

ETHOS

Spring 2011 Volume 3 Issue 3

The
Real
Mile High
Club

80 ACRES
OF PARADISE
Communal living
off the beaten path

**Hydroponics
vs. Organic**

Bandest of
the Bands
WINNER
Rare Monk



BLOOD MINERALS

YOUR PHONE'S DIRTY LITTLE SECRET

PLUS: CLAYMATION GOES 3-D // JOURNALISTS UNDER FIRE // CHEW ON THIS: MAGGOTS AS MEDICINE

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Hector (right) with mother and brother at Portland International Airport on the day he returned to Oregon. (Photo by Rachelle Hacmac)



In an age when technology has inundated nearly every facet of modern culture, it has, in many ways, inadvertently helped regress our capacity to communicate.

Popularized by the current proto-language trend which accepts sentence fragments and partial thoughts as a passable form of dialect, the written language has degenerated to suit our insatiable appetites for bite-size chunks of information. As words become minced, punctuation gets dropped, and “Facebook me” has replaced the traditional cordiality of “Hello, my name is _____,” short form lingo has transcended from its purpose in media-related converse and into everyday discourse. The decline of fundamental communicable practices is upon us.

As the growing number of non-netizens adapt this means of pseudo communication, the future of intercultural dialogue—let alone across diverse cultures—is on the verge of resembling prehistoric grunting rather than articulated prose.

So what more is a modern journalist to do? Or more specifically, WWED: what would *Ethos* do?

For over ten weeks, *Ethos* staffers have worked tirelessly to fill the growing lacuna of well-packaged journalistic works, covering every facet of our stories through in-depth reporting, photography, illustration, design, and multimedia.

This is especially true in the case of Hector Lopez, a PSU student who was taken from his home and forced out of the country essentially overnight. Hector’s odyssey back to the US from Mexico is just one sampling of a much larger issue surrounding displacement, discrimination, and the definition of the “American identity.”

In an era when information is spewed out in truncated snatches, *Ethos* strives to present engaging, culturally diverse topics the best way we know how: as a complete journalistic work about a culture constantly in flux.

Suji Paek
Editor in Chief

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Congratulations to *Ethos* staff, both past and present, for its award-winning work. In 2010, *Ethos* received second place for the Columbia Scholastic Press Association's College Silver Crown Award, the Associate Collegiate Press's Diversity Story the Year, and a 2011 William Randolph Hearst Award.

Exiled from America

University student faces deportation to an unfamiliar country and culture

STORY SYDNEY BOUCHAT PHOTO RACHELLE HACMAC



Lopez was one of 400,000 illegal immigrants deported in 2010, many of whom were unaware they were not legally recognized American citizens.

Hector Lopez is arrested before he knows his crime. At the age of twenty, the Portland State University sophomore discovers he is an illegal immigrant while sitting in a federal holding cell in Portland, Oregon. After spending ten days at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington, and before he could find a lawyer, he is deported to Mexico, knowing neither the people nor the language. This is only the beginning of what becomes a grueling four-month ordeal for Hector, away from his home, family, and friends.

You were arrested on August 23, 2010. What was that experience like? It must have been very difficult.

Absolutely, especially when you're not expecting anything to happen, and with me not knowing anything about my legal status. At first, you're kind of . . . you think it's not real. Like, 'Oh, you must have the wrong person.' But after you realize that it is you that [the authorities] are after, it quickly

puts you into a panic.

So you were not aware at the time that you were an illegal immigrant?

No. I have a Social [Security number] and a driver's license. And, you know, usually when you hear about people with immigration problems, you hear of them changing names or doing things to fit in, but I never had to do any of that. I figured if I was [illegal], my parents would have told me.

How exactly did the US immigration authorities go about taking you out of the country?

I thought that as soon as I talked to a judge, someone would come to their senses and realize that this shouldn't be happening and everything would be okay. And then, [immigration] just said, 'Hey you, you're leaving today.' And I said, 'Well, I don't know anyone. I don't speak the language. What do you want me to do?' They said, 'Well, we can't give you legal advice.' At around 9 a.m. [September 1, 2010], I was taken from my cell. I was given my clothes back

and then handcuffed at my waist, wrists, and ankles. Then I was put on a prison plane. It made three stops. It was a twelve-hour process. We landed in Brownsville, Texas, at about 9:30 p.m. that same day. From there, [the other deportees and I] were driven to the border and made to walk across.

You were made to transport yourself across international lines?

They kind of just drop you right off at the border. You can't go anywhere because you're immigrant of a federal area, so you only have one way to walk, and that's toward Mexico.

At this time, where was your father? Was he with you?

No, my dad was going to ask for asylum, but when I got deported before him for no reason, he gave up his right to fight for his case so he could be with me in Mexico. He was deported about two weeks after me because he gave up his case. But this whole situation when I was deported was by myself.

You were in Mexico for two-and-a-half weeks before your father gave up his right to asylum to be with you. Describe that experience.

That [first] night, I went to the bus station that was a little ways away from the border. There was a group of about 150 of us that had just been deported. My phone was dead, so I couldn't call anybody. I couldn't ask for a hotel. Three people had gotten murdered in that area a couple hours beforehand. I found a gentleman who spoke some English and he told me I probably shouldn't be leaving the bus station because it was dangerous. So I slept at the bus station that night. The next day, I called my mom, who told me to get a bus ticket to Mexico City, where a lady who was my mom's old neighbor was going to take me in for a while. I took about a sixteen-hour bus ride from the border to Mexico City. The lady picked me up when I got to the bus station in Mexico City. I stayed there for almost two months.

What was it like living in Mexico?

I saw moms and children sleeping on the street. They were homeless. And I thought, 'You know, where I grew up, we don't let that happen.' I wasn't used to seeing things like that. I didn't want to be there, but I couldn't leave. The majority of the two months I spent in my room by myself. It was almost like I didn't even have a life. It was too much to handle, and you just kind of hide yourself and try to deal with it.

What brought about your returning to the border to seek asylum?

I can't go too in-depth with the reasons of what happened, but after multiple incidents, and you start realizing that you're the one being targeted, you just lose patience. I know two months doesn't seem like that long, but every day I didn't know when I was coming home. That's what eats at you the most. Around the beginning of November, the panic started to sink in a little more and a little more, and I spoke to my lawyer. She said I could seek asylum. It was the thing I was trying to avoid in the first place, going back to jail, because I knew how horrible it was. But after we realized that [asylum] would probably be the quickest and safest way to get me back into the US, on November 17, I took a bus from Mexico City to Nogales, Sonora. I surrendered myself at the border at the walkthrough where people show their visas and passports. From there I was arrested and taken to the detention center, where I stayed for a little over a month.

What was the detention center like?

It's not technically a prison, though I don't know what the difference is. I've never been to prison, but I'm pretty sure it's the same thing or almost the same thing. When I was

detained in Seattle, I had my dad there. I had someone to talk to, someone who I knew, so it wasn't as bad. I went to Arizona by myself because I didn't really have a choice. I figured I'd rather be here than scared for my life. You get acclimated after a while. You get used to spending your whole day doing nothing. For the first couple days it was rough, and definitely a shock, but you start getting used to it.

At one point, you were allowed to go home to Milwaukie, Oregon, for Christmas. Did they do that special for you?

Yes, the [immigration] let me go home on December 23. It's not something that they do too often. My case was a higher profile case, and there was an 1,800-signature petition sent in. There were hundreds of phone calls made. They took a little better care of me, I guess. They let me go sooner than most people. I got out without paying a bail. They do it, but it's on a case-by-case situation, and it's not very common.

Now you're back with your mom and your brother in Milwaukie. What is your current legal situation?

I'm waiting for a court date. I should be receiving it in the mail soon. But right now, I'm, I think it's called 'out-of-status.' I'm not really legally here, but I'm not illegally here. I'm in the middle. But hopefully I can get another start. I start school in the spring, my work application is pending to get a work permit, and I can get my license soon.

How difficult has it been for you to re-establish your American life?

I thought that was going to be a problem. I have a gentleman from Dallas who's an advocate and he's been helping me. His name is Ralph Isenberg. He and my mom and everyone were worried that I would suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or something along those lines because it was pretty traumatic, what I went through. But I hopped into my life pretty quick. The first few days were a little groggy and weird, but right now I'm fine. I know it sounds weird, but right now I'm just waiting to get back to work, and that's probably going to be before I get back to school. And then I'll just pick up where I left off. What I told everybody is that I'm not going anywhere. I've been guaranteed multiple times by some of the best attorneys in the country that I'm not going anywhere. I'm not going back to another country. And that's always reassuring. I'm going to stay here, so I might as well start my life again.

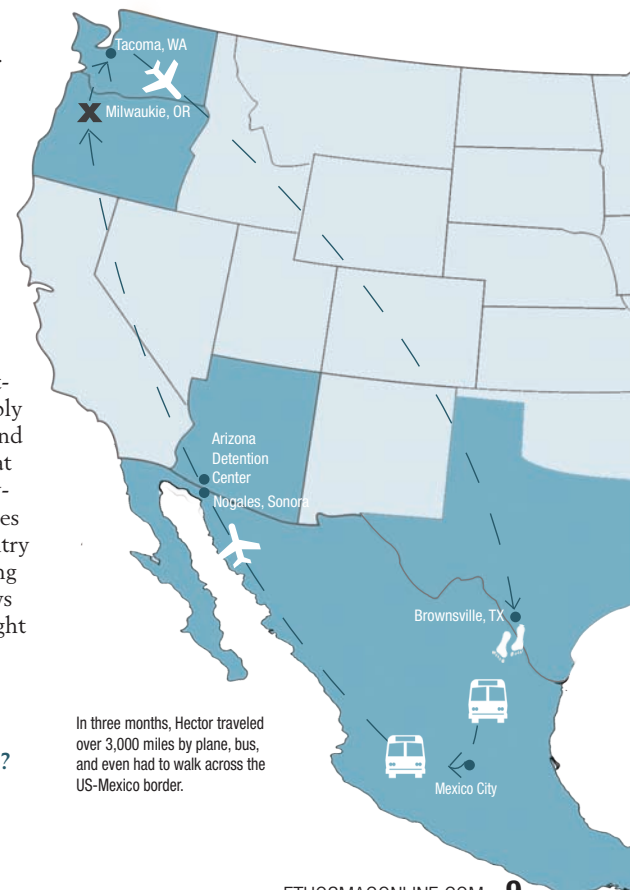
How do you think this experience has changed your opinion about being an American and living in the United States?

