

**Confessions Of A Former President  
or  
What Goes Around Comes Around  
by Deborah Thomas Neal**

May 18, 2024  
*CMCA Annual Meeting and Banquet*

The past ten years of this esteemed  
501-C3 foundation  
includes eclectic documents  
that might need explanation.

A pending court case keeps me up.  
Ex- Presidents are nervous,  
Bev emailed me. I'm sure she has  
friends in the Secret Service.

I said I would show up tonight ,  
with my prolegomena,  
of what went down the past ten years.  
Bev sent me a subpoena.

It has to do with documents.  
in my house unattended  
that should have been turned in the day  
my presidency ended.

I just assumed nobody cared  
to see the paper trail  
of who said what to whom and why,  
or potlucks in detail.

I must confess I do possess  
some secrets, Presidential.  
In fact there's still a shitload of  
loose ends, stowed, residential.

I brought these with me hoping to  
return what still remains.  
I'm sorry some are just first drafts  
with wine and coffee stains.

Let's see! Cape Meares. Our villagers  
were generous and willing  
to help improve community  
but not too keen on billing.

The infrastructure needed cash,  
a healthy bank account,  
to do what needed doing  
and to make donations count.

We did a lot of surveys,  
pros and cons were thrown back at us.  
We called meetings and decided  
to obtain Non-Profit status.

We had to write up By-laws,  
so the State would certify it.  
With no idea what By-Laws were  
I volunteered to try it.

It happened we had visited  
a beach house in the sun  
where my in-laws, long time residents,  
held P.O.Box number 1.

They knew the town, had documents  
and recognized the faces  
of four generations living there  
still in their family's places.

The village demographics,  
goals, and problems rang a bell.  
They'd figured out solutions,  
now time honored, that worked well.

They had similar events each year  
fund raising and high tea,  
A Barbecue for Firemen,  
weekly yoga, and tai chi.

They had a village newsletter.  
with theater critiques  
of community performances,  
and suspicious water leaks.

I'd worked hard at reinventing  
rules, essential as the wheel.  
It had been quite overwhelming,  
So instead, I chose to steal

The Westport, California  
Village By-Laws in totality.  
I read them carefully, and stole  
their tried and true reality.

To figure out the rules from scratch?  
Why should I sit and waste  
my energy to recreate  
what I could cut and paste?

I saw it not as plagiarism;  
more like cuttings from their flowers  
I asked around, no one complained.  
So their guidelines became ours.

I didn't mean to claim I wrote  
the whole damn thing myself,  
I told the Board the origins  
before it hit the shelf.

It had been tweaked with loving care,  
once the Board agreed to send it.  
and evidently it's still there,  
Just use it or amend it.

Your president agrees with you  
that hoarding docs is wrong.  
Just know that had I written them  
they would have been too long.

As for the rest, there's a report  
about our biking trails  
and menus from some fundraisers  
and Holiday travails.

Three times we hosted bikers  
who rode here from the East Coast,  
good food and beds, to rest their heads.  
They dipped their wheels ( a toast.)

Our water tank fell down the bank,  
and caused a debris flow.  
The new tank was installed quick smart  
but a yard or two too low.

I dreamed up such a great idea!  
A lifeguard took her post.  
Our Annual Regatta  
drew a couple boats at most.

Across the street at Merilee's  
a crowd observed two boaters,  
the one ahead had tied a rope,  
two kayaks, me the motor.

I set out towing Spence. He sang  
Show tunes in prone position.  
I failed to paddle 'round the lake.  
A one off expedition.

We celebrate the things we do  
regardless of successes.  
Kudos to Patty and to Mike  
who oversee our messes.

And thanks to Pete we all can eat  
stuff growing by the road,  
and build a portapotty,  
never mind if it's to code.

Our home base offers rental space  
and has a link to Heaven,  
Come worship what you wish!  
Connectivity's thanks to Kevin.

So many people bring their skills  
give money, time, work.  
The organizer for ten years  
Is always Kathy Burke.

There is no project that takes place  
she doesn't have a hand in,  
and even when she doesn't,  
she turns up to be the stand in.

My best advice to all of you-  
when you expect a turn out,  
is take care of Kathy, let her rest  
we can't afford a burn out.

July the 4th tradition  
in Cape Meares is our Parade,  
CMCA can't sponsor it  
in case mistakes are made.

We can't afford fatalities  
or yachts that pull down wires,  
Liability insurance bans  
contagious beach wild fires.

