

KD MAGAZINE

Winter 2008 Volume 2 Issue 2



DIVING IN HONDURAS

ART OF GLASS

WICCA

UNDERWATER HOCKEY



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KD Magazine is a publication that appreciates world diversity and values tradition while eagerly observing progress and evolution. In this issue, we see innovations to the sport of hockey as it moves to an underwater locale in "Pucks, Sticks and Snorkels." Religion takes a relatively new turn in the practice of Wicca, discussed in the "Forum." On the other hand, Tim Long brings back vintage wear with his second-hand clothing store, Eugene Jeans, in "Diamond in the Rough," and Eugene artists preserve the timeless art of glassblowing, as described in "The Love for Fire." Progress causes political turmoil in Colombia, as told in his documentary film ("Film Rolling in Colombia").

KD has made a technological jump this issue, having moved to an online format. Though for a number of additional reasons, this change reflects KD's intention to keep up with the ways of its readers and the ways of the modern world. Eventually, we hope to produce both print and Web editions and reach an even broader, more diverse audience.

In striving to keep the voice of KD new and changing, I also have recruited a new Editor in Chief, Meghan McCloskey, who will oversee the magazine's production beginning in January. I have seen an abundance of growth since I began participating in the production of KD as a designer in the summer of 2006. My time as Editor in Chief has been exceptionally rewarding, as both the staff and the publication have changed and expanded, and I have gained irreplaceable experience. Today's staff comprises an almost entirely different set of students than it did when I began, which has brought dozens of talented and fascinating people into my life. Seeing faces come and go from the staff is evidence of the changes the magazine has undergone.

From different perspectives within the staff and as a reader, I look forward to watching the advancements KD Magazine makes in the future.

Kelly Walker
Editor and Chief

KD MAGAZINE

Winter 2008 Volume 2 Issue 2

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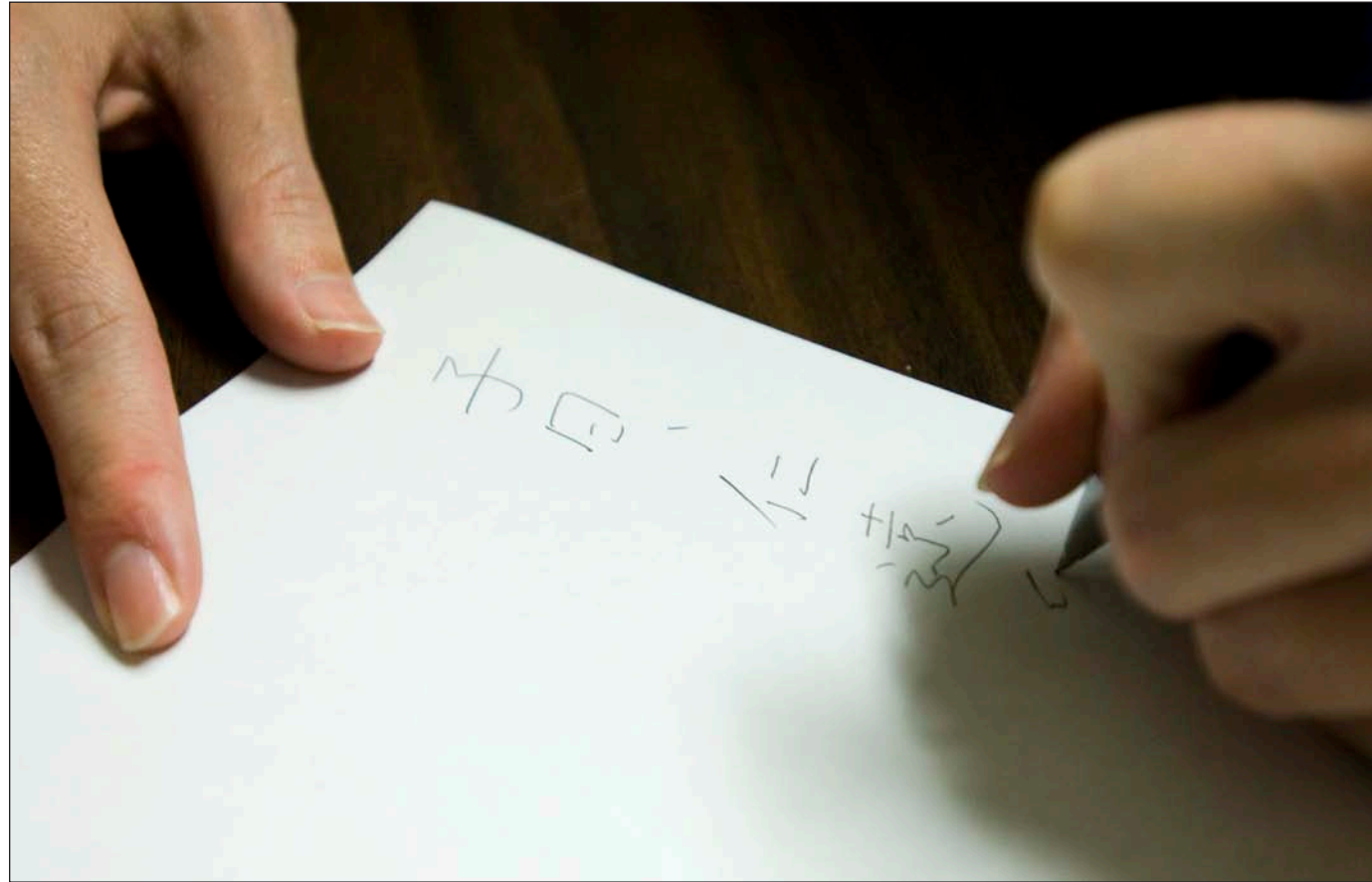
COVER: A diver follows the trail of a hawksbill sea turtle in Honduras. Photographer Ben Mangin shares accounts from his life as a divemaster in "Living the Dream." (pg. 17)



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China boasts a deeply rooted culture that inspires others across the world. The Chinese value food as more than simple nourishment and script as more than a medium for expressing ideas; each reflects the wisdom of a society that dates back much further than most. Amid the traditional value system, a Chinese student in the U.S. embraces his country's continued societal growth.



Chinese Calligraphy: an Art Form

Horizontal line, dot, sweeping downward stroke, vertical line, sharp curve and two downward strokes. These shapes and lines compose the "Seven Mysteries," used to write Chinese words.

For a stranger to the Chinese language, these characters may as well be hieroglyphs. Billions of people, not only on the Asian continent, aspire to learn Chinese as a way to understand the history, culture, mentality and passions of the largest and oldest nation in the world.

Many people question whether or not calligraphy relates to writing or drawing.

Others even compare it to painting. The same symbols look different as they come out of each individual's pen. Artists seeking self-expression apply calligraphy to different forms of art. Galleries and exhibitions across the globe present them as more people notice the powerful and fascinating images.

Logograms, or Chinese characters, represent a meaningful unit of language. It is no wonder that complex Chinese words and characters are challenging for anyone who decides to take up calligraphy. Learning calligraphy can consume an entire lifetime and teaches one not only a practical tech-

nique for writing Chinese characters, but also self-discipline and insight into a unique Oriental art of expression.

Generally, knowing 3,000 characters enables a person to read a newspaper. Those who attend a college in China may know even 7,000 characters. Among 40,000 characters, only a quarter belongs to the language used currently in China.

Chinese calligraphy has been around for approximately 4,000 to 5,000 years, and the language continues to fascinate artists, scientists, historians and those who look for something truly original. *-Weronika Budak*

PHOTOS BY CONNER JAY AND ASHLEY BAER

International Fraternity



Phil Gong has embarked on a journey of which many of his classmates in Fuzhou, China could only dream: he has entered the unfamiliar territory of the University of Oregon to pursue a degree in sports business.

For Gong and other Chinese international students, the U.S. education system is distinct. China has adopted a compulsory system in which all children are required to attend school for at least nine years. After two to four years in high school, college-bound students take an entrance examination, known as "gaokao," for university admission.

According to China Daily, a record of 10 million students sat at the two-day National College Entrance Exam this year; college entrances are excruciatingly competitive. This leaves Chinese students under constant pressure. Many parents also encourage Chinese students to pursue a college educa-

tion in the United States and climb the social ladder. Like Gong, thousands of Chinese students apply to study in the United States. Only a few are admitted. "It's a really big thing," Gong says. "The colleges are outstanding, and is the best among the world."

"Don't get me wrong, it is a very big leap for me: the culture and the people here are so different." He observed that the students here are less burdened by the ideologies of the state. Chinese people focus highly on education because they believe that a generation of bright people will lead them to a new century.

Nonetheless, the University of Oregon has offered limitless opportunities to international students. Among these are its flexibility and belief in a student's well roundedness. College institutions in China offer little academic freedom; Gong, who is a pre-business major, would not have been able to sign up for a music class in China.

"Here, I can easily take a music class or anything outside of my major if I wanted to" he says. Gong was surprised to discover that so many of the college students in the United States have changed their majors. "China has a huge population, so it is very difficult for

institutions to deal with those things." Chinese colleges have very few student organizations. "I had no idea what a sorority or fraternity was," says Gong. Gong's roommate recruited him into Delta Tau Delta, an international fraternity at the University of Oregon. Gong is the only one of 50 members in the fraternity who represents international students. Chinese students come to the University of Oregon uninformed of such things, so Gong is very honored to have been accepted. "I want to show all the international students that we can join and do a great job."

Despite the differences in the educational systems, Gong explains that the government system is similar. 21st-century China is often overshadowed by ideology of the past. China as a communist country has progressed in its economy and liberalism. "Through the years I grew up in China, I could feel the development," Gong says. "You can see it; you can sense change."

Although there is a lack of students who share the same experiences as Gong, he knows he is not alone. He feels that he can exude his individuality and power to bring honor to Delta Tau Delta. With the involvement of Chinese international students at the University, Gong hopes to supersede the old ideology of China with a new one. The Chinese international students will also gain experiences that they otherwise would not have. "Joining a fraternity is very advantageous," Gong says. "You have your own academic advisor, a house, a crew of great guys who are there for you, and service opportunities." Now this is something that even modern China lacks. *-Lorie Anne Acio*

The Hometown of Chopsticks

The ancient invention of chopsticks opened a door to the civilization of food culture. However, its old traditions are known only in the magical and mythological world of China.

As a significant part of Chinese identity, chopsticks are believed to bring good luck to those who use them, and they seem to make food taste delicious. Nowadays, chopsticks are more than just tableware; they represent Chinese history and art. Mealtime etiquette is specific to customs that reflect Chinese people's attachment to their culture, as well as to national and local customs.

The Chinese pay particular attention to their table manners and to the manners of those who dine with them. It is proper to greet everyone before a meal starts. Guests wait for the host as a way to show respect

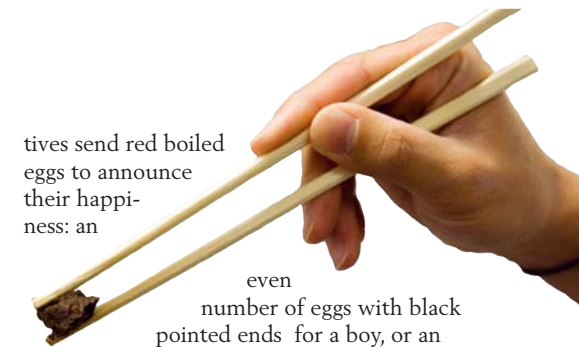
and thanks for inviting them to share food. Main courses are placed on the center of the table. Hosts surround the outside of the table with appetizers and decorative elements that complement the occasion and the family's social status.