I think I'm an American. I may not be an American citizen, but I think I'm as

American as baseball and apple pie. I grew up here. I only know one pledge of allegiance. I only know one president. For all accounts, in my eyes, I am an American, and I think a lot of people feel the same way. The reason I came back is because I believe in the American system. I knew I wouldn't be in jail for years and years and years. I knew the right thing would be done, and the right thing was done. I'm not mad that I got arrested. A lot of people say, 'You should be mad at the system. You should be mad at your parents.' Well, I'm not mad at the system. They were doing their jobs. And now that things have been brought to light, they have done the right thing. They have been very helpful with everything, to release me and get me home. I guess it gives me even more admiration for the country and the American system and everything that it stands for.

Has this experience helped you grow at all, or has it only hindered you?

I don't think it's helped me too much, but it's definitely opened my eyes. I now realize that when you're talking about immigration, you have one idea of it, like what we see on the *Discovery Channel* or the news. But, being in it, being in jail and in the country, it's a sad thing, and it's not all murders and drug cartels. I saw a little four-year-old kid in a jail because someone had tried to smuggle him over. It's a really sad thing to see. This isn't right. So it definitely opened my eyes. ☉



Oppressing the Press

In their pursuit of truth, journalists face censorship and even death around the world

STORY **CODY NEWTON** ILLUSTRATION **EDWIN OUELLETTE**

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) ranks Mexico, Russia, and Afghanistan among the most dangerous places in the world to be involved in the press. Rampant corruption, as well as the lack of government protection and power, inspires violent groups such as drug cartels and terrorist organizations to silence journalists—by any means necessary. Despite the dangers of finding and exposing information in these countries, journalists continue to put their lives on the line to report the truth.

War in Afghanistan

Habib Zahori, a journalist from Kabul, Afghanistan, writes under the name “Asheel Qayum” to prevent the Taliban and other potential threats from kidnapping him. “We can’t write or talk about a certain number of individuals and their dirty business,” he says. In January, Zahori worked on a story for the *New Yorker* in Afghanistan, exposing the corruption of Khalil Ferozi, the owner of the country’s largest private bank. Since the release of his article, Zahori has been forced to change his life. He now keeps his phone turned off during most of the day and won’t answer numbers he doesn’t recognize.

Afghanistan’s constitution has had guaranteed press freedoms since 2004, but exposing corruption and expressing personal opinion still comes at a price for journalists in Afghanistan.

According to Zahori, constitutions are hard to defend in war-torn countries since the government is unable to enforce constitutional rights. “Warlords and strongmen are still in control of everything here,” Zahori

says. “Those who dare to write the truth often end up either in jails or killed.”

According to the CPJ, twenty-three journalists have died in Afghanistan since the US-led conflict began in 2001. The war in Afghanistan has been increasingly dangerous for foreign journalists who face the decision of reporting as an embedded correspondent with the US-led International Security Assistance Force, or venturing out into the field alone without the aid of military protection.

Victor Blue, a freelance journalist based in San Francisco, has been to Afghanistan twice in the last two years: once as an embedded photographer with the US military, and once unilaterally to do work in Kabul. Blue spent twelve days going on patrols in the Marja area of Helmand Province, the world’s largest producer of opium. He spent nine of those days in firefights.

“There really isn’t a ‘front line’ in Afghanistan,” he says about his experience. “It’s an insurgency.”

Still, Blue chooses not to dwell on the dangers, as soldiers always suffer worse than journalists, and Afghani citizens “suffer worse than both of us.”

However, those dangers are worth the advantages of gaining an inside view of the military effort. Blue was able to report outside of popular military bases and spend time on smaller patrol bases where soldiers are closer to combat. “That’s where you can see how the troops are interacting with the Afghani population,” Blue says.

However, “if every time you show up to take a photo wearing a helmet, body

armor, and are surrounded by guys armed to the teeth, it’s going to affect how the Afghani people act in front of you.”

For Blue, this is where being unilateral has its advantage. “It’s being able to see the country as it is,” he says.

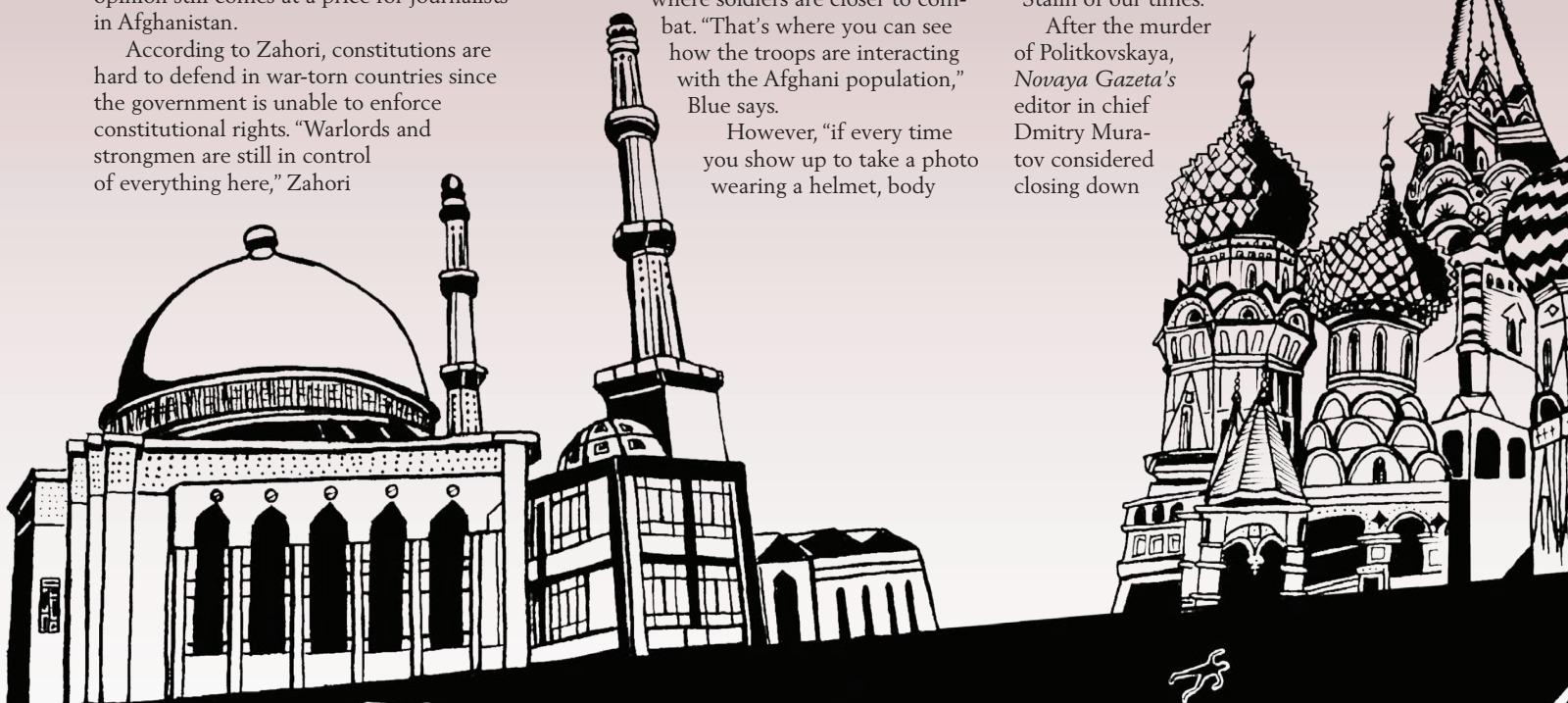
Despite the violence and dangers in this country, Blue feels he has a responsibility to represent Afghanistan’s marginalized people and share a glimpse of their culture through his reporting. “I can be the bridge between the things that demand our attention and the people who can’t be there,” he says.

Russia’s Media Control

Anna Ovyana was a journalism intern at the Moscow based *Novaya Gazeta* when a well-known Russian journalist, Anna Politkovskaya, was murdered on October 7, 2006. Politkovskaya was famous for her criticism of former Russian President, and current Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, and her investigation of war crimes during the Chechen conflict. “It was a tragedy for the newspaper and its journalists,” Ovyana recalls.

A week before her suspected assassination, Politkovskaya told Radio Free Europe that she was a witness to a criminal case against Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov and accused him of being a “Stalin of our times.”

After the murder of Politkovskaya, *Novaya Gazeta*’s editor in chief Dmitry Muratov considered closing down



the newspaper, and banned all journalists on staff from going into Chechnya. "It's not easy to say that in our country these murders are not a surprise for us," Ovyann says.

According to the CPJ, thirteen journalists have been killed in contract style murders, or pre-planned organized killings, since Putin took office in 2000. However, no one has ever been convicted of planning the murders. Some scholars accuse Russian elites for preventing these investigations as a way of controlling media.

Forbes Russia, owned by the independent German-based company Axel Springer, has also seen its share of tragedy. Alex Levinsky, a writer for *Forbes*, along with almost all of his colleagues, believes former editor in chief Paul Klebnikov was assassinated on July 9, 2004, for his investigation regarding corruption by Russian oligarch Boris Berezovsky.

Levinsky himself has been threatened and bribed in his career. One of his first stories for *Forbes* was an investigative piece about the state-owned company Gazprom, one of the largest gas and oil companies in the world. He suspected the company was stealing money. While on assignment, Levinsky received two mysterious phone calls; one was from a member of the State Duma, the legislative branch of the Russian government. The man told him to stop working on the story.

He was eventually asked to meet with members of the KGB successor Federal Security Service (FSB in Russia), and was told "not to offend good people."

