreed to repeal an ordinance passed last November by the old Antelope Council designed to prevent the old residents of the city from being taxed out of their homes. The ordinance had been called for as a major part of an agreement signed last July 8 by representatives of the Rajneesh and non-Rajneesh communities. No alternative ordinance has been passed.

(11) Finally, the Rajneesh-dominated council has directed their new city attorney to investigate the transfer of the Antelope Community Church and proceed with efforts to return it to the city. Last summer, aware of the well-publicized and bitter dispute involving the Rajneesh takeover of a church in Southern California, the old city council decided to return the church to the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon. The city had the church "in trust" for a number of years.

At the time of the transfer, a Rajneesh spokesman recognized the council was "perfectly within its legal rights to proceed with this transfer." However, their story has changed dramatically since. A Rajneesh city official alleged that he had been approached by several Rajneesh residents who voiced concern that they had no place to meditate in Antelope. At that point, according to the official, the possibility of using the old Antelope Community Church was suggested.

Upset that their place of worship would be endangered should the Rajneeshees gain control of the historic church, old residents of the community objected vehemently.

Mayor Karuna responded that the city had given away a valuable piece of property, which, if the city could somehow get back, could be sold or leased. She did not mention to whom it should be sold or leased.

Antelope folks had a pretty good idea where it would go. "They want the whole damn town," said one, "and they're going to get the whole damn town. By hook or by crook, they're going to get it."

ANTELOPE-RAJNEESHPURAM TIES

At a recent council meeting, Mayor Karuna stated for the record that what goes on at Rajneeshpuram and what happens on the Antelope City Council are totally separate.

Non-Rajneesh residents, after observing the actions of the council, question that suggestion. One doesn't have to spend much time around the council to wonder why.

One day last week, I attempted to locate members of the Antelope City Council to discuss the agenda of the meeting scheduled that night. About 11 a.m., I was told they were all down at City Hall in Rajneeshpuram.

I mentioned that later in the day to a Rajneeshpuram tour guide while I was touring the ranch. She was sure I "must have gotten the wrong information," but when she called the council for me at 4:30 p.m., she was also told that they were at city hall in Rajneeshpuram.

That night, at the council meeting, Karuna distributed as if planned, the various ordinances which were read by different Rajneesh members of the council. She was observed glancing at one ordinance, commenting, "Let's see, this one was your's" and handing it to one of the young women on the council for reading.

"We live in harmony with everyone."

Ma Anand Sheela



Residents of Antelope say "They're trying to tax us out of town" while Rajneesh-dominated budget committee considers new tax increases for tiny southern Wasco County community.

Photo by Bill Driver

"...all our tax dollars will be funneled right down to Rajneeshpuram."

City business in Antelope is conducted primarily through the Rajneesh information and reception office. The head of the city council is the sister of the mayor of Rajneeshpuram.

PRESSURES MOUNT

It is difficult to see any solution to the controversy in Antelope. Taxes will rise dramatically after the May election. Combined with rising water and fire protection fees, the non-Rajneesh residents will feel the financial squeeze tighter and tighter.

The fact that a large portion of Antelope's tax dollars appear to be funneled for Rajneeshpuram in the form of various service contracts will not make the situation any easier to swallow for the non-Rajneesh.

Should the church issue be pursued and eventually be leased or sold to the Rajneesh Commune, tempers and bitterness throughout the Antelope community will increase even more dramatically than in past weeks.

The intimidation that non-Rajneesh have lived with for months appears to be on the increase. One of the most outspoken critics of the council during a recent meeting spent a good deal of the evening covering her face from a Rajneesh photographer even though she had requested that she not be photographed.

Antelope residents have complained almost from the beginning about this popular intimidating tactic. It's difficult to imagine that effect this continuous picture-taking has on a person. I spoke with several people who have given up and left Antelope. Although requesting not to be quoted for fear of Rajneesh lawsuits or other actions, they told of being photographed by Rajneesh camera people everytime they left their homes.