Certain foods have meanings and are characteristic for important life moments. Before birthdays, Chinese people eat noodles, as their length symbolizes longevity and virtue. On birthdays, they eat traditional birthday cakes. For the elderly, peaches are added to the cake to signify immortality. When wishing a bride and groom offspring, wedding guests offer them different kinds of peanuts. Before or after a long trip, family members prepare noodles with dumplings for the travelers, which are meant to remind them of home. When a baby is born, rela-

tives send red boiled eggs to announce their happiness: an

even number of eggs with black pointed ends for a boy, or an odd number without black points for a girl. Fish is eaten at the New Year, symbolizing the wish for prosperity and wealth in the coming year.

Among well-known aspects of Chinese culture, such as politics and a wealth of natural resources, lies great diversity, traditions passed through generations and enormous impact on other societies. China continues to evolve and share its unique culture with the world. *-Weronika Budak*



Diamond in the Rough

STORY & PHOTOS KATIE ONHEIBER



ABOVE: Tim Long plays a hand-made guitar, which is one of the many guitars he sells at his shop and plays throughout the day. OPPOSITE: Converse are among the many different kinds of shoes lined up below Long's store window.

A Eugene entrepreneur couples clothing with character at a second-hand store

Somewhere in the racks of vintage clothing that fill the small shop at 132 East 13th Avenue, there are hidden treasures from the past. And you don't have to search hard to find them. Tim Long, owner and sole employee of Eugene Jeans, has made it easy for you. Enter his store, and you're sure to find something that meets your fancy. Everything from peasant dresses to Aerosmith tee shirts to old Yellowstone National Park sweat-shirts have found their way into Long's local shop.

There's something different about this store. Maybe it's the vintage lunch boxes that line the shelf on the back wall. Or possibly it's the enormous 76-by-45 inch pair of Levis pinned up on display. Or the classic sneakers, sandals

and boots that rest beneath a window near the entrance. Perhaps it's the old 78s that grace the floor near a growing array of guitars and banjos. Or could it be the collection of ultimate Frisbees that sit on the floor in the center of the shop?

Maybe the most interesting part of this local business, though, is the man who created it. When Long isn't working, you can find him playing ultimate Frisbee in Dexter or serenading a crowd as the washboard player for the band Bad Mitten. But from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday, you'll find him working at the shop he built from scratch, where no single item looks like another, and there is only one size of everything.

WHERE ARE YOU FROM, ORIGINALLY, AND WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO EUGENE?

I was born in the Bay Area. When Reagan was elected governor of California in 1966, my mom decided we were going to move to Oregon. I lived on and off in Eugene. The family traveled around a lot. I lived a year in South America where my mom taught English, but I've been here solid since 1986.

HOW AND WHEN DID YOU GET STARTED IN THE USED CLOTHING BUSINESS?

In 1990, I dated a woman who became pregnant several months later. Relatives sent baby clothes that were polyester, and we didn't like. So we went to a secondhand store where we traded them. I then took seven to eight pairs of Levis in and made \$32. At the time, I was working as a roofer. We were getting food stamps and started doing clothes on the side. I found I could buy them cheap at one place and sell them for more at another. My wife's grandmother was a sewing instructor and taught her the trade. From there, things got bigger, and I spent more time doing clothes. I was able to quit my roofing job. I got big money for specific items. One pair of Levis I bought for \$1000 and sold for \$3000. They were these 1932 buckle-back edition; pretty rare.

WHAT IS SO UNIQUE ABOUT THE CULTURE OF SELLING USED CLOTHES?

There are so many one-of-a-kinds, and I'm somewhat of an individual. Wearing vintage makes you more unique. I wore this 1978 Queen shirt at a party, and people asked about it, so it's also a conversation piece.

HOW IS THE COMPETITION WITH OTHER USED CLOTHING STORES?

It's friendly competition. Everyone acknowledges everyone else. We call this a 'wash and wear' store because there's so much stuff in here. Everyone has his or her own niche. We work together in some ways. We'll give each other a heads up if there's a shoplifter or a drunk. You get all kinds of people, and you learn to deal with the weirdos.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST REWARDING ASPECTS OF WHAT YOU DO?

The people and getting to talk and hang out. Touring bands will come in here, and we'll talk about my guitars I have. Sometimes we'll jam. I've made a lot of friends here.

WHY IS THE USED CLOTHING CULTURE APPEALING TO YOU?

When malls came out, I was dragged through them, and it's all so overpriced. Part of the vintage culture is that you can't walk into a store where there are 50 shirts in a

variety of sizes. It's just one thing. You're wearing a shirt no one else has.

WHAT MAKES YOUR STORE STAND OUT?

Great selection and a good men's department. In other stores I notice tons of women's foofy stuff and only one men's rack. Here, it's at least 50 or 60 percent men's. It makes us different. Also, I keep it lively. People come in because it makes them feel good.

WHERE DO YOU OBTAIN YOUR MERCHANDISE?

I buy from people. I get phone calls and receive word of mouth from antique dealers. I talk to people at stores. People bring in boxes full of stuff. The upside is sometimes there's good stuff. The downside is that people bring in things that are dirty, smelly and just wouldn't sell. We're picky about condition and style. I have to say, I know more about fashion than I practice. Personally, I'm a jeans-and-tee-shirt guy.

WHAT APPROACH DO YOU TAKE TO YOUR BUSINESS?

Lax, in a nutshell. First and foremost, I do this to feed my children, but also to have fun. I'm friendly, cheerful and always playing guitar. If I'm having fun, I believe others will too. I'm a little anal, but not too anal. If someone's a couple bucks short, I tell them to just owe me later. Treat people like their trustworthy and they will be.

SINCE YOU WORK ALONE, HOW DO YOU ENTERTAIN YOURSELF ON A SLOW DAY?

I play guitar. It's all about music for me. I have my records. There are plenty of things here to keep me entertained. If it's a sunny day, I'll have the door open, and I'll take my banjo outside and play. Sometimes I even work.

IF YOU COULD MAKE A LIVING DOING ANYTHING ELSE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I love playing music, though it's very difficult to make a living doing it in Eugene. Maybe I'd have my own little coffee stand and be a barista. I could also travel the world disc golfing and taking pictures of the locals and signature holes. I'd call it 'Disc Golfin' across America.' I'd start on the West Coast and travel in an R.V. or station wagon. I'd put the pictures up on a website. Then, disc golfing and beer companies could sponsor it. There's a lot of beer involved in disc golfing. I didn't intend to have a clothing store; it was never a plan. If someone approached me at 25 and said I'd have this clothing store, I'd say, 'What are you crazy? You shouldn't do so much of whatever drug you're doing!' But here I am.

WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF BEING LOCATED ON EAST 13TH AVENUE?

Originally, this spot was away from everyone. We wanted our own identity; didn't want to piggyback on another business. We tried to set ourselves apart as a destination. We aren't downtown, although we used to be called that. We're too far west to be West University. You're now entering 'midtown.'

DO YOU SEE YOUR BUSINESS EXPANDING?

There's only one of me. I have retailer friends who say I should rent another space, but I'm stretched for capacity, for time and other things I like doing. When all you want to do is expand, you start becoming a megalomaniac. Maybe I'll hire employees someday, but this is my own little baby. November 14 is our 10th anniversary of the store. KD



Defining Divinity

STORY JESSICA POLLEY • PHOTOS CONNER JAY



ABOVE: Norma Joyce began the Wicca group as a religion that fit her beliefs, focusing on feminine power. OPPOSITE: Many ceremonies performed by the Eugene-based Wiccan women include candles and bonfires.

Wicca women take flight in their own ideals, honoring the female spirit within

The Wings circle in dance, seemingly floating against the burnt night sky. The group starts to sing in ritual, its members' faces illuminated by yellow candlelight. They gather in solemn chant, praying for loved ones who have passed. Individual Wiccan women are known as Feathers, but when joined together through religious praise of their goddess, they become Wings. Although every ritual is different, Wings symbolize the coming-together in celebration of the Goddess. The Goddess is believed to be a form of energy, not a human figure; therefore, she holds no formal name.

Pointy black hats, brooms, spells and large pots of oozing poison: This is what Wiccan women are, right? Although women who practice Wicca do sometimes call themselves witches, it's hardly a scene from "Hocus Pocus." Wicca, which stands for Women In Conscious Creative Action, is a religion that many people stereotype before knowing anything about it.

Reverend and current leader of Wicca's Eugene coalition, Norma Joyce, laughingly

dismisses the stereotype that witches fly on brooms. Although, she admits, it would make getting around town a lot easier. Spells are another story. Wiccan women do use spells in individual and group rituals; however, they see them as a form of religious prayer and not a means for turning kids into toads. They use spells to channel the power of the Goddess into initiating positive change and promoting problem resolution. For example, they often will use spells in an effort to help friends in trouble.

It is because of this perceived ability to alter the outcome of a situation through the use of spells that Wiccans consider themselves witches. However, negative associations with the word "witch" have prompted some Wiccans to discontinue use of the term. Many see this as an abandonment of the memory of the innocent people who were tortured, imprisoned and executed during the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, as well as the thousands of people killed during the European "burning times" that spanned from the 1400s to the 1700s. In

both instances, people were sought out and persecuted for religious beliefs, heresy and witchcraft, and burned at the stake.

Today, dedication to healing Mother Earth and honoring the Goddess are the main focuses of the Wicca group. Joyce began Wicca in Monmouth, Oregon in 1983, and it became a recognized religion in the state of Oregon just a year later. Wicca officially moved to Eugene in 1989. Unlike most religions that honor a male figure, Wicca honors the female spirit and her four elements: Air, Wind, Fire and Earth. These combine to make the manifestation of all creation.

"As a group, we make a commitment to Mother Earth," says Joyce. "It is imperative to bring back the Mother Divine." She explains why honoring the female is important and adds, "Mars is a god, but he is a god of war. We see enough war going on, so it's time for a change!"

Joyce began her journey into Wicca in 1973, after realizing that Christianity didn't match her religious ideals. "I went to a theological school and then to a Unitarian school, but they didn't talk enough about the feminine figure," says Joyce. "I was searching for something different." That's when she found Wicca.

As director of a women's crisis center in the early 1970s, Joyce found that many volunteers at the center thought her need for a female deity was radical. "I told them, 'No. I am not radical, I am logical!'" she says. Joyce has encountered many who criticize her views, but she knows what works for her and remains true to her beliefs.

Wicca is unlike most religious systems in the sense that its members do not believe that their goddess is a human figure; instead she is a form of energy. For many people, religion provides a sense of calm and deep connection with a god or goddess through prayer, service and song. Wicca followers achieve similar outcomes through similar processes. "We get laughter," Joyce says, smiling. "There's an Irish saying that says 'the devil hates laughter,' and it's true! We have a good time; we have a serious time; we honor the path we're on and the lessons we need to learn. And we celebrate them."

Although some Wicca groups are made up of both female and male members, Joyce's Eugene coalition currently comprises only women. Eugene's coalition is reminiscent of ancient times when strong, women-only communities were prevalent. Joyce reflects on the group's natural tendency to be supportive of one another and adds, "Actually, I have two members who needed some help and are currently sleeping on the floor at my house."

For this Wicca group, part of calling to the Female Divine of their goddess is calling to the caring spirit within themselves. Essentially, Wicca celebrates the planet, Mother Earth, as the Female Divine who provides

life and positive energy. The women call to the Female Divine through individual prayer, group chants and spells.