After the confrontation, he feared going to the police. At one point Levinsky even told his children, "If I call and it's an emergency, you'll need to stay away from the house for a couple days."

Levinsky never had to make the phone call, but it was a sobering reminder of the lack of protection journalists are given in Russia. "The state speaks about the protection of journalists," Levinsky says.

"But never really does anything to protect them."

Mexico's Drug War

Carlos Lauría, another member of the CPJ, tells the story of Rodolfo Rincón, a fifty-four-year-old journalist and employee of *Tabasco Hoy* newspaper in Villahermosa, the capitol of the Tabasco region of Mexico. As a seasoned criminal reporter, Rincón was used to getting threats to his life. During a time when rival gangs fighting for control over drug trafficking routes were resorting to beheadings, Rincón was producing a story that included photos of the criminals' safe houses.

Rincón was last seen in January 2007 leaving his newsroom. Three years later on March 1, 2010, a spokesperson for the Tabasco State Attorney General's office announced that Rincón had been kidnapped and murdered by the Los Zetas cartel, which the US government considers one of the most dangerous and sophisticated drug organizations in Mexico.

"Authorities found the burned remains of a body they believed belonged to Rincón," Lauría says, although DNA tests never confirmed this.

According to the CPJ, twenty-two journalists have been killed in Mexico since President Felipe Calderón took office in 2006. Mexican journalists are guaranteed individual rights to freedom of expression and freedom of the press, but compared to the mounting influence of drug cartels, the government is powerless to enforce such rights.

The problem, according to Lauría, is that "Corrupt state and local authorities remain largely in charge of fighting crimes against the press."

As a result, the local press remains entirely defenseless. "The government has failed to take responsibility

for the widespread attacks on free expression," Lauría explains.

After losing two journalists, the daily newspaper *El Diario* in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, published a front page editorial asking drug cartels, "What are we supposed to publish or not publish? . . . You are at this time the de facto authorities."

Every day, journalists in Mexico risk their lives to report on a drug war that according to an administration report to US Congress, has claimed the lives of 22,000 people. Yet despite their sacrifice, little is being done to protect them. According to the CPJ, 90 percent of all press-related crimes over the last ten years have not been solved.

Brisa Maya of Mexico's National Centre for Social Communication said in an Inter Press Service report, "the impunity enjoyed by those who attack and murder Mexican journalists leaves the door wide open for further attacks."

That door may be wide open, but committed journalists continue to die in their efforts to inform the public. However, without support by the government, people like Lauría fear Mexican journalists may one day be completely silenced. "Pervasive self-censorship throughout vast areas of the country is the product of this lethal violence," Lauría says.

Groups such as the CPJ understand the Mexican people want and need to stay informed, but without protection, journalists won't be able to give the people what they need. "They know they're at war," Lauría says. "They want to understand what is happening and how to combat it." ☹



iConflict

Are hit songs and movies necessary to get us to boycott “blood minerals?”

STORY **JACOB O’GARA**

ILLUSTRATION **CHRISTOPHER FELLOWS**

PHOTO, COVER **JORDAN BRANDT**



Eastern Congo is rich with tantalum, tin, tungsten, and gold—minerals that are necessary components of electronic devices like cell phones and computers.

Rebel groups force men, women, and children to mine for these minerals. The collected ores bring in millions of dollars for the rebels, who use the money to buy guns and ammunition. The minerals are smuggled into neighboring countries like Uganda or Rwanda, and then are exported overseas.

Joseph Conrad once wrote, “to tear treasure out of the bowels of the land was their desire.” Hillsides throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been gouged and pockmarked, and inside their quarries, men, women, and children work constantly, plucking minerals from the earth, coerced by men holding assault rifles. The ores collected by the workers are being processed into minerals like tungsten, tin, and tantalum. The worst thing about these “blood minerals” isn’t that they provide economic fuel for thug organizations; it’s that they’re necessary to first-world societies. Along with gold, the “three t’s” go into every laptop, Blackberry, and iPod.

The journey of these minerals from a piece of ore in eastern Congo to the guts of an iPhone in the Upper East Side is obscure. After mining, the minerals are smuggled into Rwanda or Uganda. They are then shipped to smelting companies in Asia—China, Malaysia, or Indonesia usually—where the ores are refined and become the actual minerals. The smelting companies receive minerals from all over the globe, and

the blood minerals get mixed in with the “clean” minerals as they go on their way to becoming component parts.

“Manufacturers rely on assurances that the minerals they receive are conflict-free,” says Sadia Hameed of the Enough Project, an initiative of the Center for American Progress against genocide and other crimes against humanity. “In order to convince companies to take on greater responsibility and audit the supply chain, we have to create a consumer demand for conflict-free minerals and electronics.”

In other words, what they need is a movie. When *Blood Diamond* was released in 2006, American moviegoers were introduced to the grotesque, hidden world of misery and bloodshed where people fought, dismembered, and killed each other for bits of precious stone. Shoppers would walk into a Zales jewelry store in their local mall and demand conflict-free diamonds because of the popularity of the movie. This wasn’t the first pop culture reference to “blood diamonds from Sierra Leone” which was mentioned in passing in *Die Another Day*

and was the subject of a Kanye West song, but with *Blood Diamond*, an Oscar-nominated film that grossed over \$170 million worldwide, consumers were able to see the issue that orbited around every diamond they bought.

However, no pop culture phenomenon exists for the blood minerals issue, and it’s unlikely that one ever will. According to Tamsin Smith, formerly of (RED) and Gap Inc.’s Government Affairs Department, an issue like blood minerals doesn’t lend itself to the Hollywood “message movie” treatment. “Movies paint a picture and can illustrate complexities much more significantly [than other awareness campaigns],” Smith says. However, some humanitarian crises can’t be summed up in a slogan on a bumper sticker or in a movie’s run-time.

The problem that groups like the Enough Project run into is the problem of blood minerals itself. The situation is just too complex and abstract for the average consumer. There are too many small actors involved in the process. And unlike diamonds, the minerals themselves are not



Processing plants in Southeast Asia receive minerals from all over the world, including “blood minerals.” The smelting process makes it impossible to determine if the minerals came from conflict zones.

Finally, the minerals are made into parts for electronics—which are sold in retail stores throughout the US.

the final product—they’re components that go into and help run the final products, like computers and cell phones. “Cell phones are harder to view as expendable objects, unlike diamonds,” Smith says. She also argues that writing letters to electronics companies is too simplistic because companies such as “Apple [have] not caused that war.”

Hameed recognizes that there’s no ab-

dilemma to even begin to get attention, that war needs to end, somehow, and then, local (Congolese) organizations need to “build up a functioning society in a post-war environment.” Now, the Congo isn’t the “heart of darkness” of Conrad’s fiction—it’s a knot: all of the issues are tangled together and you can’t deal with one without untangling the entire mess first.

No pop culture phenomenon exists for the blood minerals issue, and it’s unlikely that one ever will.

solute solution. Because of the Congo’s turbulent political landscape, what the Enough Project hopes to accomplish with stricter mineral-trade regulation is to “open the door” for “other reform measures,” according to Hameed. On the other hand, Smith thinks that most of the action should occur locally, where the minerals are pulled from the earth. “There’s a war going on that has challenging economic, political, and social aspects,” Smith says. For the blood minerals

Because of these complexities, consumers avoid the issue. It’s easier. Unless the problem can be explained in a pithy phrase or two and the solution is just as simple, people are hesitant to do anything about concerns beyond their scope. Social action is disruptive, and unless such disruption can “pay the consumers back with impact stories,” as Smith puts it, people aren’t likely to agitate for change.

A century ago, the Congo was the focus

of another human rights emergency, perhaps the first to receive media coverage. Then, what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo was known as the Congo Free State, the personal fiefdom of King Leopold II of Belgium. Under his control, the land was plundered of copper and rubber, and the native peoples were brutalized and mistreated to the point of extermination. When authors like Mark Twain, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Joseph Conrad learned of and wrote about the situation, the ensuing public outrage was so immense that Leopold surrendered his holdings in the territory.

This historical parallel shows that reform is possible in the Congo. It shows the importance of looking at grim and sometimes baffling issues, and responding by acting. Most of all, however, it shows that if you want to spread awareness of an issue, you really need someone like Mark Twain, or better yet, Leonardo DiCaprio.

In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad writes, “The conquest of the earth . . . is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much.” Therefore, we don’t. ♀



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JUST SAY "NO" TO
T R A D I T I O N A L
DRUGS

STORY ANDREW CREASEY
PHOTOS MADELYNN VISLOCKY

Floral Perfumes

Maggot are built to clean wounds. They hunger only for dead tissue.

The patient nervously awaits treatment in the sterile, modern interior of the doctor's office. The surrounding shelves and cabinets are peppered with the instruments of modern medicine: stethoscopes, antibiotics, blood pressure cuffs, and digital thermometers. A large wound exposed on the patient's thigh has withstood countless conventional treatments. Out of options, the patient is seeking alternative treatment.

The doctor confidently enters the room, cradling a small bottle. Inside, there is a writhing pulse of movement. Working carefully, the doctor treats the gangrene-riddled wound by drizzling the festering lesion with the microsurgions that are making a medical comeback: maggots. Over the course of seventy-two hours, the sterilized, wormlike larva will slither within the patient's body and cleanse the wound of dead tissue. The side effects: a slight itch, and the smelly, sticky discharge of the creatures' digestive enzymes. Afterwards, the maggots are washed free and the wound, scrubbed clean by the flesh-hungry grubs, will heal. The process is a legitimate medical procedure, and is even covered by healthcare.

The cleansing power of maggots has been known for centuries. Anecdotal anthropological evidence traces maggot use over the past thousand years, from the aboriginal Ngemba tribe of New South Wales, Australia, to the Hill Tribe people of Northern Burma. Before dressing wounds, ancient Mayan healers would soak bandages in animal blood and bake them in the sun until they teemed with maggots. Today, it is one of a number of unconventional, antiquated medical practices that are gradually permeating modern Western medicine.