So we assert "the gathering  
is where we wait for lunch,  
while firemen throw candy  
to the children, bunch by bunch."

One family comes as sneaker waves,  
another rides their bikes,  
a few hot shots on skateboards  
weave among the tykes on trikes,

but most important are the ones  
along the road who cheer.  
Regardless of the length or speed,  
you sit there every year.

Without you, children would go home,  
They'd miss their only chance  
To celebrate and be a star,  
to join us, and to dance.

So on behalf of grandchildren  
this village helped to raise,  
I offer heart felt gratitude  
and universal praise.

I thank you all for all you've done,  
and what you keep pursuing,  
despite new knees, you're saving trees,  
in old age, you're still doing.

Our CERT program! Our website!  
Fresh white paint and brand new shingles!  
We danced to Gary's Meares Cats  
Who performed our favorite singles.

We never mentioned politics,  
or fought about the White House.  
We endorsed our striving Eagle Scout  
who fixed trails to the light house.

Our funds were in the faithful hands  
of overworked Anita.  
We liaised with Tsunami Stars  
up north in Manzanita.

Real news or not, The Fencepost brought  
a lively print concoction.  
Our businesses supported us  
donating to our auction.

A hundred and a half of us  
debated on Next Door,  
We built three sheds, filled up with stuff  
til 2064.

We've found our way to Oceanside  
without the nearby loop.  
We've kept our cool when scooping up  
both human and dog poop.

We've gathered tools and implements  
spruced up this shed and garden,  
I cut back so much border hedge  
Had to beg the Bennett's pardon.

I've secretly been privy to  
the Clandestine Committee  
That Beautifies Cape Meares  
and notes what is and isn't pretty.

Some members names are carved in stone,  
but one or two were missed.  
They still write us, politely, but  
I still can't find our list.

The writers and the artists  
in Cape Meares are getting lauded.  
Our poetry reading filled the house  
and everyone applauded.

25% of town showed up.  
No marketing committee!  
(That would have been 3 million  
Had we read in New York City.)

One issue that is unresolved:  
Directory pros and cons.  
We have to walk somewhere to talk  
to friends who are anons.

No hints of names and numbers writ,  
or prompts for names of spouses.  
I can't even find Kathy, going  
back and forth 'tween houses.

Our house is up a daunting hill,  
that scares off fragile guests.  
Some friends have been too ill  
to risk more cardiac arrests.

Our rescue squad has saved some lives  
We got an AED,  
They raced it to a barbecue.  
Saved John ASAP.

Sometimes the storms and accidents  
leave Cape Meares without power.  
Our neighborhood's have radios,  
like those of Eisenhower.

We've had a water color class  
taught by talent from Bay Ocean.  
I hung my magnum opus,  
kind of "Still Life Still In Motion."

Now all the artists here are like  
a guild with golden eye.  
The mobile you all gave me  
when I see it makes me cry.

Where once the Board had their retreat,  
and NewYears plans revealed,  
my plants have died, we've met outside,  
the playground paint has peeled.

Our grandkids, like CMCA  
grew up here and grew strong.  
They learned about community  
and how to write a song.

I thought there might be time enough  
perhaps during this dinner  
for the Ballad of Bay Ocean Spit  
a future grammy winner.

Our firemen, our nurses, doctors,  
Red Cross Volunteers  
keep training, kept us going  
under lockdown for three years.

We sent people to conventions,  
studied earthquake liquefaction,  
we attended monthly TR4's  
drilled Shakeout Shock Reaction.

We wrote a book describing  
Cape Meares' natural resources,  
surveyed the birds, relayed in words  
the pathways safe for horses.

We've monitored the traffic,  
hosted auctions, Tim gave land.  
We fixed our roads, cleaned up the beach,  
stored food, both boxed and canned.

So on behalf of grandchildren  
this village helped to raise,  
I offer heart felt gratitude  
and universal praise.

I thank you all for all you've done,  
and what you keep pursuing,  
despite new knees, you're saving trees,  
in old age, you're still doing.

There's plenty more that's taken place  
All thanks to this community,  
I'm turning in the evidence.  
Let's keep our herd immunity.

And speaking of immunity,  
and bargaining for pleas,  
I hope that Bev won't turn me in,  
We don't pay legal fees.

But let us all pay homage  
to those here, let's raise a cup!  
Come rain or snow or plague,  
whatever happens, you show up.