According to the Church and School of Wicca website, Wicca.org, Wicca's members learn from and revere the gift of nature by celebrating the cycles of the sun, moon and seasons. They search within themselves for the cycles that correspond to those of the natural world and try to live in harmony with the movement of this universal energy. Their teachers are the trees, rivers, lakes, meadows, mountains and animals as well as others who have walked this path before

"As Wiccan, we are not anti-other religions. We can only hope that people will be tolerant of us as well."

us. This belief creates a reverence and respect for the environment, and all life upon the earth.

There are many Wiccan rituals throughout the year, but solstice celebrations are the most important. These celebrate the changing of seasons and the good that Mother Earth will bestow upon our planet and all living things. There are four other rituals that are key to the Wiccan praise: Candlemist, held in February, celebrates hopes, fears and dreams; Beltane, held in May, is a fertility celebration; the Lamas, held in August, welcomes the first harvest of the year; and Halamas, in December, is a ritual that embraces the new period of darkness.

Wicca stems from Pagan beliefs and practices. Paganism is an ancient polytheistic religion, meaning its followers believed in multiple spirits. Many pre-Christian societies worldwide, including Celts, Greeks, Romans, Aztecs, Incas and Chinese, celebrated polytheism.

Wiccan rituals are normally held at someone's home, rather than in a church. In fact, no practice is carried out in a church, because Wiccans do not believe in what churches stand for: celebration of a male god. Rituals can be long or short, depending on what the hostess wants to do.

Songs, prayers and the lighting of candles are all common celebratory activities. Active Wiccan members have a stole, or shawl, to wear to ceremonies. Some women choose to wear dresses; others wear jeans. "The one thing that is always at our rituals is food," Joyce says with a wink. "We love our eating and socializing time!"

Besides being a reverend and organizing the Eugene Wicca coalition, Joyce has a strong presence in the Oregon State Prison system. She often holds classes and workshops on the religion. "I always get a surprised reaction when I visit a state prison," she says. "I visit both women and men's prisons to help them learn about themselves and the good that can come if they can learn to heal." To her surprise, her workshop attendances are usually high, drawing around 80 eager learners.

"I think most of them are bored and curious," she claims. "But at least they are making an effort to learn about a new way of thinking. Not all react positively to my presence, though. I get plenty who protest what I teach."

The issue of religion is challenging to teach, because those who are religious tend to be deeply rooted in their own belief system. Although many are open to learning about other denominations, not all are willing to accept them.

"The biggest thing we can ask for is tolerance," she says. "As Wiccan, we are not anti-other religions. We can only hope that people will be tolerant of us as well." **KD**



love in Ecuador

*An account of a four-month journey through
South America in search of cheap food and a Latin girlfriend*

STORY & PHOTOS BRIAN WARD

The difference between a tourist and a traveller is that a tourist knows where he's going. Ever since I could borrow money, I had been a tourist—until my trip to Ecuador. I planned on knowing where I was going and making arrangements ahead of time, but spontaneity won out. My original strategy was to move to Quito and get a job working with a girl named Gabriela, who I had studied with in Spain a few years earlier.

I boarded my plane to Quito and Gabriela met me at the airport. She drove me to my hotel as we discussed mutual friends in Spain. Although she couldn't take me out the next day, she gave me a list of places to see in Quito. I decided to go to the recently finished Metropolitan Park on the outskirts of town. The park had a number of strange exhibits, including one with four trees that were planted branches down, leaving the roots pointing skyward. Later, I crossed paths with an English woman who lectured me on the shortcomings of Ecuadorian cuisine. Listening to a tourist critique another country's gastronomy sounded out of place. I tried adjusting to life in a big city—it was nothing like the comfortable lifestyle I was used to in Eugene, Oregon.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Lady Sofia is Brian's Latin love interest; Three hours outside of Quito is a town called Banos, known for its wealth of eco-tourism and its slow pace; The Virgen de Panecillo, or "the Virgin of the Little Bread" in English, not only is using a chain to strangle a serpent which represents injustice, but also divides the North and South parts of town; At 19,374 ft, Cotopaxi is one of the highest active volcanoes in the world, located 50 miles south of Quito; An Ecuadorian village lies in a lush valley.



ABOVE: Quito's nightlife is complemented by eccentric costumes worn by bar employees. You are never a stranger in South America. When on the town with local friends, Ward's party quickly merges with other patrons.

As I walked down one of the main boulevards, two teenage boys with a backpack approached me and began speaking very quickly in Spanish. I had no idea what they were saying, so I held up my hands to show them that I didn't understand. One of them turned around, and he pulled what appeared to be a Labrador puppy out of his backpack. They wanted to sell me the puppy for \$300. I tried to explain the concept of supply and demand, and that in a city overrun with dogs, it was impossible to charge such an absurd amount. They pulled up the creature's front lip to reveal an impressive set of fangs. I realized that this animal was definitely unlike any other dog I'd seen. When they explained that the animal was on the endangered species list, I finally realized that I was actually looking at a bear cub, known in Spanish as the "osito de antiojos," or the "sunglasses bear." I attempted to explain that airlines don't allow passengers to bring shampoo or toothpaste onto their planes, much less an animal on the endangered species list.

On the next block were 300 kids with studded bracelets and spiked hair waiting outside of a stadium. I stopped and asked a girl with a nose ring and a Mickey Mouse headband what was going on. She told me that there was a free punk rock show at the stadium later that night. Many public theaters and concerts appeared around town for little or no money, which was one of the benefits of the newly elected, semi-socialist Ecuadorian president. Life under the new President Correa had some drawbacks, though. He triggered outrage in the United States after firing one of the senior American members from the International Monetary Fund. The

U.S. response was to withdraw all anti-narcotic planes and technology from the Ecuadorian and Colombian border by 2009.

Upon my return to the \$10-per-night hostel, the maid asked me what had happened in my bathroom. It turned out that I had improperly tucked in the shower curtain while bathing that morning, which caused the entire bathroom to flood. I offered to mop, landing myself the nickname "chico de la escoba," or Mop Boy.

I met my two best friends in Quito. I was living in a house with eight roommates, half of whom were foreigners and the other half South American. The first roommate I met was Manolo, from the southern coast of Ecuador. When he asked why I was traveling, I told him I wanted to meet girls. He loved the response, and he assured me that he'd take care of it.

Manolo was from a very diverse background. He had lived on the streets of Quito for two years after divorcing his first life, which pushed him to drug and alcohol dependency. Since returning to sobriety, his vices were karaoke bars and cell phones. I counted three cell phones on his belt as he cooked eggs for me one morning.

Manolo invited our roommate Patricio to watch a game with us. Like Manolo, Patricio had a history with drug and alcohol dependence, and had accidentally killed four of his best friends while driving drunk in Colombia. He survived, thanks to his wealthy father, who sent him to Houston for emergency brain surgery on the night of the accident.

Ecuadorian beer—when cold—is delicious, but its ketchup tastes like toothpaste. The friends I made helped me accept the country and all its differences from my homeland.

I first met Sophia at a local bar. She approached me in a bright yellow top with thin straps and started talking to me in Spanish.

She asked if I wanted to dance, and before I knew it, she was pulling me toward the dance floor to face one of my biggest fears: dancing Salsa in front of a crowd.

Before parting, we agreed that she would pick me up the following day and take me to her house, which was 35 miles south of Quito in "Valle de los Chillos," or Valley of the Whispers.

Sofia worked in her family's business for more than 10 hours each day. On my first day in Valle de los Chillos, Sofia taught me how to make "quimbolitos," a corn paste mixed with honey and raisins and wrapped in bamboo leaves. Sofia's quimbolitos are famous. When people from Quito visit their friends, they often bring quimbolitos, as Ecuadorians prefer these as gifts from visitors. I ended up spending three days in Valle de los Chillos and was invited back to go to the thermal baths with Sofia and her family. Sofia made me a wool hat and fed me more food in three days than I've eaten since arriving home. She complimented me hundreds of times on my attempts to speak Spanish.

After leaving Valle de los Chillos, I was reluctant to return to a large city, so I decided to tour Cuenca. Waiting outside the bus station to go to Cuenca, a child of approximately 10 years asked me where he could find the nearest McDonald's. I suppose he asked me because he recognized me as an American. I took that as the ultimate affirmation of the United States' contribution to world culture: high blood pressure and diabetes.

Arriving to Cuenca gave me a breath of fresh air. The taxi drivers were laid back, the town had a nice stream running through the middle, and the locals weren't cynical of tourists the way they were in Quito. I stayed at a hostel, el Cafecito, which was the only place in town where people from Cuenca could meet foreigners. After checking in and getting a meal, I went out to the hostel's unofficial nightspot.

The bar, Pop Arts, is basically a garage converted into a club. The floor tilts and the lighting is dim, forcing you to use lit cigarettes to guide yourself through the club's four main rooms. Its ambiance mimics a frat house with a full-service bar. When I arrived, the dance floor was too full, so I hung out by the bar. After a couple minutes of chatting with people at the bar, I realized that they all were staying at the hostel and that I knew most of them.

My first conversation was with Julian, a scuba instructor in the Galapagos Islands. Julian said he wouldn't mind hooking a "welfare case" like me

The floor tilts and the lighting is dim, forcing you to use lit cigarettes to guide yourself through the club's four main rooms.

up with some local girls. The conversation escalated when I mentioned China. Julian was very upset that the Chinese were killing sharks around the Galapagos Islands for their fins, which they put into a certain kind of soup intended to increase libido. Julian said he wanted to hunt the Chinese and make a soup out of their ears to decrease libido in Latin America.

I joked that I was one-quarter Chinese, and we had a laugh. I learned that he is the lead singer for a local

band and originally rose to local fame after driving a scooter with a passenger two blocks while playing air guitar.

Cuenca's soccer team is known as the Deportivo de Cuenca, but the players' jerseys hardly display their team name. Instead, the name of the town's liquor of choice, Cristal, is printed in bold white and black letters. Cuenca is much like the town I lived in during high school: Salinas, California. The locals in Cuenca have a saying for their town: "Pueblo pequeño, infierno grande," meaning



ABOVE: Lady Sofia perches romantically on a window ledge over a city street.



ABOVE: Although seriously damaged by a 1917 quake, the city of Quito has the best preserved historic center in Latin America, such as this alley near the Plaza San Francisco. OPPOSITE: For \$4 USD, anyone can take a ride by cable car to a hilltop overlooking the city.

“small town, big hell.” Cuenca natives are incredibly down-to-earth and always ready to joke about their horrible soccer team; they say the only thing to do is to drink. The Cuencanos are my kind of people.

I got a job as a bartender at one of the beach bars in Montañita. There was stiff competition on the beach, and our bar was lucky if it sold three beers a night during the week. We tried everything from huge bonfires to candlelit walkways, but competing bars had better music and light shows—and their bartenders knew how to make drinks.

One night when there weren't many customers, I went down to the bonfire and danced with some girls on the beach. We were having a great time until a woman came running toward us, screaming hysterically. She reported that Lima, Peru had just been leveled by a tsunami wave, which was expected to arrive in Montañita within an hour and a half. The Colombian girls were terrified when they heard the news. I grabbed their camping gear and started running toward the bridge behind the bar. It was dark, and, struggling to make my way, I lost the girls. I decided to climb up the mountain and look for them. I quickly scampered up the gravel driveway in pitch-blackness, dodging tree

She reported that Lima, Peru had just
been leveled by a tsunami wave, which
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within an hour and a half.

limbs and abandoning construction equipment. After reaching the top of the hill, I found the Colombian girls panicking that the hill wasn't high enough, and the 20-foot waves would wipe us out.