Although Americans predominantly treat their ailments with synthesized drugs engineered by the burgeoning pharmaceutical industry, alternative medicines, such as acupuncture and herbal remedies, are carving a niche in the prescription drug market. In 2007, Americans spent \$34 billion on alternative medicines. And while this doesn't compare to the \$234.1 billion we spent on prescription drugs in 2008, these ancient, natural practices are mounting a comeback.

For some, alternative practitioners are a breath of fresh air among an increasingly medicated culture. In 2009, pharmacies dispensed almost 4 billion prescriptions, up from the 2.8 billion it distributed in 2000. This growing prevalence, when coupled with an annual growth in prescription prices of 3.6 percent from 2000-2009, creates an increasingly difficult economic environment to navigate. In contrast, a 2008 study by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention found that on average, Americans paid less than \$50 per visit to alternative medicine practitioners. For acupuncture, the average was slightly higher at \$75. For prescriptions, without including the charge for visiting the doctor's office, Americans paid, on average, \$71.69 in 2008, according to the Consumer Price Index.

Along with these economic issues, motives for choosing unconventional medicine stem from frustrations with a monolithic healthcare system too bloated to provide individual care catered to personal needs. Rob Singer, owner of Acupuncture for the People in Eugene, Oregon, has firsthand experience with the failures of Western medicine that push patients towards alternative treatments.

Singer was initially attracted to acupuncture after a visiting acupuncturist spoke in his holistic healing class, a course he took only for an easy A. The lecture fascinated him, and it was the initial spark that catalyzed a lifelong interest in the practice.

After graduating with a degree in Environmental Science, Singer took a break from school for seven years, but his interest in acupuncture persisted, prompting him to enter the arduous, four-year acupuncture master's program at the University of Oregon.

Now within his cozy practice, patients recline in a snug, communal room filled with La-Z-Boys. The sound of snoring mingles with the steady pulse of Eastern-infused trance music emanating from a small sound system perched atop soft carpet. Gentle ripples of water trickle from a plug-in fountain, providing a wash of white noise that converges with the warm air discharged by electric radiators to create a tranquil ambiance.

At first glance, it's akin to a sort of grown-up naptime. Closer inspection reveals tiny, hairpin needles extruding from seemingly random points across bare limbs. These people are seeking, and often times finding, relief from ailments such as depression and chronic pain, through acupuncture.

"Acupuncture utilizes energy pathways throughout the body that run from the extremities into the internal organs," Singer says. Acting as guides, acupuncture needles are used to rectify energy imbalances caused by disease or unhealthy habits.

Acupuncture identifies more than 400 energy points across twelve channels on the body. When confronting new symptoms, Singer outlines a point prescription plan designed to manipulate the necessary energy channels to positively affect the afflicted regions.

"It's like creating a recipe," Singer says.

The procedure is also almost completely painless. The sterilized, disposable needles are tapped into the skin at energy points and then finely adjusted to a specific depth. Patients sometimes experience a dull ache or pulling sensation, but this disappears minutes after needle insertion.

While his treatments have a high success rate—in the last year alone, Acupuncture for the People saw 831 new patients and administered more than 7,500 treatments—Singer acknowledges that the notion of acupuncture can be difficult to accept.

"It's very different than Western medicine, and, culturally, we don't have a frame of reference to understand it," Singer says. "Western medicine is very scientific and focuses on symptoms and pathologies. Chinese medicine looks at the whole person and sees that the symptoms are really a sign of an underlying imbalance, and then looks to improve that imbalance to relieve the symptoms."

At times, he recalls patients searching for relief after frustrating and expensive doctor visits that resulted in only a bloated list of prescriptions—most of which merely alleviated side effects from previous prescriptions. Others simply can't afford a visit to the doctor's office.

"A lot of times, the folks who are seeking acupuncture care are here because Western medicine did not work for them," Singer says.

Eugene herbalist Heather Nic an Fhleisdeir has personal experience with alternative treatments succeeding where conventional treatment failed. The battle was for her life, and her treatment was herbal therapy.

At twenty-three, Nic an Fhleisdeir was diagnosed with an incurable condition. Doctors were unsure how long she would live. Then one night, she heard an herbalist on a radio show whom she immediately connected with. In just eight days, according to Nic an Fhleisdeir, the herbalist turned her symptoms around. Today, she has been diagnosed free of the condition.

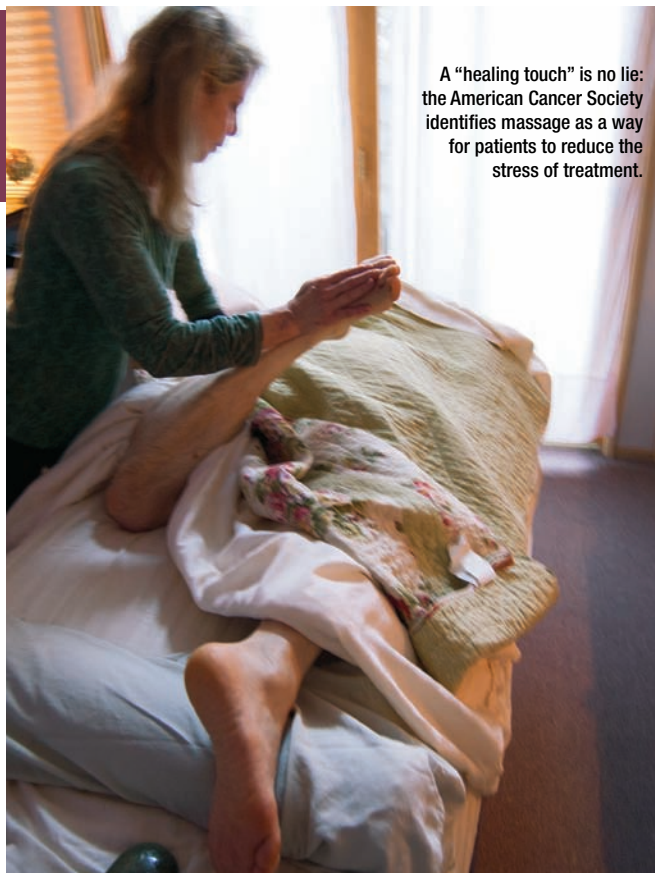
"After going through that, I realized there were more truths in the world than I had been exposed to," she says.



TOP LEFT: Originally developed in China, acupuncture taps into various points to manipulate the flow of the body's energy. TOP RIGHT: Much of traditional medicine is rooted in the use of herbs, ranging from the pain-easing poppy to antioxidant rich oregano. BOTTOM RIGHT: Safflower, which also produces an edible oil and birdseed, is most commonly used to treat measles, fevers, and skin complaints. BOTTOM LEFT: Because maggots have the ability to work themselves into every nook and cranny, these microorganisms heal persistent infections and festering wounds effectively. (Courtesy of Doctor Edgar Maeyens Jr.)

Patients do not have to decide between conventional and alternative medicine. These two divergent approaches can coexist.

A “healing touch” is no lie: the American Cancer Society identifies massage as a way for patients to reduce the stress of treatment.



While her experience is more pronounced than others, she is not alone in turning toward herbal remedies. According to the World Health Organization, 80 percent of the population in Asia and Africa depends primarily on traditional medicine predominately based in herbalism. Between 2003-2004, Western Europe spent \$5 billion on herbal treatments. China spent \$14 billion in 2005.

Nic an Fhleisdeir views herbs as the first and oldest line of defense in healthcare. Often times, she can solve a patient’s problem without resorting to costly doctor visits. She compares the health of the body to a faulty electronic device. “First, you make sure it’s plugged in,” she says. “That’s the nice thing you can do with an herbalist is make sure your body is plugged in before you dismantle it.”

There are times, however, when patients have ailments that no medicine, conventional or otherwise, can solve. Dr. Edgar Maeyens Jr., a dermatologist from Coos Bay, Oregon, is regularly confronted with these types of conditions in the form of chronic wounds and ulcers that can persist for years without responding to treatment.

Where other doctors would, as he put it, dump these cases, Maeyens sought alternative options by turning to history. Reading about wounds in the American Civil War, he found an intriguing agent in wound healing: maggots. Maeyens discovered that soldiers with wounds infected with maggots lived, and those who didn’t either died or had a limb amputated. Researching further, he found a doctor, R.A. Sherman, who grew sterilized medical maggots in California and had success using them to treat chronic wounds.

“I’m a curious guy,” Maeyens says. “I just couldn’t stand not being able to help these patients.”

Now, when Maeyens receives patients with persistent wounds, the answer to a question that once plagued him for years is obvious: insert maggots, which he refers to as his “little pals,” into the wound, and let them work their magic.

Maggots are built to clean wounds. They hunger only for dead tissue. Their tiny, pliable bodies allow them to navigate every nook and cranny of a wound to scrub clean areas no other tools can touch. Even their excrement contains enzymes that break down dead tissue. And, to make matters even easier, the biological clock propelling their life cycle forward will tell them to stop eating, get underground, pupate, and complete their metamorphosis into flies right about the time they’ve cleaned the wound. From there, flushing them out is easy.

Using these creatures with a custom dressing he designed to absorb the seeping discharge caused by their digestive juices, Maeyens has achieved astonishing results. He recalls patients who came in with \$40,000 in hospital bills and a wound that wouldn’t heal. After three days of “maggot therapy” costing \$100, combined with ten weeks of recovery, Maeyens’ microsurgons have saved limbs and relieved the burden of ulcers that have persisted for, in one case, eight years.

Despite these feats, Maeyens says that some doctors deride maggot treatment as barbaric. Surgeons, according to Maeyens, chafe at the idea that there is a manifestation of nature’s malfesance that they can’t scrape out the body with a scalpel. Yet, time and again, Maeyens receives patients with “incurable” wounds, and, time and again, Maeyens’ “little pals” do the job no medical procedure conceived by man could.

In the end, this lack of mainstream acceptance only gives Maeyens incentive to prove the doubters wrong. “It’s more than

my pleasure to push their noses into it with these maggots,” Maeyens says. “It’s so cheap and so simple, and it’s really efficacious. It comes down to helping the patient.”