Ma Anand Sheela, president of the Rajneesh Foundation International has said, "We live in harmony with everyone." It's obvious she hasn't spent much time in Antelope.

LAWSUITS

Intimidation tactics are not limited to continuous photographing of people against their wishes. One local described the Rajneesh theory of communications as "Give us this or we'll sue you."

The fear of lawsuits is very evident in the Antelope area. Very few people will talk to a reporter without prefacing their remarks with, "Don't quote me directly whatever you do."

They are all well aware of "what happened to Rosemary." Rosemary McGreer, an outspoken critic of the Rajneesh in the early months of the controversy, was sued

for millions by the Rajneesh after a joint appearance with Sheela on the Merv Griffin Show. Although the suit appears to be very weak, it has put emotional and financial pressure on the McGreers. It has also intimidated a large number of other residents in the area to the point that they speak very carefully, if at all, about their many problems with the Rajneesh.

INTIMIDATION

The non-Rajneesh have, and in some cases, are still experiencing other forms of intimidation, subtle intimidation, but intimidation just the same.

Vans drive slowly through Antelope at all hours of the night. Residents report seeing Rajneeshees standing just outside their yards also in the middle of the night. Reports of verbal abuse and intimidation are many.

"Those people are smart. They know what they can say and get away with."

Judge Bill Hulse

This reporter was involved last Sunday in what appears to be a typical example of Rajneesh intimidation tactics. It was during an Antelope City Council meeting and I had just finished taking a few photographs for this story. I took some of the Rajneesh photographer repeatedly photographing an Antelope resident against her wishes and others of Krishna Deva, mayor of Rajneeshpuram.

When finished, I leaned against a post in the back of the room. Deva immediately approached me and leaned against the same post, his shoulder brushing mine. He asked where I was from and without looking away from the meeting I responded, "Just north of here, but I live in Portland now."

He asked, "Do you still have family members living up here?"

The tone of his voice wasn't friendly to say the least and I knew something was up. I looked at him. His face was about six inches from mine. His expression was cold, like some would-be tough guy trying to intimidate somebody in a local tavern.

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Non-Rajneeshees tired of waiting

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I didn't know what to say for a second. It's not everyday that someone leans against you, stares coldly into your face, and asks about your family members. I responded that I had family in Wamic.

Without hesitating or changing expression, he asked, "What are their names?"

After the exchange, he crossed the room and spoke to the Rajneesh photographer, who immediately began

taking pictures of me.

Later, I spoke with several non-Rajneesh folks about the incident and they just smiled as if they knew all about those tactics. One said, "That's Knapp alright. Vintage Knapp. We've been putting up with that kind of crap from the beginning."

The next day I reported the incident to Wasco County Judge Bill Hulse. Hulse said such complaints are often received by the county.

"You're not the only person that's happened to," he told me. "We've had

many similar complaints, but there is nothing we can do about them because, legally speaking, you weren't threatened. Those people are smart. They know what they can say and get away with. We can't do anything until they actually hurt somebody."

HEALTH PROBLEMS

Such attempts at intimidation have little effect on someone who visits the Antelope area only occasionally, but for the people who live there it is much, much different.

Living with the constant pressures brought on by the various tactics noted above has taken its toll on Antelope's non-Rajneesh community. Many have been treated for stress-related medical problems. I spoke to several who cited deteriorating health as a primary reason for leaving Antelope. For the ones that remain, the problems fester.

VIOLENCE NEXT

Talk of violence in the Antelope community was recently dismissed by Wasco County Commissioner Rick Cantrell as "whiskey talk".

Wasco County District Attorney Bernie Smith, shrugged off warnings about the dangers brewing in the area. He said, "People don't think too much about the Rajneesh controversy here in The Dalles and things are pretty quiet down around Antelope."

Two hours after I spoke to Smith, I attended an invitation-only meeting in The Dalles featuring Rajneesh defector Robert Anderson. About 600 very interested people were at the meeting. Smith was wrong about the level of interest in the Rajneesh in the northern part of the county and I'm afraid Cantrell and he are wrong about the dangers brewing in the southern part of the county as well.