No other hills were in sight, so we stayed put. After sitting in the dirt for over an hour, a voice came over the town's loudspeaker, announcing that the threat was over and that we should go back to town. People on the hill recounted the tsunami that had

destroyed Thailand and taken over 24 hours to arrive, so as far as they were concerned, the threat had not subsided.

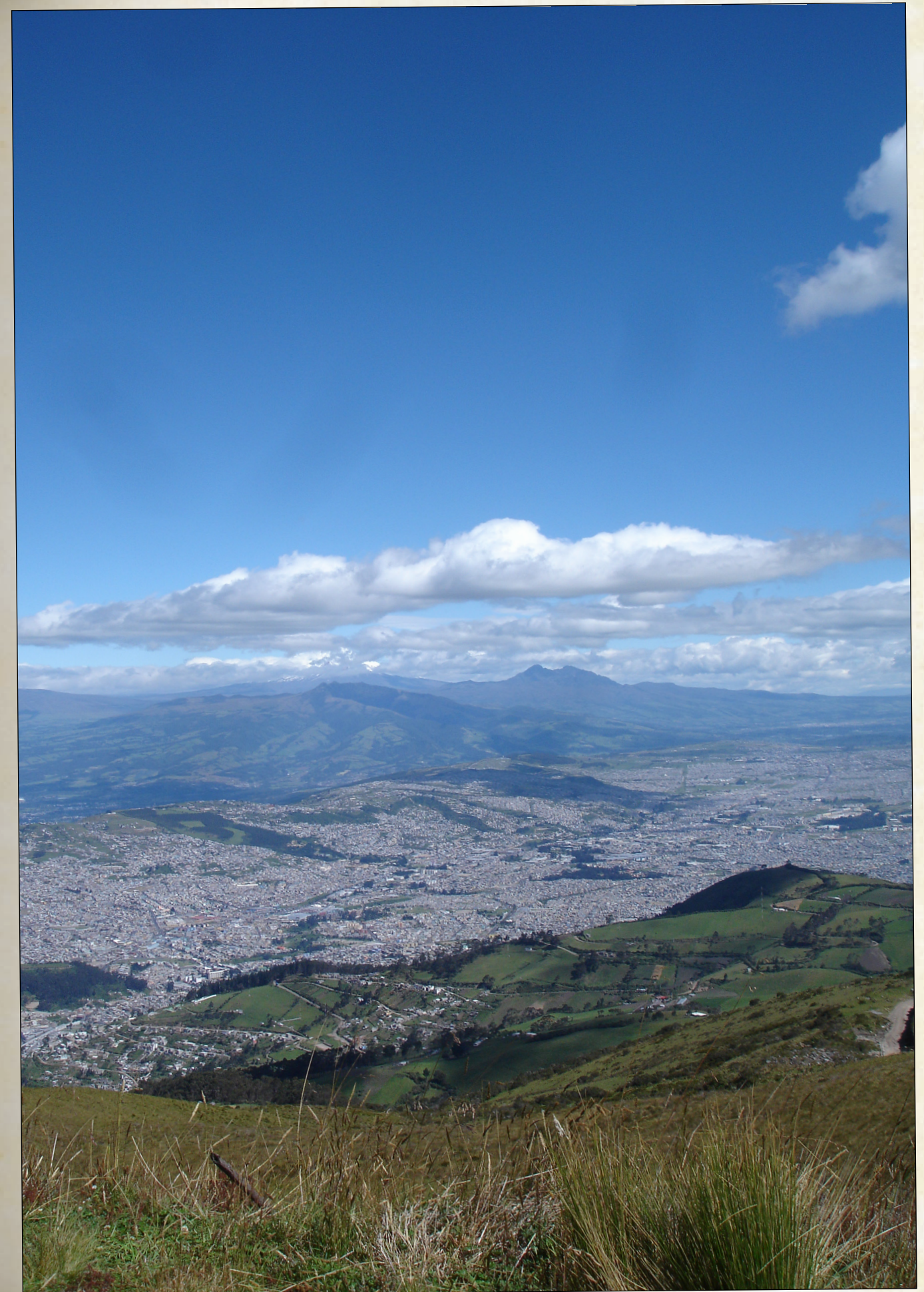
I decided to descend from the hill and take my chances. Nearly an hour had passed, and I

wanted to go to bed. When I got back into town there were people everywhere. It seemed the threat of death by tsunami had inspired a huge spike in alcohol consumption.

After the supposedly near-death experience, I was in the mood for some quimbolitos, so I decided to return to Quito in search of my favorite quimbolitos chef.

To be continued... KD

For the complete account of Brian's search for a Latin lover, buy his book at www.lulu.com/content/523478





**A student shares
the enlightening
simplicity of life
as a divemaster in
Honduras**

STORY & PHOTOS **BENJAMIN MANGIN**

When my alarm goes off at 7 a.m., I get out of bed and slip on the same board shorts that I wore yesterday. I brush my teeth, wash my face and walk out the door. The basket on my bicycle is loaded with everything that I'll need for the day: a towel, a gallon of water, and, most importantly, my lucky white bandana. Pedaling down the unpaved road toward the end of the island, I pass the public beach. German tourists have stopped to watch the sunrise, an Austrian woman begins her morning yoga routine, and others are still passed out from last night's festivities.

The dive shop where I work is located at the very end of the island. When we give directions to tourists, we say, "Go until the road turns into the sea. There we are."

Continuing on my morning commute, I pause for a giant green iguana relaxing in the middle of the road. This giant reptile, endangered to the island, doesn't care that he is delaying me and continues to bask in the sun. But as I near him, he retreats into the bushes.

I join the majority of my co-workers at the restaurant next door to the dive shop for a quick bite and a cup of coffee to go. For a few minutes before the customers arrive, I sit on the bow of our dive boat and look out across the water. With my strong cup of Honduran coffee in hand, I feel the island breeze on my face and think to myself, I have the greatest job in the world.

I'm a divemaster, or DM, which is a scuba diver certified by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors to lead groups of divers. Essentially, I'm an underwater tour guide. When scuba divers travel to new locations, they contact local dive shops to arrange their underwater excursions. When they call our shop, I'm one of a handful of staff members ready to lead their adventures. Every morning I greet our new customers with a genuine smile. "Good morning. My name is Ben and I'm going to take you diving today," I say.

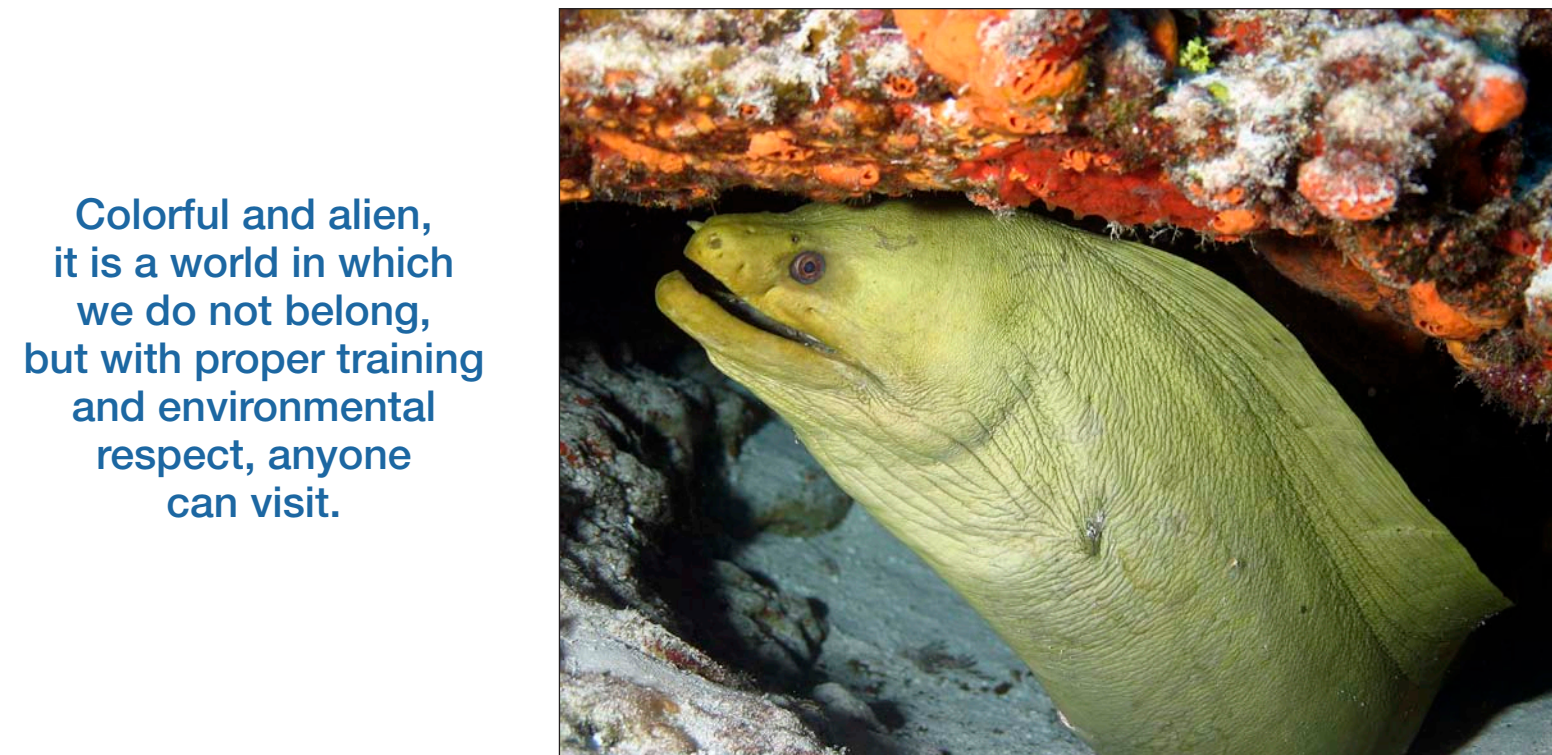
LIVING THE DREAM



Working as a DM is not always enjoyable. Like with any other job, there are days that wear me out. Take the time that our boat broke down miles from shore. Being stranded on an inoperable boat while trying to maintain my composure for a group of customers is challenging. Leading a group of young teenagers can be equally unpleasant. Imagine a group of six adolescents underwater: One diver is at the surface complaining that her ears hurt, while two others are at 80 feet, deeper than what is considered safe for their ability level, and refuse to ascend to shallower depths. Another diver decides she wants to pet a green moray eel. So here I am, underwater, amidst countless potential catastrophes, trying to maintain order and safety. It can be a headache.

But even these small annoyances don't detract from the satisfaction of the life of a DM. Underwater, everything generally improves, and problems rarely arise. It's quiet and peaceful. Everything moves slowly. The only sound comes from bubbles and the occasional boat motor. It is truly a different world. Colorful and alien, it is a world in which we do not belong, but with proper training and environmental respect, anyone can visit.

I do the same thing everyday, so the potential for monotony exists. However, the amazing thing about diving is that you can visit the same reef multiple times and never experience the same dive. There is always something different. One of my favorite memories is of the time a customer and I encountered an enormous sleeping stingray, easily four feet across. Large barbed quills protruded from its tail. We slowly crawled on the sandy bottom to see how close we could get without waking it. Near enough to kiss it if we desired, my adrenaline was pumping as the animal awoke.



Colorful and alien,
it is a world in which
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respect, anyone
can visit.