Most patients are grateful they underwent the treatment, despite what amounts to genuine displeasure bordering on outright pain once the maggots grow and start chewing on the dead flesh.

“[The patients] almost bond with them,” Maeyens says. “They’re saying: ‘Thank you for saving my limb.’” Some even request a jar of the larva to take with them as a souvenir.

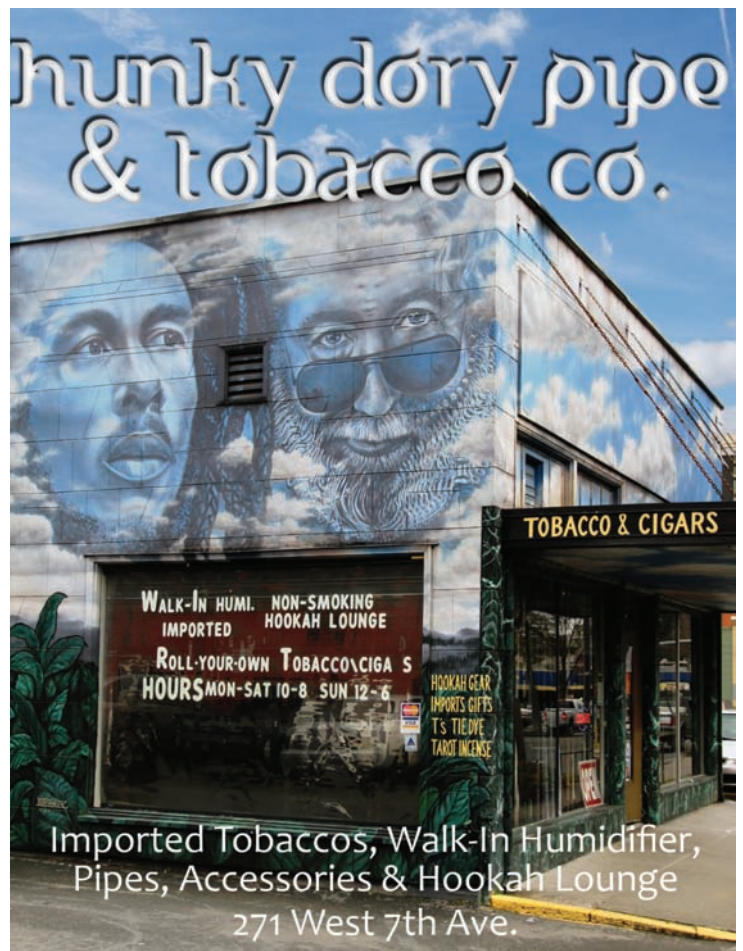
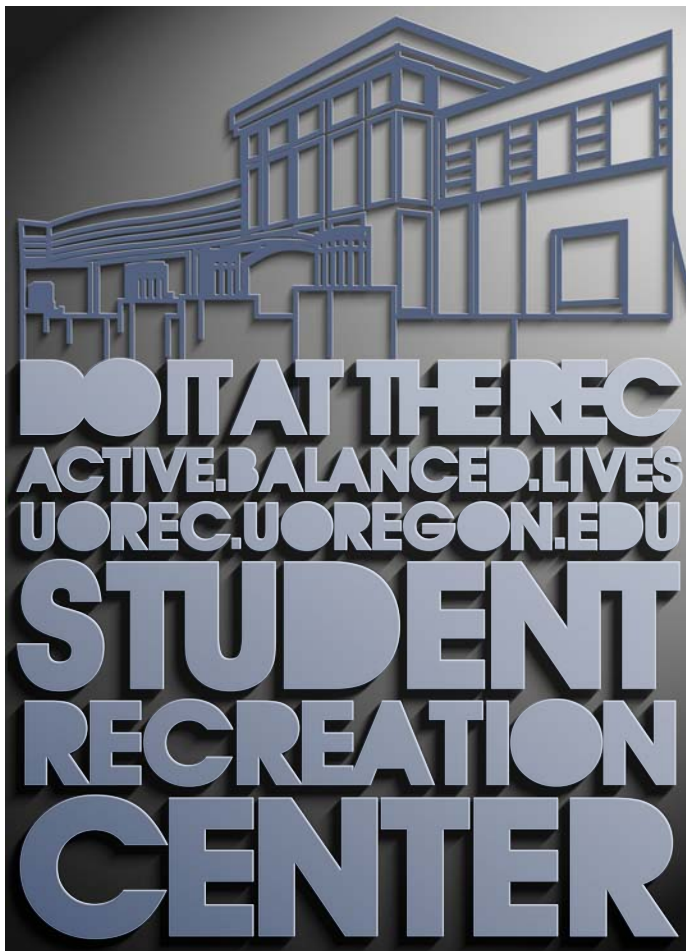
Many patients enter the treatment as a final, desperate chance at recovery and end up wearing the scar as a wound of pride. “It’s great attention for them,” Maeyens says. “They can brag to their peers: ‘I had maggot therapy.’”

Today, maggot therapy is still under the medical radar, yet Maeyens is seeing interest grow. He receives calls from doctors across the world, and local surgeons refer patients with chronic wounds to Maeyens regularly. They’ve become, as Maeyens puts it, “believers.”

In the end, that’s what all unconventional treatments require: belief. While the results of acupuncture, herbalism, and maggot therapy do not rely on the mind-set of the patient to produce positive results, they need open minds to flourish within a culture that predominately tackles illness by swallowing a pill.

Alternative medicine, as it is practiced today, is a misnomer. The question becomes: What is it an alternative of? Patients who choose to pursue these options do not have to decide between conventional and alternative medicine. It’s not a matter of one or the other. These two divergent approaches can coexist.

In the end, there is no universal method of healthcare. Disparaging a course of treatment due to cultural taboos is myopic and counterproductive. The battle of health has no clear victorious method. The human body, in all its bewildering complexity, can deceive the most erudite. It doesn’t always listen to the degree framed on the wall. There are options beyond the conventional, choices between the norms. These are the avenues worth pursuing, because, while it’s never a guarantee, it’s always worth exploring the alternatives. ♻️



off the waffle

authentic liège waffles

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THE REAL MILE HIGH CLUB

Logging almost 1,000 hours in the air per year while traveling 48,000 miles, flight attendants are the true citizens of the skies

Flight attendants of the 1950s and '60s would have never pulled a Steven Slater: they never would have grabbed a beer and hopped on the evacuation slide out onto the tarmac after an altercation with a passenger. During that era, the so-called "glory days of flying," such hubris was unimaginable. Their job was glamorous and respected and sought after by most women of the time. Then, the arduous process of airline deregulation from 1978 to 1985 came and along with dozens of discrimination-related court cases, brought the demise of the leg-baring high-heeled stewardess. The fancy cocktails they once served with propeller shaped stir-rods have been replaced with half cans of off-brand ginger ale. Gourmet meals presented with brilliant smiles and verbal acknowledgements transformed into packages of peanuts handed out with "thank you" stamped on every napkin.

By many accounts, customer service fell out of the sky. Before deregulation, US airlines charged \$75 (\$400 adjusted to inflation) per ticket, even on short flights. Because of federal mandates, this rate was instated for every airline, so customer service was the only way airlines could distinguish themselves from one another. Because ticket prices were so high, airlines employed attractive, female flight attendants to cater to the wealthy businessmen that constituted the vast majority of their passengers. This customer service first mentality ushered in the sophisticated age of air-travel when a non-stop from New York to Los Angeles was an event to dress up for. However, middle-class Americans grew frustrated with the exclusivity of flight, and so the government intervened.

After deregulation, airlines competed over ticket prices instead of customer service. They increasingly dropped ticket rates by eliminating services such as complementary meals and free blankets. Flight attendants' wages and benefits decreased. Passengers' priorities shifted from wanting a lavish experience to saving money. Over time, the glamour disappeared, and flying became just another method of commuting. Flights from coast to coast became a necessity, not a luxury. As the prestige surrounding flight attendants vanished, its glamour vanished too. ☹

STORY RYAN DETO
PHOTOS ALEX STOLTZE
ILLUSTRATION CHRISTOPHER FELLOWS

1912: Heinrich Kubis of Germany becomes the world's first flight attendant, on a blimp. Before the 1930s, airlines only had male stewards.

1930: Nurse Ellen Church became the world's first female flight attendant at age 25. Shortly after, United Airlines instituted a single-women only rule that soon became an industry-wide institution.

1945: Airline Stewardess Association, the first flight attendant labor union, is created and later evolves into the Association of Flight Attendants. The AFA is the world's largest flight attendant union with 42,000 flight attendants at 21 airlines.

1953: American Airlines instituted age restrictions on female flight attendants requiring them to retire at 32. Over the next 10 years many airlines followed suit with required retirement ages of 32 or 35.

1955: United Stewardess Barbara Cameron becomes the first flight attendant to pose in *Playboy* as Miss November. In 1980, *Playboy* would do the feature "Stewardesses: A Glorious Pictorial."

1968: The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission rules that age and marital restrictions to be illegal sex discrimination.

1972: After 40 years of female flight attendants dominating the skies, courts reversed the initial ruling on Diaz vs. Pan American, banning airlines from discriminating against male attendants. Male flight attendants now have higher average salaries than female flight attendants.

1972: Stewardesses For Women's Rights forms in response to National Airline's "*Hi - I'm Cheryl, Fly Me to ___*" and Continental Airline's "*We Really Move Our Tails for You.*"

1978: The Airline Deregulation Act is passed, removing federal control over ticket prices and routes. Before 1978, if a round-trip ticket between Portland and Seattle was \$100 on one airline; it would be \$100 on every airline.

