



WE'VE GOT IT. DON'T LOSE IT.

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Our coastal village life and the urban world are more subtly and profoundly different than it may appear. Here we have everything money can't buy. But we rarely totally understand what we really have until it is gone - through clearcutting, bigger roads, media, influxes of urbanites with different values and incomes.

People often have a good sense of what they don't want to change, or become. Cannon Beach-ites, in the '80s, didn't want to become Carmel, CA. But it shifted. Now many of those people have been pushed out to Manzanita. Manzanita-ites are now saying they don't want to become Cannon Beach. Is Wheeler beginning to say they don't want to become Manzanita?

We've passively allowed other interests - particularly corporate and corporate media - to establish parameters for our lives which enrich them at our expense and mandate the nature of our communities. It amazes me, in retrospect, that we would even allow the existence of gigantic organizations with no requirements for benefit to community, to workers, or to the rest of Creation - only self-enrichment at a cost to others.

The effects of not setting our own rules for our communities become quickly visible when the nature of growth passes an invisible boundary. That boundary has to do with far more basic things than land use. Once we start thinking about it, I'm sure we all can discover more things it's important not to lose. Here's a beginning of what I feel we need to pay close attention to. Add to it.

First, for me, is the context within which our work and our exchange of work takes place. This includes balancing of power differentials between employer and worker, living wage levels, and limits of wealth differentials in the community. It means requiring a value base rather than solely a greed base for corporations acting in the community.

It means ways of work coming from a fullness of heart rather than just a means to purchase material needs. Constraints on advertising. Pricing that aids rather than deceives a shopper. And ensuring that work applies and enriches our skills, increasing our value to the community.

When we buy from, or work for, people we know, there is a valuable web of relationship, meaning, and energy that feeds us, which we can trust. Our community would feel very different with McDonalds, Starbucks, or WalMart.

Second is the relation to the sacred and to the holding sacred of other life. How couldn't that be vital here, in such an awe-inspiring place?

Third is the nature of connection between and among people in the community – the intimacy, vulnerability, and openness that comes with smallness and caring vs. the adversarial, win-lose ways of relating common in cities.

Fourth is village-in-nature vs. an urban-media-corporate culture. There is more to this than urban-rural differences. If our heads are jammed with TV advertising and billboards, passive entertainment packaged solely for advertising revenues, concrete rather than moss, we're not the same people. Fortunately, the wind here blows a lot of that out of our heads. Here we're part of more than just a human world, and the nature of our interdependence is far deeper than the urban-rural dependence of commerce.

Fifth is size. Bigger places can provide "more" opportunities. But nowadays, far much of that can be gotten from here. And larger size brings different kinds of business, work, living, and social structures that are, to me, deadening to the heart and soul.

Sixth is dominance by automobiles. When parking can't be handled on-street and with small lots, when you look towards the beach and can only see rows of cars, something important has shifted. Some interesting possibilities here.

Seventh is the filters through which we see the world. The rare times I am exposed to the media, I feel blasted by its unrelenting barrage of fear-generating tension. Everything is terrorism. Disasters. Threats. No joy. None of the wonderful things we experience every day. Through those filters, we live in very different apparent realities.

Let's go beyond that. What can we become? What would it be like if we try to become all we can

"The character of any true community can be seen only when each of its members has been awakened fully and allowed to reveal his or her innate gifts and genuine self. The sum of all of these unique identities then becomes the character and identity of the community. A healthy community not only supports diversity, it requires diversity."
– Malidoma Somé