PREVIOUS PAGE: A hammock is the perfect place for a siesta after scuba diving. ABOVE: Charli Todd entertains her fellow divers by fire dancing at a party. BELOW: Tropical rainstorms are a regular part of life for these local women. OPPOSITE ABOVE: A hawksbill sea turtle is always an exciting sight for divers. OPPOSITE BELOW: Typically a reclusive animal, the green moray eel hides under a coral cropping.





We came from different countries all around the world but were united for one purpose: to share fun adventures.



ABOVE: A Good Samaritan and crewmember of the Coral Princess comes to the rescue of Mangin's temporarily incapacitated vessel. OPPOSITE ABOVE: While making fresh balleadas, or Honduran tacos, the "Balleada Mujer" greets locals with a friendly, "Buenos dias." OPPOSITE BELOW: A beautiful sunset is the end to a perfect day.

It opened its eyes, looked at us, and, realizing we were no threat, went back to sleep. What a great dive.

There are other exciting aspects about my job. As a divemaster, I have more fun than a scuba instructor, since I am certified to lead divers who have already been formally trained. This means that I get to have fun exploring the reefs with people who know how to dive. An instructor often spends his or her time in a swimming pool or shallow beach, teaching skills to divers in training. The two jobs are vastly different, but often a DM is used to assist the instructor with their students during training sessions.

The other major difference is that instructors make much more money than divemasters. Instructors are paid either a salary or a "per student rate," but their job seems like too much work for me. Many DMs agree to work for only room and board and whatever tips they get from customers, but I am paid 10 U.S. dollars a day. That's not very much money, but considering that one dollar equals roughly 20 Honduran lempiras, the math works in my favor.

With no expenses for room and board, my daily wages were enough to live in paradise for a few months. As much as I like earning money, there was a simple satisfaction at the end of the day. When customers would have a good time diving, it was not uncommon for them to grease my palm with a couple hundred lempiras as they departed from the dive boat. The tips were just enough for some cold beers and fresh "balleadas," the Honduran equivalent of tacos.

Of course there is more to the life of a DM than diving. There is drinking. There is dancing. Did I mention drinking? And who better to do all this with than my roommates and co-workers?

We were a tight bunch. We came from different countries all around the world but were united for one purpose: to share fun adventures.

I'll never forget the day the boys and I took kayaks and fishing poles to the north shore of the island. We spent over an hour paddling through the narrow Mangrove forests to reach the opposite side of the island. Once we reached our destination, uninhabited beauty, amazing beaches, and huge hermit crabs surrounded us. We spent the whole day fishing, snorkeling, and drinking warm Cervezas. I had so much fun it didn't matter that we didn't catch any fish.

Then there was the time a few of us took the boat out to dive and look for whale sharks, the largest fish in the sea. We spent the day cruising the north shore looking for signs of whale sharks feeding. Rage Against the Machine blasted over the boat's speakers as we took turns standing on the bow with binoculars scanning for the sharks. Eventually, we gave up our search and went diving at "Iron Bound," a reef noted for its underwater archway.

I consider myself lucky to have had these amazing experiences. I know that as a DM I'll never be rich or much less famous. But I know that as long as I keep diving, I'll always be destined for adventures and to meet awesome people, and I'll always have many more stories to tell. KD

The Love for Fire

Art, history and passion drive glassblowing into Eugene

A raging furnace blows 2,100 degrees of heat into Aron Leaman's side. Waiting, he looks down at the complex geography of his palms. Callus hills extend from the pads at the base of his fingers to the tips. Deep dry valleys cut across the flesh lowlands. It's a rough terrain, blackened by newspaper print, scarred, incrustated with wax. The entire surface shines, polished like a precious stone from constant use. It's never clean, at least not until he quits working for a few days. On the center of his left hand, Leaman smoothes one thumb across the warm basin. "I get my hands burnt a couple times a week," he says. "But it usually doesn't get through the calluses."

With every handshake, acquaintances know that Leaman is a craftsman. He burns, scars and works his hands raw for his art, glassblowing and glass shaping. A trade handed from artist to artist since the first century, glassblowers like Leaman frequently gather at hot-shop studios, where neon orange pools of molten glass morph into

fixed pieces of artwork. The trade requires not only hours of practice, but hours spent teaching and working in camaraderie with other glass artists. Leaman lives consumed with this creative desire, ignited by the intensive process.

"One of the hardest things at first is getting used to the heat," he says, pulling a five-foot iron pipe from the glory hole, an opening in the furnace that leads to the lava-like inferno inside. "After a while you lose your heat sensitivity. I don't feel it that much anymore."

Leaman currently works with the Eugene Glass School in West Eugene. He first learned glasswork techniques when he went to Franklin Pierce College in New Hampshire. As an arts management major, he began working in the college's hot shop as a teacher's assist and student. Leaman then traveled to the Eugene Glass School for the past three summers to assist in hot-shop classes and learn from other artists. "I'm just sort of a wanderer and I wandered

back here," he says. As a traveling artist, he says one must be flexible and willing to do any work that comes along. Otherwise, there's not enough money to pay for it. "It's just having fun instead of trying to make a living," he says.

Across town from the Eugene Glass School at the University of Oregon, a glass furnace brews in a dimly lit corner of the Craft Center. Hot glass instructor Tim Jarvis pulls an iron pipe from the furnace while a molten glob of honey-like glass droops from the end. It's ready. He just knows. He can feel it. Swiftly, he swings the pipe 10 feet to a workbench where his student sits waiting. Jarvis shapes the glass with a clump of newspaper as the student rolls the pipe back and forth along the wooden arms of the bench.

"The best thing to say is that you're setting yourself up for torture," Jarvis jokes between a howling propane flame gun and furnace. "But I don't tell my students that."

Jarvis currently teaches hot-shop classes

at both the Craft Center and the Eugene Glass School. He began glasswork in 1997 as a sculpture major at Herron School of Art in Indianapolis. Jarvis worked in private hot-shops until 2000, when he and one other instructor began teaching classes at the Eugene Glass School. About four years later, he studied in the glasswork Mecca of Murano, Italy. "I had the opportunity to study there for one month and I'm still reeling in that," he says. Murano was the center for the craft during the Renaissance period. Glassblowers were moved from Venice in 1291 A.D., because fires escaping their 3,000-degree furnaces burned nearby wooden homes.

It is unclear exactly how glassblowing developed before that. Most estimates place the invention around the first century in the Roman Empire where it was used for trade. But today the art is still mostly taught in private studios or trade schools.

"It's still more of an Old World thing, working with apprenticeships," says Jarvis. "You're working with just snippets of knowledge."

Places like the Craft Center are very rare at a college, says Jarvis. Some glassblowers travel to conferences to collaborate and learn new skills. Last June, Leaman a group of friends drove an R.V. across the country to Pittsburgh just to attend an annual conference.

He also has helped the Eugene Glass School with its own annual glass celebration called the FlameOff Competition. At the FlameOff, famous glassworkers and many others migrate from all over the U.S. and Italy to watch hot-shop demos, socialize and join the competitions. The school and its FlameOff have helped to make Eugene a glasswork hub. "That's why I'm out here," Leaman says. "There's people I can work with."

Leaman is one of several artists roaming the 10,000-square-foot warehouse studio of the Eugene Glass School. Orange flames flare up in different workstations, buckets of colored glass scatter the area, murals of glassworkers cover walls and bluegrass

"This is a molten pool that's left to interpretation. It goes from a raw material to a work of fine art."

rock floats over the hum of large industrial fans. With a smile, Leaman displays his latest commissioned project. Grabbing two glass ovals swirled with muted green, blue, red and yellow streaks, he places them into indentations on a chunk of dark driftwood. When they are put together, the piece looks like glass mushrooms growing on an old log.

"I'm thinking about designs all the time," he says. Leaman makes drawings of his most of his designs because one unanticipated



move might cause the piece to change shape completely. "Glass is problem solving."

And problem solving often involves more than one artist. Large glassblowing projects can require as many as five people for one piece. "You work in camaraderie because it's painstaking work," says Jarvis after crafting a blue and red striped Venetian vase with his student. "We throw in the one element that normally messes with people's patience—heat!"

To master their skills, glassblowers not only work with others but also repeat techniques over and over . . . and over. Jarvis says one glass master from the Czech Republic believes artists should repeat skills 1,000 times. Jarvis actually thinks between 30 and 50 repetitions works. He estimates the learning curve is one to five years.

At the Eugene Glass School, Leaman knocks a 3-inch glass horse of the end of his iron pipe. "It took me six years to learn how to make a horse in one minute," he says.

"I think desire is important, as well as a willingness to fail," Jarvis says of learning the intricate process. Glassblowers must have a strong desire, working next to burning heat, fighting the time of the cooling process and working with sharp tools. But actually, 90 percent of hot-shop injuries are not caused by fiery glass, but by hot metal. Jarvis experienced this phenomenon firsthand. He absent-mindedly grabbed close to the heated end once. The searing metal fused his hand shut around the pipe, so he had to slide the pipe back through his hand to free it. "It reminds you of the respect you should have for the glass," he says.

To a glassblower, the medium grows into

an entity all its own. "I've always wanted to eat it," Leaman says grinning, thinking of the sap-colored taffy mass that begins each of his projects. For many like Leaman, the attraction becomes an addiction. "Love of fire," he says, draws him to the art. "It's just mesmerizing. You see it and you know it's an addiction."

For Jarvis, the beginning of the process fuels his obsession. "This is a molten pool that's left to interpretation," he says, staring into the glory hole. "It goes from a raw material to a work of art."

Walking into his office, where his desk is cluttered with different glass forms, Jarvis ponders his role in the glass world. "The one thing I wish I could do better is plant my excitement to other people," he says. -Allison Goin



BELOW: Tim Jarvis teaches hot glass in the Craft Center. He expressed that having this facility available is a real privilege and more students should take advantage of it while they have the opportunity. OPPOSITE ABOVE: The UO Craft Center in the EMU is the only place on campus that offers a hot-shop where students and faculty can learn the ins and outs of glass blowing and sculpting. OPPOSITE BELOW: Selected works by artist Aron Leaman of the Eugene Glass School.



PHOTOS BY BRENNNA CHEVNEY



Film Rolling in Colombia

A university student creates a documentary of life in this tumultuous South American country

If someone were to see the video camera hidden under a tee shirt on his hip, he knew his life could be threatened. But as he stood, heart thumping, in gang-controlled Aguablanca, a section of Cali, Colombia, he continued to film. Aaron Rettig had heard countless haunting stories. He had heard voices, young and old, talk about the effects of the permeating violence and the corrupt politics. Each story he heard urged him to look deeper into life in the third most populous South American country. And he captured it all on film: love of dance; a professional soccer career ended by gunfire; pain-filled, hopeful faces.

As a professional kayaker, Rettig was used to filming under an adrenaline haze of raging currents, cascading waterfalls and roaring white water rapids. But with this film project, he met a different set of stressors while he filmed a documentary about Colombia's vibrant culture.

The athletic 22-year-old's interest in South American culture was peaked while visiting friends in Ecuador. The diverse land-

scape, stimulating nightlife and rich culture of Colombia drew the University of Oregon student back a second time to create the documentary. His dark brown hair, chocolate eyes and fluent Spanish allowed him to blend in when needed while he traveled around Colombian neighborhoods.

Rettig's documentary, "Lo Demas Es Loma," films far beyond Colombia's cultural landscape. It explores the complex, tense

Eloisa urges viewers to look at Colombia not solely in fear

political climate in a country amid the 50-year-long civil war and examines how the United States' policies have contributed to the country's problems. The film observes the lives of three Colombians from different areas of the country. Each individual has felt fierce ripples of the violence and policies that have dominated the region in different ways. Rettig says the title is difficult to

translate, but roughly means "Cali is Cali, and everything else is wilderness."