1998: Smoking is banned on all US domestic flights.

flight steward

nurse

stewardess



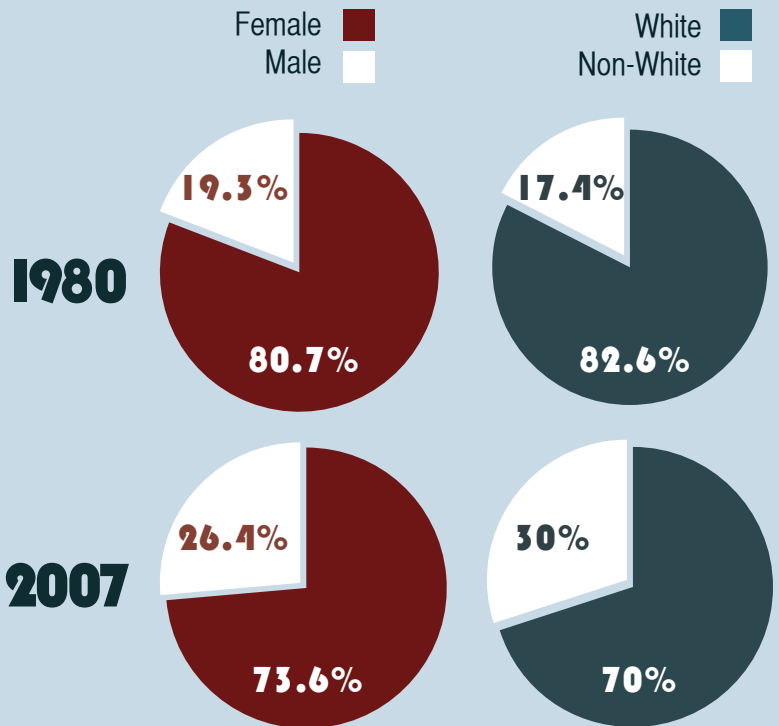
TIME FLIES

THE EVOLUTION OF THE AMERICAN FLIGHT ATTENDANT

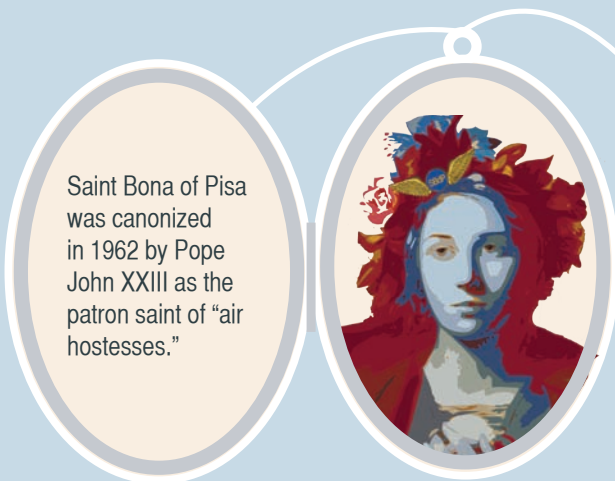


●● To qualify, a girl should be between 21 and 26 years old, un-married, reasonably pretty and slender, especially around the hips, which will be at eye level for the passengers.”

Excerpt from *Life Magazine* article from 1958 entitled “Glamour Girls of the Air.”



Statistics courtesy of US Department of Labor and the Population Reference Bureau.



Saint Bona of Pisa was canonized in 1962 by Pope John XXIII as the patron saint of “air hostesses.”

98,700

Cabin crew jobs in the US.

26%

Median hourly wages decreased from 1980 to 2007 (adjusted for inflation).

air hostess

flight attendant

cabin crew

What's in a name? The first caretakers of the skies were called flight stewards, but the title has evolved along with the industry. Today, the preferred nomenclature is “cabin crew.”



Felt, leather, and straw are just a few of the materials used to create hats at John Helmer's. (Photo Blake Hamilton)



ARTISANS OF OLDE

STORY **KALIE WOODEN** PHOTOS **MARCIE GIOVANNONI**



Every type and size of hat lines the walls of a third-generation haberdasher store. The preserved machinery of a letterpress churns and stamps as it prints out custom stationery. One-of-a-kind custom shoes sit on shelves of a father and son's home business. Centuries ago, these stores and their wares were an everyday part of living. Through generations of family-owned businesses, local craftsmen work hard to preserve the custom nature of their craft among a world of impersonal, mass-produced products.

A FAMILY OF HABERDASHERY

After celebrating ninety years of business in 2011, John Helmer III reminisces about his childhood working in his family's haberdashery. From bowler hats to classic top hats, the shelves are stuffed with every style. A rainbow of ties, men's accessories, and the occasional women's hat take up every nook and cranny of the newly remodeled shop. In 1921, Helmer's grandfather emigrated from Sweden and worked as a valet for wealthy men—back in the days when one day required multiple wardrobe changes.

Before the 1600s, the term "haberdasher" meant a merchant who sold cloth and fabric. It has since evolved to identify a business of men's accessories, which in the early twentieth century was usually a hat.

"Hats used to be one of the most common accessories, like wearing shoes. It was just an everyday part of being dressed," Helmer explains.

John Helmer Haberdasher has been in the same location on SW Broadway in Portland, Oregon, since 1927. In 1956, the store expanded into the space next door. When Helmer was in high school in the seventies, he worked there with his dad. "I just kind of grew up with the store and fell into it," Helmer says. As of now, his three kids, all in their late teens and early twenties, have yet to show an interest in the store.

"They didn't grow up in the business as much as I did," Helmer says. "When I was growing up, it was a much younger clientele and it was easier to be involved."

Helmer still manages to maintain a family-oriented feel to the business while keeping up with the times. They have an extensive website that makes up twenty percent of the business. While their sales decreased during the recession, one of the benefits of a long-

standing business is the lack of severe spikes in sales. Helmer says headwear has also been growing increasingly popular, and people will still spend on smaller accessory items during hard times.

Some of the store's items are thought to be pointless accessories of an older, more traditional time of dress. But those items draw in numerous theater buffs and television shows that are filmed in Portland, such as TNT's "Leverage," which buys items for authentic costuming. Despite the store's contrast to today's casual styles, John Helmer Haberdasher has become a staple for an authentic, family-owned business that's lasted through the years in Portland.

"We always try to maintain that old-fashioned appeal," Helmer says. "All of the time people are just so happy we are here and thanking us for being here."

John Helmer Haberdasher still keeps relatively short hours as well. The store closes at 6 pm on weekdays and is closed on Sundays—a rarity with today's long mall hours. Working retail can be grueling, and staying open late and on Sundays just isn't worth it, Helmer says. The store's hours bring back memories of a more traditional, slower-paced world, and can also make working in retail more enjoyable. "Customers are generally up and ready to buy something when they come in, and we get a broad social and economic range of customers, so that makes it a fun business to be in."

The days of custom hat sizing and suspenders continue on at John Helmer Haberdasher, where craftsmanship and family dynamics outweigh the long hours and mass-produced goods of today's consumer market.



LETTERPRESS: A LIFELONG HOBBY

Old posters line the walls, stacks of stationery sit in corners, and the lacquered smell of ink consumes the air. Large black machines and metal cartridges fill the room. "If you walked into any print shop in the early 20th century, it would have looked like this," says Bob Giles, owner of BnS Letterpress printing company.

Giles started his small company when he retired in 2003 after years of working in the print industry as a third-generation printer. Giles's grandfather was a linotype assembly worker in South Dakota, and Giles's father worked in the printing industry for over thirty years.

"It's the only thing I've ever known. I started folding newspapers for my grandpa when I was eight years old," he says. "Printing is in my blood."

Out of high school in 1962, Giles started as a journeyman at a print shop for the *Gazette-Times* in Corvallis, Oregon. Early in his career, a new type of printing process called offset came along, and Giles adapted to stay in the industry. Throughout his career as a print craftsman, he worked for several local print companies, including the *Register-Guard* newspaper in Eugene.

"When I retired, I wanted to go back to my roots and the old way of printing with a letterpress 'cause it's more fun," Giles says.

In his shop located in a separate building off the back of his home, Giles has three letterpress machines, a Ludlow typesetting machine, and one 1948 linotype machine that he saved from a scrap metal yard. Although he does some printing for business, most of it is a personal hobby.

"I can pick up any kind of piece that's printed and tell whether it's offset or letterpress," Giles says, who strives to maintain an authentic feel to his printing products. Many modern stationery companies portray imprinted work as the higher quality option reminiscent of traditional stationery, but Giles sets the record straight.

"It's kind of funny because in the old days if you printed something like that you would get fired, if you smashed the paper in like that," he says. Imprinting the letters on to the paper to create an indented or engraved look actually deteriorates parts of the original printing press.

"Nowadays everyone is striving for that look and they think that's the way it was, but back then people had more respect for the quality of the paper and the press machine."

Many aspects of the original Gutenberg printing press have changed since the mid 15th century, but Giles remains a part of a small group of 150 printers in the United States who stay in touch and share the old craft with one another. In between the occasional commercial project, Giles can usually be found printing quotes and sayings for fun with his granddaughter.



TOP PHOTO: Only a few type pieces out of thousands, Giles has every typeface and size imaginable, from Helvetica to Monotype Corsiva, ready to be put in a frame-set. MIDDLE PHOTO: In an effort to maintain a steady flow of production, Giles keeps the machine running as he quickly places, removes, and replaces the cards. BOTTOM PHOTO: The father and son duo may not design every shoe, but they work in collaboration with local artists to stylize the look of the shoe and attract new clientele.

MODERN COBLERS

Midnight discussions in the shop downstairs, continuous access to the creative process, and a never-ending flow of inspiration—these are just some of the luxuries of working in a home-based family business.

Whether a customer has wide or narrow feet, two

different sizes, or whatever specific work is necessary, the father-son duo at Babu Shoes make a conscious effort to provide shoes currently not available in the mass-produced market. While there are several custom cobblers in the state of Oregon, most of them only offer high-end dress shoes. Daniel Walling leans against the counter, eager to explain how he and his dad are trying to change the local shoe industry.

"I came on board with the business to help my dad achieve his dream," Daniel Walling says. "He's deeply passionate about shoemaking and wants to provide a type of footwear that people have never experienced before."