There is no way to know what it's like around Antelope unless you go there, talk to the people, and watch the interaction between the Rajneesh and the other residents of the area.

Everyone reads an occasional article about intimidation and lawsuits. The public no doubt will hear more and more about the fate of the non-Rajneesh in the area as they struggle to deal with inflated taxes, and try to save their church, school, and homes.

But reading an occasional article and living with what those people live with 24-hours a day aren't the same.

A story is going around Antelope that sums up a growing sentiment in the area. A local reportedly approached Krishna Deva (Dave Knapp) recently and asked, "Dave, you're a psychologist. Just how much more of this crap do you think I can take before I crack and start pulling the trigger?"

One local stated during a city council debate over the American Legion's proposed barbecue that anyone "...coming

around that (barbecue) pit is gonna be shot."

John Silvertooth Stewart, the only non-Rajneesh on the city council and an object of a great deal of local criticism for working so closely with them, stated during the last council meeting that he had been informed of threats against him.

The danger, however, doesn't come from people who are making all the noise. It comes from the people who have already "given up talking".

Good, law-abiding people who waited for the Wasco County Court, the LCDC, the state legislature, the courts, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service to do something. They've waited and waited.

They've seen their lives turned upside-down. They've dealt with harassment that the public either doesn't know of or doesn't care about. They've watched their neighbors give in and leave the community. They've watched the threat to them grow and grow.

They've watched and waited. Someone had better do something fast, because a lot of folks in Antelope are tired of waiting.

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Bill Driver Wamic native

Bill Driver is a free-lance reporter currently living in Portland.

He is the son of Lyle and Billie Driver of Wamic. Driver grew up in Wamic and graduated from Wasco County Union High School in Maupin in 1971.

Driver is also a graduate of Lewis and Clark College with a degree in political science in 1977. He did undergraduate studies also at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Driver is currently living in Portland with his wife Ellen and his 18-month-old daughter Jessica. Son Sam is scheduled to arrive by August 1.

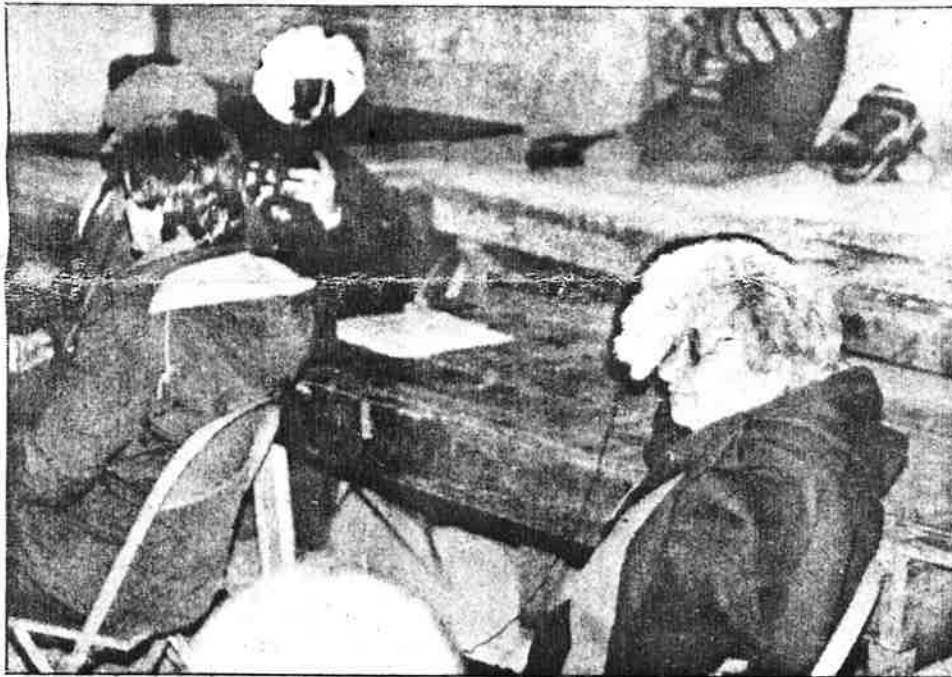
Driver's articles have been published in several British newspapers. He was working on a book, but has put that on hold to conduct some detailed research of the growing Rajneesh controversy.