He was particularly captivated by the pulsating energy in Cali, the country's third largest city. "It's like the Miami of Colombia," Rettig says.

From behind the camera, Rettig has witnessed the violence firsthand. He filmed in gang-controlled neighborhoods and saw a man pull a knife on his friend. He was assaulted while filming and once had videotapes confiscated by police.

Set against sloping green countrysides, dazzling nightlife and invigorating Salsa music, the film dives into the complex political and social problems. Ongoing clashes between the corrupt government, left-wing guerillas and paramilitaries has purged lawlessness into the country and skyrocketed crime. Rettig says that fighting has lessened in recent years, but violence still plagues the country.

Part of the social upheaval is the United States' response to Colombia's infamous reputation as the world's largest producer of

cocaine. In the late 1990s, the U.S. supported Plan Colombia, a controversial legislation aimed at curbing drug trafficking. Rettig's film explores fumigation, one of the most contested aspects of the policy. In aerial fumigation, herbicides are dumped on the land in an effort to kill coca, the plant used to produce cocaine. But the policy has been largely criticized because the herbicides also kill many other crops and expose residents to the potent chemicals through direct contact and water contamination.

"There's this tension that hangs around," Rettig says. "Most people born there have no recollection of the war not being there."

Rettig says a heightened awareness of violence contributes to this tension, and fear of retribution causes people to feel cautious around cameras. He includes only the interviewees' first names to protect their privacy. He met far more faces than ended up in the film's final cut, but he chose to focus on three individuals because he felt the problems they faced were common among many Colombians.

In Manizales, the film's first featured city, a well-known former professional soccer player discusses the intense violence that persists throughout nearby neighborhoods.

"The daily bread is violence," Hugo, 35, says about the city. He holds up a framed photograph of his former soccer team. He says the violence ended his professional soccer career when a paramilitary mistook him for someone else as he was leaving a bar one night and shot him, putting him permanently in a wheelchair.

Graciela's situation echoes the predicament of many Colombians. As a middle-aged woman living in a guerilla-controlled department near Cali, she must go into the city to find work. Fumigation has ruined her family's crops and forced her to leave her home. She works in a family's kitchen in Cali on the weekends to earn a living.

Fumigation has also adversely affected Eloisa's life. She says fumigation dried up her family's crops, forcing her to live in Cali to work as a maid. The intense violence that permeated Eloisa's neighborhood when she first moved there has calmed down. She urges viewers to look at Colombia not solely in fear and not to focus only on the violence.

As Rettig traveled across Colombia, he was struck by the unvarying generosity gifted to him by the people he met. He said he has never felt so welcomed while traveling. He was constantly greeted with kindness, treated with supreme generosity and fed home-cooked meals. Through ecstatic, cheering crowds, invigorating music and mouth-watering dishes, "Lo Demas Es Loma" celebrates a county's love affair with soccer, expertise in dance and amazing food.

Fellow journalism student, Colombia-born Michelle Andujar Cordoba, helped guide Rettig throughout cities. Most of the filming was done with his own hand-held, high-definition camera. As a one-man crew,

Rettig was able to gain intimate filming access without drawing attention, he says. On the other hand, he was frustrated knowing that he could have shot better footage and conducted more thorough interviews with extra help.

A small team of students worked on the film's postproduction. Andy Maser served as the film's chief editor. Andujar Cordoba helped translate the hours of interviews. The team added extensive text to the film to provide background to the numerous political and complex historical references discussed during interviews. Student Kyle

Boggs went through the painstaking process of adding all of the film's text and subtitles. Journalism professor Dr. Bill Ryan helped the students sort through more than 20 hours of footage.

Ryan says he encourages his students to travel and study abroad because experiencing other cultures can broaden their perspectives on the world.

Rettig says he will never forget the people he met in Colombia. "They took it upon themselves to show me the country," he said. "Most of the people I met wouldn't want to live anywhere else." -Desiree Afleje

OPPOSITE: Aaron Rettig has travelled all over South America to film and to kayak. BELOW: Photos by Jenny Rettig document Aaron Rettig's filming experience in Colombia.



PHOTOS BY HARLEY DENIO III AND CONTRIBUTED BY JENNY RETTIG

Pucks, Sticks and Snorkels

Underwater hockey has dived into nations across the world, and now into Corvallis, Oregon



From above the surface, the action looks like a mad feeding frenzy. Players on the Corvallis Stingray team hold onto the wall with one hand and wield their black or white stick with the other. A player from the opposing team calls from the far end of the pool, "Black, White, Go!" and both the black- and white-stick teams, adorned in multi-colored Speedos, suits, swim caps and snorkels, take off toward the middle of the pool. Legs and flippers flail in the air as all 12 players dive determinedly toward the puck, jostling and sometimes unintentionally kicking each other. As confusing as it looks from above, a strategic standoff occurs below the water.

Underwater hockey is not a recent phenomenon—the sport has been around for about 50 years. Alan Blake, a member of England's Southsea Sub-Aqua Club, assembled the first underwater hockey team in Portsmouth, England. His objective was to keep new divers active in the winter when it was too cold to dive in the sea. At the time, the game required eight players and was called Octopush; players in the United Kingdom still use this name. In the last 30 years, underwater hockey has become an international phenomenon, with clubs in 33 different countries.

The Stingrays do not compete, but rather play together as a local club. Most new players are forwards, because defense is considered a highly skilled position. Team member Shawn Tucker, a 30-year-old Northern California native living in Corvallis and working at Oregon State University, is an underwater hockey natural. Tucker grew up in a family of aqua lovers. His parents and siblings are all certified divers. "My whole family is really water-based," Tucker says. Tucker's brothers, who have competed in six World Underwater Hockey Championships, first introduced Tucker to the sport. Tucker enjoys the game because it allows him to play and connect with people from all over the world. To prepare for the high-intensity games, he does land and water cardio workouts three days each week. Tucker says lung capacity is the most important part of the sport.

Underwater hockey players wear snorkels, so, during play, they rise to the surface to inhale big breaths of air before dashing back to the bottom. The game does not pause for substitutions. The action never stops. "You could have the puck and not even realize there is someone right above you diving down to take it," Tucker says.

A burly man with a stick, frantically chasing a small puck around a frozen arena or a grassy turf most often is associated with ice or field hockey. But now there's an unexpected third kind of hockey: underwater. In the sub-aqueous edition, players replace their uniforms with bathing suits, helmets with snorkels, and sharp skates with flippers.

The brutal ice sport has transferred to the depths of pools all over the United States and around the world. Not far from Eugene, a Corvallis underwater hockey team called the Stingrays gathers once each week to play this waterlogged game.

Underwater hockey is played with two teams of 10, each team competing with six players in the water at a time. The players are submerged in less than 10 feet of water and armed with foot-long sticks as they chase a three-pound lead puck, which remains at the bottom of the pool unless kicked up for a moment during rough play. Like ice and field hockey, the object is to hit the puck into the opposing team's goal, a trough that lies at the end of the pool. Players' positions also are similar to those of ice hockey, with forwards, defenders, and midfielders. Offensive teams attack in different formations to outsmart the defense.

Underwater hockey is non-contact, unlike its on-ice counterpart, but it is still competitive. Tucker says the challenging part is developing strong endurance, which is necessary for play. A game lasts 30 minutes, with 15-minute halves and a three-minute intermission.

The Stingrays can't be choosy in the relatively isolated Northwest; players

don't have to be professionals to compete. Michael Hadlock, an OSU graduate and mechanical engineer, has been playing on the team for seven years. Mark Swick, a white-water rafting guide, played on the University of Florida's club team in college. Swick has been playing for eight years, competing in potluck and club tournaments in cities from coast to coast. "It is addictive," he says. He describes the sensation of playing underwater hockey as "the feeling of slipping without falling."

Kimberly Green, a Chicago native, played on the women's underwater hockey team at her alma mater, the University of Illinois. She currently is training for the

women's U.S. underwater hockey team, which will compete in the 2010 World Championship in France.

In other areas of the world, underwater hockey has become an established extracurricular sport. High schools in New Zealand have competing underwater hockey teams, and England's well-established teams compete in all divisions at the World Championship games.

The World Championship, held every two years in alternating countries, was last held in Sheffield, England in 2006. U.S. teams participated in several different divisions.

The divisions include men and women elite, masters, and teams for kids less than 19 years old. The United States ranked first in women's masters and open masters in 2006.

While players from the United States represented their country at the World Championship, the nation is at a disadvantage because of the difficulty forming a team, Tucker says. Underwater hockey is played as a hobby here rather than a full-time competitive sport. Our national team's

"You could have the puck and not even realize there is someone right above you diving down to take it."

players usually have not practiced or played together, which makes building a cohesive, competitive squad a challenge.

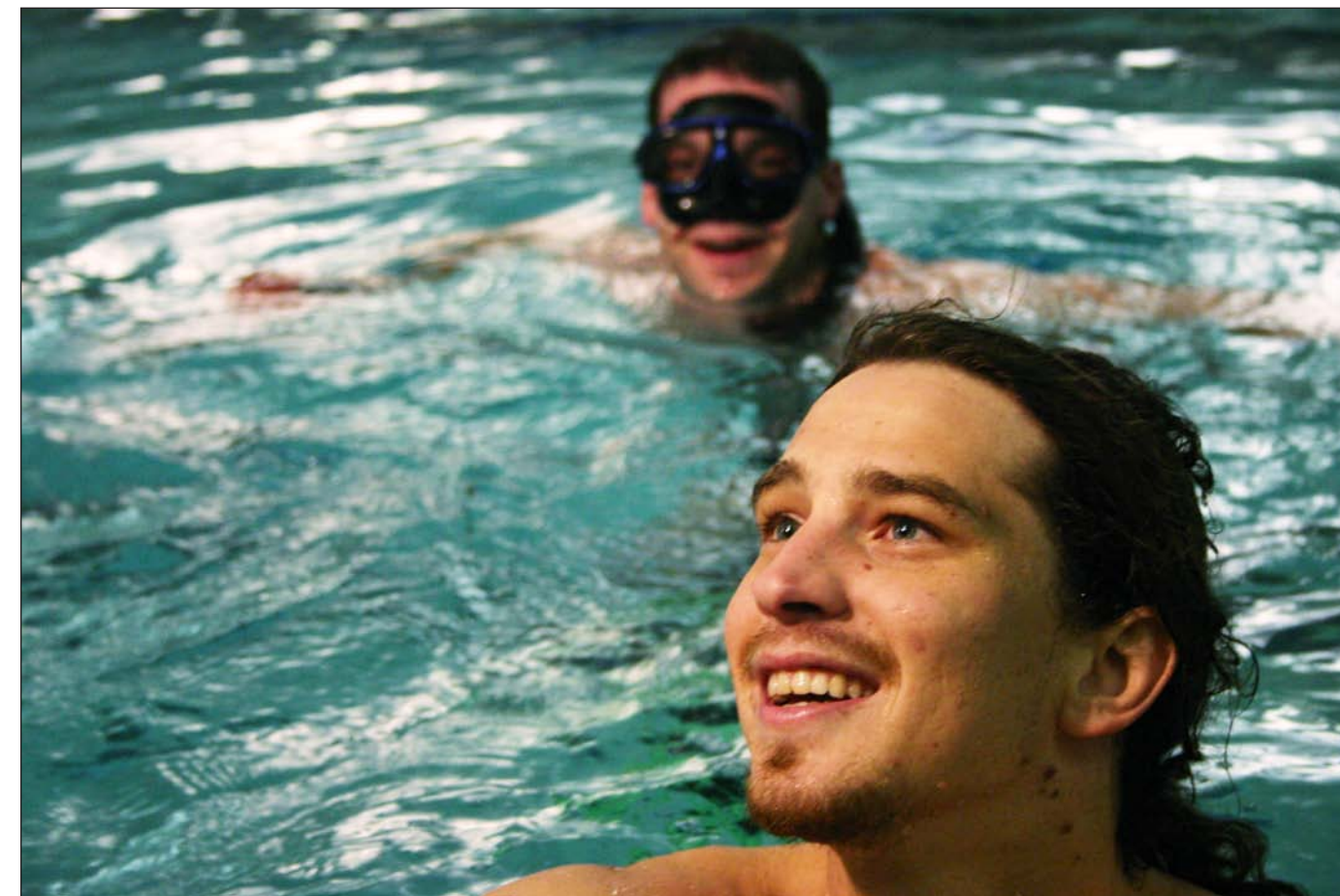
It is the love of the game that keeps the sport alive, the players claim.