When his dad Bob Walling started working in the shoe industry, he was involved in everything from leather Italian dress shoes to moccasins in Hawaii. Eventually he became tired of the business and wanted to create a process where he could directly oversee the quality of his shoes, and create something with a different aesthetic using local materials. It took around two years to perfect their technique and training, and then in 2008 the Wallings started selling their shoes at the Holiday Market in Eugene.

"Customer response to the shoes has been infinitely more than we thought it would be. After our first show in 2008 we have had a six month waiting list on custom work," Daniel Walling says.

Currently the Wallings are trying to achieve a balance between custom work and a ready-made product available in the average middle-class price range.

Daniel Walling has been crafting his whole life, and being part of his dad's shoe business was just another way to do that. "The first question I would always ask myself was could I make this? And the answer was usually yes."

While he had some reservations about working closely with his father, Daniel Walling says it's been easier than he thought it would be. "My dad is a really easy person to work with," he says. "We can jump into the creative process whenever inspiration strikes and that's the kind of advantage handmade crafters have."



While Babu Shoes has taken a different approach to traditional cobblers, BnS Letterpress and John Helmer Haberdasher strive to preserve the authentic nature of their craft. But keeping up with the times is still a goal for many local craftsmen in order to stay afloat as a business. The words haberdasher, letterpress, and cobbler may be old-world nouns, but their crafts still manage to thrive through the powerful will of family generations. ◉

"We can jump into the creative process whenever inspiration strikes and that's the kind of advantage handmade crafters have."



Daniel Walling, working diligently at the sanding belt, shapes the insole for a pair of custom boots.



Paradise:

Eloin matriarch Anne Robert's relationship with the natural world is roots-deep. Over the course of her 25-year tenure on the property, she has developed connections with all manner of flora and fauna, including Grandmother Tree.



FOUND

STORY JORDAN BENTZ PHOTOS ALEX STOLTZE

Take a right off Oregon's Interstate 5, past a strip of used car lots and a repair shop with a sign that claims to "make friends by accident;" follow the highway through a canyon, past the barbed-wire fences of the C-2 Cattle Ranch and onto a tapering gravel road; park at the Camp Latgawa turnaround and cross the wooden bridge over the Dead Indian River; hike through an oak swale and up the switchbacks leading to Eagle Point; find the trail marked with yellow ribbons and continue on the footpath until it splits around the trunk of a colossal tree: meet Grandfather, an elder of the Order of the Trees and gatekeeper of the Eloin Commune.

The self-proclaimed Abbess Anne Roberts, a wiry woman in a checkered plaid shirt and dirtied jeans, instructs her guests to remove their caps in the presence of Grandfather Tree. She mutters an incantation and runs her fingers down the rutted trunk. Sunlight filters through the vaulted canopy and falls on her close-cropped ivory hair; the backlit boughs of the trees above look like stained-glass windows. Anne breaks from her trance and asks Grandfather Tree permission to continue before turning down the path.

"You know, the sap of that tree is only one molecule different from our blood," Anne says, keeping pace with a Golden Retriever-Great Pyrenees mix named Noodles.

Though Eloin members adhere to a peculiar set of beliefs, the idyllic forest retreat is a far cry from one of Oregon's more notorious communes of the 1980s, the Rajneeshpuram community.

Rolls-Royce processions and brightly clad followers characterized the Rajneeshpuram commune, the cult-of-personality built around renegade Indian holy man Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh on a 64,000-acre ranch in Eastern Oregon. The group sought to take over Wasco County by importing thousands of homeless to register as voters on the eve of commission elections and by sickening hundreds in The Dalles with salmonella poisoning. Rajneesh fled but was caught and deported back to India, and the group left Oregon after stores of assault weapons and a germ lab were found on the ranch.

The resulting newscasts vilified communes nationwide, and brought them back in to the public lexicon. Despite this highly publicized instance, Anne and the other Eloin live-ins have learned to deal with outsiders' misconceptions.

"We're very esoteric, weird, and out there," Anne asserts with a puckish grin.

Anne is prone to such musings, usually interspersed in light-hearted small talk. Hiking with the former tennis pro and ski instructor is mentally and physically exhausting. Her stories are a series of eco-conscious manifestos, suffused with folksy sentimentality. The teachings of Lao Tzu, Henry David Thoreau, and Neil Young color her words. She talks extensively of the ecosystem being a living entity and of her inseparable bond with the natural world.

"The air contains every single mineral and nutrient we need to exist; so this world is us, and we're it," Anne says.

Anne and her housemates' way of life harkens back to a bygone era, a time when the desire for a back-to-basics lifestyle prompted an exodus to



The Eloin Commune's founding members furnished the palatial interior of their Great Hall with trees from the surrounding forests and a collection of random curios from across the globe. These days, the space is rarely used.

undeveloped regions of the Pacific Northwest.

These disillusioned masses sought respite from the rampant materialism that accompanied the post-war economic boom. They turned their backs on the American Dream, abandoned the pursuit of a material comfort, and left in search of something more.

“YOU KNOW THE SAP OF THAT TREE IS ONLY ONE MOLECULE DIFFERENT FROM OUR BLOOD.”

At Alpha Farm, an idyllic cooperative nestled in western Oregon's coastal forests, achieving this ideal has been a constant pursuit for members of the small homestead.

On this particular Friday, the property bustles with activity. Outside the farm's makeshift chicken coop, a young girl with wire-framed glasses and a gap-toothed grin scatters handfuls of feed. Under the nearby awning of the storeroom, a bearded thirty-something man quarters cross-sections from a felled tree. A man in a beret plans the once-weekly prix fixe dinner menu—Cornish game hen with gravy, sweet corn, and homemade apple pie—for the cooperative's secondary revenue stream, a restaurant called Alpha Bit. A small fleet of vehicles sequestered in a muddy parking lot constitutes the community's other revenue source: a mail route along the winding highways outside the town of Deadwood, contracted by the US Postal Service.

Alpha Farm residents volunteer to lead weekly tours of the property. Today, “Poz,” short for “Pozitivity,”—the name adopted by Kevin Raymond, a wayward environmental studies graduate and former bank teller—leads the convoy. He stops by Alpha Farm's namesake patchwork of garden plots and greenhouses, where workers till an organic compost blend and smoke hand-rolled cigarettes in the drizzling rain. An old transistor radio plays Crosby, Stills, and

Nash's “Judy Blue Eyes”—a song that the folk trio debuted at the inaugural Woodstock Festival.

In many ways, Alpha Farm is a microcosm of a growing movement toward self-sustaining, interpersonal, hyper-connected communities committed to advancing the greater good. These are the new utopias.

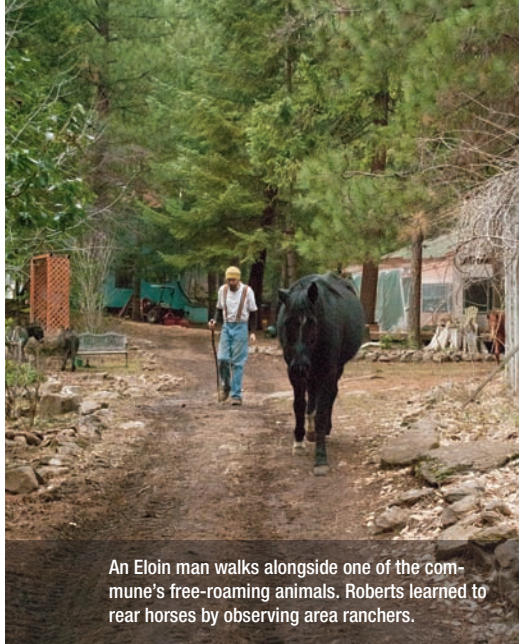
The Communities Directory, a publication promoting intentional communities across the globe, has seen a steady increase in applicants over the past two decades. In the early 1990s, only 300 communities were listed. Today, there are more than 1,800. Like Alpha Farm, many of these communities have a stable source of income and formalized rules of governance. They strive for self-sufficiency, and work to lessen their impact on the natural world.

These communities are nothing like the image of hedonistic, cultish, drug-addled communes of old—a point emphasized by the Alpha Farm cofounders.

“We prefer the term ‘intentional community,’ rather than commune,” says Alpha Farm cofounder Caroline Estes from the living room of the house she shares with her husband Jim. “Intentional communities are long-lived; communes are casual . . . that's why a lot of communes start here, because people come and live a short time, usually with very little commitment.”

For the past thirty-eight years, the couple have lived and worked on Alpha Farm. Jim and Caroline met while studying journalism and political science (respectively) at the University of California at Berkeley. They spent their first date at a Bay Area jazz club and dated on and off until marrying in 1958. Together, they were to advocate change in the burgeoning movements of the day, in marching with luminaries like Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez. Jim served as an editor for the San Francisco Chronicle, while Caroline worked as an organizer with the National Student Association on the politically charged Berkeley campus. After leaving San Francisco, the couple migrated north in search of a plot of land, where they sought to establish a lasting community. They found refuge on an old Swedish homestead and named it after Alpha, the first home-steaders' daughter.

“Commune’ also carries all the semantic weight, like ‘they're



An Eloin man walks alongside one of the commune's free-roaming animals. Roberts learned to rear horses by observing area ranchers.



Members of the Alpha Farm share meals and the considerable workload on the property, and alternate shifts at an off-site restaurant owned by the collective.



Alpha Farm visitor and Minnesota native Trisha Ray Eckland packed her Volkswagen van and travelled across the country in search of a stable environment to raise her newborn daughter.

just sitting around smoking dope all the time, not doing any work," Jim adds. "There were two or three such communes in this valley when we came here . . . they didn't last."

A dry-erase board in the living room of the Estes's house outlines the weekly work schedule for the members of Alpha Farm. The list of workers is nearly twenty names long, and everyone here works in service of the community.

"Living in a community is hard work; it's not this laid-back, peaceful, non-problematic lifestyle," Caroline says. "You're faced with problems all the time, many of your own making, and you have to learn how to live all over again."

The Estes's work to create an environment that is productive but also conducive to a happy, healthy lifestyle.