Driver has followed the controversy from the beginning but began detailed research of the issues involved about six weeks ago. He has attended several recent meetings of the Antelope City Council and budget committee.

Driver has also interviewed numerous local officials, residents of Antelope, Rajneeshees, toured the ranch twice, and has conducted an extensive study of public records both in official documents and the media.



Krishna Deva, mayor of Rajneeshpuram, and Don Smith, outspoken critic of the Rajneesh actions in Antelope watch Antelope City Budget committee meeting. Ma Prem Sangeet, seated at left, is city attorney for both Antelope and Rajneeshpuram.



An Antelope resident shields her face from Rajneesh photographer at Sunday's City Council meeting. Photos by Bill Driver

Martin Marietta

Plants put 50 back to work

Good news from Martin Marietta.

Soon, production will be increased and employees recalled both at The Dalles and Goldendale smelters. More than 50 employees will most likely be recalled. The combined operating level will rise from less than 80 percent to about 90 percent.

According to a news release, Martin Marietta Aluminum will gradually increase its primary production capacity at smelters in the Pacific Northwest, consistent with environmental constraints.

The action is in response to an offer by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) of non-firm energy at a reduced rate for that portion of plant capacity between current operating level and full capacity. The reduced rate of 11.2 mills for this portion of power demand compares with the current rate of 25.9 mills but is only available until Oct. 31, 1983, a very short period of time for aluminum smelter operations.

David C. Dressler, president of Martin Marietta Aluminum, said, "Since Martin

Marietta has maintained a higher production rate than most other aluminum companies in the Pacific Northwest during the current severe recession, the benefits available to us are less than those available to the other aluminum companies, which had cut back severely in the region.

"In view of the current high BPA power rate of 25.9 mills, the possibility of further increases this fall and the short duration of the current offer, Martin Marietta Aluminum will be forced to review projected future operating levels again this summer.

"We believe that the BPA offer of reduced power until Nov. 1 is a "band-aid" approach to the critical problem of the wide discrepancy between high Pacific Northwest power rates and world rates for aluminum smelters, rates which average about 17 mills. We appreciate the BPA effort, but feel that more has to be done if the aluminum industry is to survive in the Pacific Northwest."

Dist. 12 board meets tonight

The School Dist. 12 Board agenda for tonight's (Thursday) meeting appears to be a full slate, even without any "budget" items listed.

Following the regular meeting, which will start at 7 p.m. at The Dalles Junior High media center, the board will go into executive session to discuss six items. Those items include a hearing for a nonrenewal of probationary teachers; review of candidates resumes for the May Barnum Outstanding Senior Girl and Boy awards; a bus driver department com-

plaint; teacher leave of absence; classified employee emergency leave; and classified personnel negotiations.

Under "business," the oath of office will be administered to Dr. Phillip Swartz, newly elected position 3 board member. His term of office begins July 1. Also under the same heading, the board will consider a teacher resignation; temporary teacher contract ratifications; Colonel Wright School bid award for thermostatic controls; Petersburg School District Cooperative bus maintenance agreement; transportation policies; and a football site.

Rajneeshpuram plans pavement

Rajneeshpuram roads will soon get a black-top cover, according to a story in the Rajneesh Times April 8.

Busiest routes will be covered with "asphalt penetration macadam". Five miles of road are to be surfaced in time for the second annual World Celebration this summer.

Black-top covering will include routes

from Magdalena Cafeterai to Jesus Grove, Zarathustra building and the new industrial park.

After roads are graded, a six-inch layer of gravel will be added, followed by a series of layers of asphalt.

Other roads will be treated with a dust-retardant during summer to keep the dust down.