Tucker believes the Stingrays have the potential to become a competing team. He considers his teammates pioneers for the Northwest; eventually, he hopes to see teams at both the University of Oregon and Oregon State University.

The underwater players want to expand their competition in this twist on hockey. "If they like having fun and if they love to try something different, then by all means come out and play hockey," Tucker says.

Stingray members travel from all different areas of Oregon to Corvallis every Wednesday to play. Rain, sleet or heavy fog doesn't slow down this dedicated group of men and women. Bonded by their love for the unusual sport, they carpool together, even on low tanks of gas. In the water they shed their day-to-day responsibilities. It's just a pick-up game, but they play with a fun ferocity unseen in many established team sports. Diving, passing, groaning and cheering, they play until they're satisfied. Watch out, underwater hockey may be sweeping the bottoms of pools in your local town before you know it. *-Grace Neal*

OPPOSITE: Like a swarm of funny-looking fish, underwater hockey players surround the puck, which is being battered somewhere in the midst of the two teams. **BELOW:** Brothers and teammates Benjamin and DJ Flammang free dive in their spare time.



PHOTOS BY DAVE MARTINEZ AND JENNY KANE

Swing, Soul, Salsa!

The spicy, wild Salsa band, Son Mela'O, inspires Eugeniens to try out new moves

Herman Reyes and his partner, Barb Johnson, stand facing each other in the middle of a large circle of Salsa dancers in training. All eyes are on them as Reyes instructs the 11 couples that have come to Eugene's non-profit Tango Center for a live concert and free Salsa lesson, though admittance is \$8 per individual or \$15 per couple. "One, two, three, here we basic," Reyes calls into the headset that plasters his long, voluminous hair firmly against his head.

The couples, mostly beginners, struggle to keep up with the simple steps and turns, but do so smiling. This is more than just a lesson; it's a social event, and Reyes makes sure of that by asking dancers to change partners three or four times during the hour-long session.

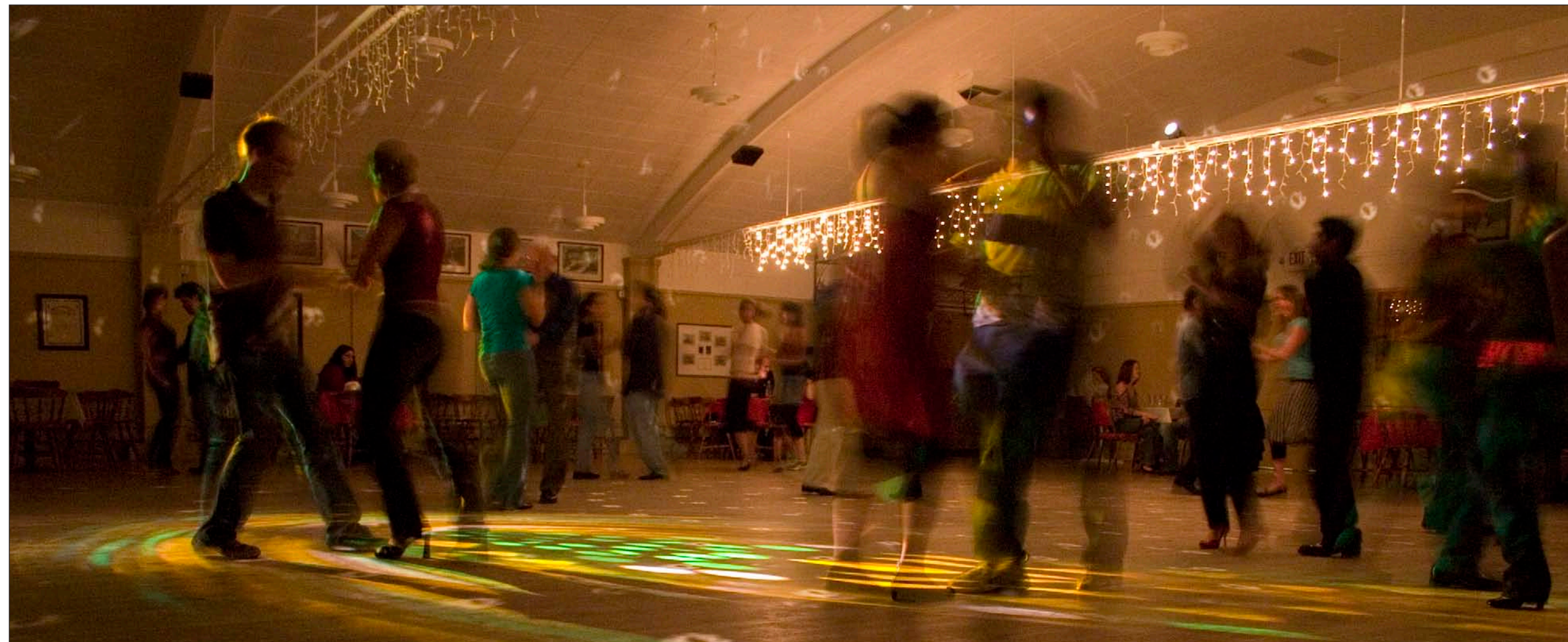
The crowd is diverse, which spices things up during rotation. A middle-aged man awkwardly makes small talk with a teenage girl before they learn the next step, but as soon as the dancing begins, all discomfort melts away. Everyone is here for the same reason: to learn how to dance Salsa.

Reyes has been dancing for seven years and teaching for six. "By teaching, I'll learn how to dance better," he says, smiling.

Salsa music is a Latin American descendant of Cuba's Mambo. Cuban music can be traced back to West Africa during the slave trade. African slaves used Conga drums to worship the gods. It is what brought them together during dire times.

Latino immigrants to New York adopted salsa in the 1930s, when they were trying to find their personal identities and keep their culture thriving. The music and dance expressed their togetherness. Like the Latino culture, Salsa is social and vibrant.

Cuba's Mambo music highlights wood-



ABOVE: Dancers move to the musical selection of DJ Mario Mora at the Veterans' Center. Many locals come to the Vets' Center for its friendly environment and occasional live bands. Volunteer Bryce Nelson says Salsa is an easy dance to learn. "All you need is the confidence to dance."

winds, violins, trumpets and piano. Salsa generally is faster paced than the Mambo and includes a larger orchestra, featuring a percussion section composed of bongo drums and claves. Claves are short, stick-like instruments made of wood, fiberglass or plastics, played by striking one against another rhythmically to produce a clinking noise. These instruments monitor the tempo of the music. Salsa reflects its namesake, the spicy Latino sauce, with its diversity and spunkiness. Contemporary Salsa infuses elements of jazz and rock.

Reyes' appearance is just as spicy as the music itself. He dances in black slacks and shiny black dress shoes paired with a peach-colored, short-sleeved shirt with the first few buttons unattached, exposing his dark, hairless chest ornamented with a long silver chain. His jet-black hair is coupled with a full mustache, also black but sprinkled with gray, revealing his age.

Johnson, Reyes' partner of two-and-a-half years, also looks youthful, wearing a short, black, triangle-cut dress and strappy

silver heels, but her age, too, is revealed by the gray that shimmers through her dark blonde hair. Tonight, age does not matter; Salsa is for everyone.

There is a large presence of college students in the Salsa classes. Reyes and Johnson distribute flyers for the weekly Friday night event, as well as for classes, to the University of Oregon's Gerlinger Hall, where the university's dance classes take place. Johnson says that many new Salsa students are from the university, and the number has grown since the previous year. Salsa can be contagious and addictive, says Reyes. It is a very social dance, and once you start, you can't stop. "Salsa is a street dance but structured into ballroom," explains Reyes, with a Spanish accent. "It's universal. It can be danced anywhere in the world."

Reyes laughs and cracks jokes as he teaches his one-time-only pupils the forward-backward, also called the "basic"; the side-to-side step; the open-break turn; the turn for follower, in which the leader spins his partner; and the turn for lead, in

which the leader turns his partner over his shoulder.

This may seem like a lot for a one-hour session, but Reyes and Johnson want to expose their students to as much as possible. "We want to put them at a level where they can go out and do something," says Johnson.

They also want their students to reach a level at which they desire to hone their dancing skills and learn more. Every month, Johnson and Reyes teach Salsa classes for beginners and intermediates.

The Tango Center appears to be community-run. Speakers hang by noticeable wires on a bare plaster ceiling. The unpainted walls give the ballroom more of a warehouse feeling, but chili pepper ornaments and pink Christmas lights fashioned into a heart and strung along the windowsills give the open room a more inviting feel. Yet the atmosphere truly is warmed by the people who inhabit it.

**Like the Latino culture,
Salsa is social and vibrant.**

The lesson ends at 10 p.m. and the house lights are replaced by red, yellow and purple filtered bulbs to set the exotic mood for the live music of Son Mela'O. Suddenly, conga drums, guitars, horns and a vibrant Spanish voice blast from the suspended speakers at an ear-piercing volume and the 1,500 square-foot ballroom clears out, leaving only a few brave couples to practice their new Salsa skills. The floor is empty with

the exception of two couples chatting. The scene resembles a failed high school

dance. However, even though the audience may not be dancing, they still are socializing. People shake hands and introduce each other as the up-beat Salsa music continues to play. With the lively music bouncing off the walls, it is hard not to tap your foot or move your hips, and it's even harder not to converse with fellow dancers. The atmosphere is nothing but friendly as the live band, Son Mela'O, begins to play.

The five-piece band is named after the traditional Cuban music, Son, and the sweet and sticky part of sugar cane, Mela'O. It incorporates many of the traditional Salsa instruments: trumpet, bongo drums, bass and the cuatro, a Latin instrument resembling a mandolin. The Eugene-based group begins its set, and two bold couples are the first back onto the dance floor. Slowly, others follow until the floor is full again. The vocalist Neri Rodriguez sings the lyrics in Spanish.

After a song ends, Rodriguez interacts with the audience in muffled Spanish. Because of the social nature of the genre, it is common for Salsa bands to chat with their listeners throughout the performance. "In fact," says Johnson, "it is rare for them not to!"

Salsa is more than just a dance; it is a social gathering and an experience unlike any other. So next Friday night, when you're racking your brain for things to do, consider learning Salsa at the Tango Center, but be warned: It is contagious. *-Katrina Nattress*

Grassroots Garden Grub

Eugene's Grassroots Garden serves healthy lunches to volunteers and helps change the face of food assistance

It's lunchtime on a crisp November Saturday in Eugene. As college students across town flood pizza places and burger joints to get a fast fix before the game, 25-year-old Cynthia, a student at Lane Community College, sits on a bench at the Grassroots Garden munching on a fresh Chilean squash casserole. "It's really yummy," she says digging her fork through the dish. Along with the casserole she has cornbread, Caprese, and salad. While this may not be the typical lunch for a college student, it's exactly the kind of thing that can be found at Food For Lane County's Grassroots Garden. The day's menu also includes granola, bread, and vegetarian chili with beans. These tasty options are gathered all-you-can-eat-buffet style inside a wooden pavilion in the center of the Garden. About 30 other hungry diners flock to the pavilion. Many of them are high school or college students, and all are volunteers. Good Samaritans like these provide the foundation for the Garden, and the produce they help grow is sent to Food For Lane County, or FFLC, an organization

that provides meals and emergency food boxes to homeless people and low-income households.

All morning, the group hauled leaves into wheelbarrows and dumped them into a soil patch, cultivating the site for future growth. After a morning full of shoveling leaves and dragging the wheelbarrows from one corner of the garden to the other, the workers are happy to be eating lunch.

Garden Coordinator Merry Bradley is the last one to stroll into the pavilion.

Once she ensures that everybody is eating, she fixes herself a plate and pulls up a chair next to Cynthia. This is the first time Bradley had a chance to relax since her arrival to the Garden at 9 a.m. As always, Bradley has been busy shoveling leaves, preparing the food and instructing the volunteers. In the midst of all of this, she personally takes care of all the workers, handing out jackets to keep everybody warm. An hour before lunch, Bradley made a jar of hot lemonade for the volunteers.

The Oregon State University Lane County Master Gardener Program started the Grassroots Garden, located at 1465 Coburg Road, in 1991. According to Bradley, each year the Garden produces thousands of pounds of food, which goes to FFLC. Numerous agencies including group homes, Catholic Community Services and various food pantries can then buy the food. Additionally, the food is used to make soups, casseroles and other meals at FFLC's Food Rescue Express Kitchen that go to the various agencies or are served at the dinner sites for food-insecure people. The food also goes to the Summer School Lunch Program, which provides children from low-income families with meals during summer vacation. Bradley beams as she describes the huge network that the Garden's food assists.

This is Bradley's seventh year with Grassroots, but she has been gardening on her own for much longer. "Probably before I even really knew what I was doing, I was gardening," Bradley recalls while she sits in a white greenhouse after lunch. Her parents owned an eight-and-a-half acre property and allotted one acre to their 12 children for gardening. After moving away from home, Bradley continued to garden. She partici-

"If people don't have enough money for food, statistically the first food they stop purchasing is produce because it's so expensive."

pated in community gardens around Eugene and completed the Master Gardener Program in 1999. Later that year, she came to Grassroots as a volunteer to help revitalize the compost site. From the very beginning, Bradley put an enormous amount of time and energy into her work there. After only one year, Bradley had worked in the Garden for more than 1000 hours. When Grassroots needed a new coordinator in 2000, other volunteers encouraged Bradley to pursue the position.

"By my nature and passion, I am definitely a gardener," Bradley says. But Bradley's primary concern is beyond tilling and composting. Through Grassroots, she has found a way to combine her love of planting with her concern for the hungry. "Food For Lane County says one in five people ate from emergency food boxes last year," she says gravely. "So, [the Garden] really is the community helping the community," she says.

With the exception of Bradley's coordinator position, Grassroots is based entirely on volunteers. People like Richard Gambino, who built much of the Garden's infrastructure, and Althea Seaver who prepares the workers' lunches, volunteer to benefit the interests of the community. Gambino and Seaver have been volunteering for more than four years. According to Bradley, about 35 volunteers come to the Garden on an average day. They participate in a variety of tasks including composting, planting and harvesting. Depending on the time of year, workers may pick vegetables or till the soil. They also have the option of helping to prepare the daily lunches.

Lunch is usually served around 11:30

a.m., and all volunteers are welcome to eat. Because Bradley and the cooks prefer to use fresh produce from the garden, lunch menus change seasonally. In the winter, popular dishes include soup, cornbread, roasted squash and casseroles. During the summer months, stir-frys and pasta dishes are common. There are also fresh salads throughout the year. "We create something from what is there each day," Bradley explains. The lettuce and beets in the salad that day were picked just a few hours before it was served. The squash in the casserole was also fresh from the Garden.

The lunch menu may be seasonal, but Grassroots works to provide a food supply that is not. As it edges on the frigid months of winter, Bradley works to guarantee that there is always fresh produce for those in need of food. During the harvest, Bradley stores a portion of the produce for winter. Throughout the winter, the Garden grows beets, carrots, leeks, broccoli, lettuce and celery. On this cold day in November, golden bell peppers and spinach are still flourishing inside the greenhouses. "When people are hungry, it's not just [in] the summer. So we try to grow what we can," Bradley says.

And growing what they can has proven to be an amazing amount. It's the first week in November, but the Garden is so lush it could be the middle of July. There are rows and rows of plants still hanging onto their summer-green freshness. Plants sprout out from every inch of the garden's soil.

Despite the success of Grassroots, the concept of a garden in coalition with a food pantry is rare. Food assistance programs historically have treated hunger as an immediate problem. Through the Grassroots Garden, Food For Lane County strives to address the larger, more permanent issues. Malnutrition is a pervasive problem among those who experience food-insecurity. According to Bradley, "If people don't have enough money for food, statistically the first food they stop purchasing is produce because it's so expensive." Food banks, while providing basic sustenance, typically do little to alleviate the financial stress of maintaining well-balanced diets. Food banks more often hand out excess foods from distributing companies and grocery stores, such as frozen meat, canned goods and pastries. Grassroots allows FFLC to provide their patrons with fresh produce, which would otherwise be a scarce part of their diet.

As time passes, the existence of Grassroots becomes increasingly important. The Federal Farm Surplus traditionally has been a primary source of excess goods for food assistance programs. But the Federal Farm Surplus supply has been dwindling in recent years, according to Bradley. While farmers devote more land to harvest corn for bio-fuel, less food becomes available. This means there are fewer goods for food banks like FFLC. However, facilities like Grassroots



OPPOSITE: Children of the volunteers at the Coburg Community Garden run through its earthy dirt trails on a beautiful Saturday afternoon, just before lunch is prepared for the volunteers. ABOVE: Volunteers line the food table that hosts a variety of delectable eats from the Garden such as squash pie, salad, chili, cornbread and fruit.

help compensate for this lack of surplus by growing their own food and distributing it through a food-banking network. Bradley also anticipates that the number of people in need of food assistance will increase in coming years because of rising production costs. Due to these factors, Bradley believes it is increasingly necessary for food assistance programs to gain a greater control of their production. Bradley feels that services like Grassroots will have to become more common. "Local participation in growing, local distribution, people connected to direct access to food, control locally of what is available... This really is the future," she says.

As lunch ends, the volunteers prepare to head back to work. A mountain of leaves still waits to be hauled away to the compost area. They smile at one another in passing as they grab their wheelbarrows. Friendly conversation develops as they scoop piles of leaves. This sense of community helps the garden thrive, according to Bradley. "It isn't even growing the food so much anymore. For me, my favorite part is the community and connecting," she says. "Amazing things get accomplished...and you realize that there's this bigger force. And it really is the power and momentum of well-intended people coming together." -Christina O'Connor



PHOTOS BY AMBER MEEFS

Surprising Self-discovery

A transfer student from Japan gains confidence in herself and reveals the challenges surrounding her transition

STORY MAIKO NAKAI • ART KELLY WALKER



A campus map and a heavy backpack were little comfort as I walked to my first two journalism classes at the University of Oregon. “Excuse me. Do you know where room 182 is?” I eagerly asked people in the Lillis Business Complex. I was ready. At 20 years old and about to graduate from Osaka Jogakuin Junior College in Japan, I had wanted to put myself in a tough situation and see how far I could go.

I came to the University of Oregon in 2005, believing that my rigorous study habits would work to my advantage. In Japan, I spent 14 hours each day on campus for classes. In addition to homework, my weekends and holidays were filled with work among seven organizations, including student government. Yet, friends warned me that studying at an American university would require 10 times the amount of work as at our Japanese college. People who had graduated from American universities claimed they had studied all night without sleeping during their first years of college. Still, when I arrived in Oregon I registered for 17 credits, worked and participated in extracurricular activities, and life in America still seemed easier—at first.

This feeling didn’t last long. Lecture halls packed with hundreds of students overwhelmed me. In Japan, most classes had only 10 to 20 students, and special sessions were held for those at risk of falling behind. In Oregon, I discovered I was responsible for keeping up on my own. I constantly pushed myself to ask for help.

I learned that for academic success, I needed to sit in the front row, speak up, ask questions and visit office hours. These strategies helped me do well in every class and on every assignment, even on a 100-page research paper for a notorious course known as Info Hell.

However, a reporting class nearly killed me last winter. Every obstacle I had encountered before was nothing compared to this one.

It seemed impossible to write a solid article in under 20 minutes without an extensive vocabulary or knowledge of American politics, laws and the court system. I kept getting Bs. It was the worst I had ever done.

I felt like I was at a disadvantage, and I lost my confidence in writing. I cried often. People told me to consider changing my major, but I thought, I won’t give up my dream because of this class. One difficult course won’t determine my future.

The stresses were compounded when a friend died suddenly. I was working on my midterm news story at 10 p.m. one Sunday when I got the call. I spaced out. “Why—I just talked to her—” I sobbed, devastated. Stacey was 22 years old, and my boss. I had known that she was diabetic, but I never thought that she would die. Later, I went to work expecting to see her, yet all I found was her bold handwriting on various documents. I discovered a yellow memo pad with a list of things she wanted to do. One item read: “Talk to Maiko about comfort level.”

My busy schedule didn’t allow me to grieve. My final grade in the reporting class was an A-. Though this class gave me a feeling of defeat, I consequently learned to accept imperfection. I regained my confidence.

My living situation was another struggle, however. When I was in Japan, I had dreamed about building a life-long friendship with my roommate. Living in the Hamilton dormitory complex, though, I had adjust to three different roommates over the first two terms. While I met many friends there, the greasy, sugary food and the constant noise of neighbors gave me headaches. So, I moved into a one-bedroom apartment the next year. I loved having my own space and freedom to eat what I wanted. However, paying bills stressed me out, and I was so busy during the day that I would walk alone to Safeway at 5 a.m. to buy groceries. I was scared and homesick, but I knew this was part of experiencing my independence.

“Though this class gave me a feeling of defeat, I consequently learned to accept imperfection.”

I also have not mastered American social life, which often seems to revolve around bars and parties. I don’t drink. I don’t smoke. I don’t dance. Most of the time, I don’t go out, and when I do, I just sit and chat until I can’t stand the loudness and craziness anymore. The whole concept of partying late every night confuses me. We do other things to have a good time in Japan, such as shopping and karaoke. We don’t celebrate every time Friday rolls around.

I sometimes worry about what I’ll miss, or what my friends will think of me if I don’t socialize all the time. But I’ve reached my own conclusion: I can experience college in other ways that fit my lifestyle. I meet people through my job in student housing, scholarship programs and extracurricular activities. In my free time, I go to Portland to see my boyfriend, and I keep in touch with my friends in Japan and across the U.S. I now live in a gorgeous house with four housemates from different countries. Although bills are no longer my greatest concern, there is always something to worry about, but I’ve learned to be flexible. This is my journey to establish who I am as I learn to handle life’s challenges.