"There's another aspect," Jim adds. "I think the commune era was decidedly negative—people were just running from things, running from the city. People who come here are coming to something."

This distinction is an important one for Alpha Farm members. The community strives for permanence. Meanwhile, the Eloin property offers visitors a chance for an escape from the modern world. While many members stay for months, even years at a time, Anne is the one permanent fixture.

Anne acts as the spiritual guru of the small woodland commune and steward of The Order of the Trees. Admittance to the Order requires a six-month trial period of living on the property.

Members accepted to the order develop deep-rooted connections with the natural world by attuning to the voices of the "Standing Nation"—a native colloquialism for the collective spirit of the forests. Some claim to speak the language of the trees, others simply find solace under the wooded canopies of the old-growth forest.

"You could say that the order is a legal umbrella that allows us to be an organization that has the validity to live and study the way we want," Anne says.

For the past twenty-five years, Eloin's holding organization, The Oahspe Foundation—a government recognized nonprofit organization—has worked to preserve the old-growth forests in the valleys of southern Oregon. When a timber company advanced to the edge of property, the community banded together, took a stand and prevented any further development.

"In a way, we're the guardians of the valley," Anne says, entering the commune.

The beaten dirt path opens to a piecemeal compound: a cluster of buildings made from various construction site cast-offs and on-site timber. A pair of miniature donkeys interrupts the procession. They are the first of a four-legged welcoming party that also includes two cats, three mares and Noodles, the Retriever mix. One of the commune's "3,000-lbs poodles," a mare named Leana, follows Anne to the planked porch of the headquarters.

Eloin eschews a hierarchical structure in favor of consensus decision-making. Biweekly meetings held in a cavernous, columned, pink and turquoise hall address the concerns of the small community. Members share meals, incomes, common spaces and the considerable workload around the property.

They work periodically in the towns outside the commune to bring in additional revenue. Anne recently brokered a deal with the United States Forest Service to manage a thinning project aimed at fire prevention. Although the thought of the Eloin inhabitants brandishing chainsaws seems comical given their eco-centric lifestyles, Anne says she much prefers working in the forest to spending any additional time in "the other world."

Presently, there are four people living on the property, though the Eloin facilities can accommodate as many as twenty-five people. In these washed-out winter months, the luster of the forested retreat is tempered by the prospect of toiling long hours for little more than a roof to sleep under, three meals a day, and the simple satisfaction of working to stay alive. Today, four of the houses built by the community are completely empty. The great hall, ornately built and furnished by the helping hands of several dozen former inhabitants, is cold and empty.

Although the membership rates for the community are lower today than in years past, Anne is adapting to the digital age by contacting interested parties via an online directory. She types these e-mails from a public computer in a nearby campsite. While seemingly a contradiction, Anne's decision to "plug into the grid" is a visceral sign of the times, and proof that adaptability is the common denominator on the modern commune.

After a hearty vegetarian lunch, Anne reenters the forest to visit Grandmother Tree, the eldest member of the old-growth forest and leader of the Standing Nation—not to get confused with the commune's guarding Grandfather. She enters a clearing and walks up to the base of the behemoth fir. She leans into a natural indentation in the base of the trunk and looks skywards toward the branches of the tree, eyes closed, completely immersed in her surroundings.

She wishes her Grandmother well and continues back on the path to the Eloin compound. She relates the story of when she first spoke with the great tree:

"I asked Grandmother Tree how she became bigger and stronger and wiser than all the other trees in the forest," Anne says, "and she said that she simply reached for the sun every day."

This sense of determinism underlies much of the work on the Eloin property—and to a greater degree, Alpha Farm—where idleness and individualism give way to the rigors of a community-oriented, subsistence-based way of life. And in a way, those living on the communes are also reaching towards the sun, forever in pursuit of a better and brighter future. ☉



Salmon farms like this one, near Cochomó, litter the roads leading to rural communities in the Los Lagos region of Chile.



TROUBLED WATERS

Unsustainable fish farming practices in Chile yield economic and ecologic disaster

STORY AND PHOTO **BLAKE HAMILTON**
ILLUSTRATIONS **EDWIN OUELLETTE**

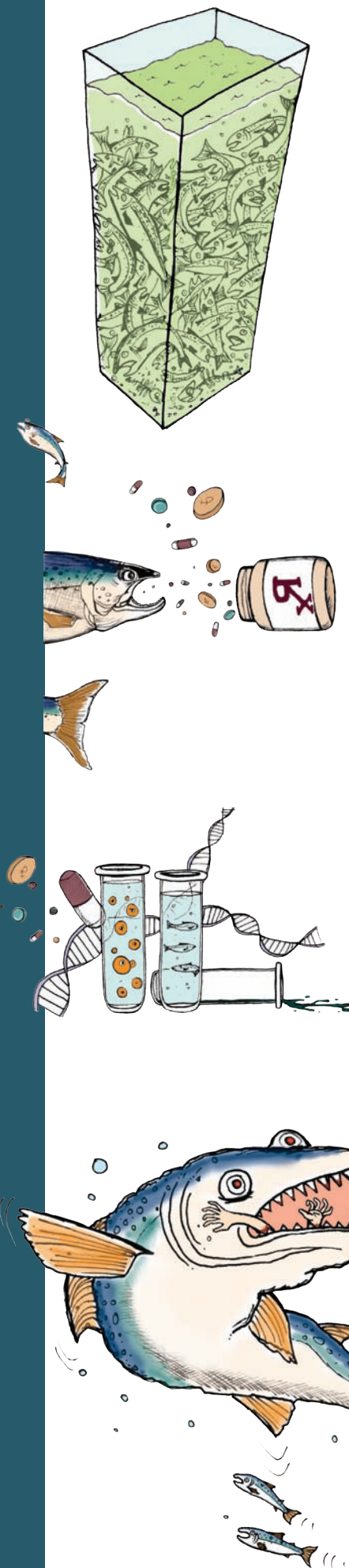
Growing up within walking distance of the ocean, I developed a special bond with its inhabitants. I fear the day I go surfing without fish swimming underneath me. I am not sure if that will ever happen, but with the recent growth of the aquaculture industry, it's now more a reality than ever.

In recent years, aquaculture, or factory-farmed seafood, has become a booming export business, especially in Chile. I came face to face with this industry in 2009 when I began to research whether or not farm-raised salmon was healthy for consumption. As I dove into information about the industry, I learned about the potential environmental destruction that comes along with raising non-native carnivorous salmon species around the world.

Three months before I traveled to South America, I took a research-based journalism class referred to as "Info Hell." After spending a term researching the industry of farmed salmon, I wasn't satisfied with what I had learned. Research behind a computer can be deceiving, especially for those who have an invested interest in the topic.

Before the creation of the salmon industry in the Chilean region of Los Lagos, the city of Puerto Montt was a ghost town compared to its current state. Now the region is home to the second largest salmon industry in the world. Residents living in this region before the industry began to expand never imagined having malls or suburbs. The growth brought with it tract homes and grated roads in the middle of wilderness for transporting salmon from freshwater facilities to the ocean.

Chile became a haven for salmon farming because of its cheap labor prices and lack of enforcement. Multinational corporations like



the Norwegian-based Marine Harvest, the world's leading producer of salmon, were able to operate much differently than in their home countries. Just by looking at the statistics of their antibiotic use in Chile, it is clear they were not operating under the same guidelines. In Chile, salmon were crowded into cages and antibiotics were used in excess to try to prevent and combat illness. As the industry grew, assumptions were made that the producers would regulate and protect the water as if it were their own, but we all know money can make people blind to the injustices they cause.

I look at Chile as a place where multinational corporations went to experiment with farming practices. In 2008, the country's production of salmon peaked, accounting for 36 percent of the world's supply, just behind Norway's 43 percent. This year, Chile is expected to produce less than half of their 2008 gross production, with other estimates as low as 25 percent.

I visited the region of Los Lagos for my first time in March 2009. My initial reaction to the city of Puerto Montt was that it was not dependent on one industry. Yet, the headlines in the newspapers indicated that the decline of the salmon industry was directly affecting the region's economy. My interest was piqued, and I planned to return.

I was in Casa de Margouya, a hostel fifteen minutes from Puerto Montt, about to embark on a twenty-one hour boat ride to the southernmost region of Chile. I had a week left before school in Argentina started, and I wanted some peace and quiet before I returned to the concrete jungle that was Rosario, Argentina. Eating my last breakfast in the hostel, I overheard a woman from Portland, Oregon, talking about a place called Parque Pumalin. I spoke with her and that was it; a couple days later, I was waiting for the boat that only comes once a week, delivering its passengers to an unexpected paradise.

My boat ride was an adventure. Parque Pumalin was amazing. Even today, when I am stressed out and overwhelmed by the confinements of a city, I take a deep breath and try to recreate the remoteness and pristine qualities of its unparalleled biodiversity. You could hike for days and not see a soul.

Enveloped by walls of trees, I felt a solitude like never before in my life.

I looked out the cabin of the boat for that perfect shot that could encapsulate where I was. I was totally engulfed in conversation and before I knew what was going on our boat had broken down and we were being towed to a storage unit at the end of a salmon farm.

"Shut up and

start shooting," my mind said. I found a spot against the entrance of the cabin where I braced myself in an attempt to get non-shaky footage of the cages that held nearly a half-million fish. Our arrival was not warmly welcomed and we were quickly retrieved from the floating dock and escorted to land. Within minutes, security cameras recorded us dipping our feet into a disinfecting agent as the workers sprayed down the dock behind us. We were in a barbed wire-enclosed compound of one of the largest salmon companies in Chile.

After being denied permission to interview the workers, I wanted to record my conversations and snoop around, but I wasn't ready to be a person of interest for a multinational corporation. So instead, I cleared a few rocks and settled in the sand to watch the seagulls bicker at one another as they stood around the circular net pen.

I could not stop my mind from racing. I had to do something—I could not believe the scope of aquaculture. I read predictions saying that by 2030, the worldwide consumption of aquaculture would surpass wild fish supplies. Yet many people are unaware of the inner workings of this newly developed food sector. I was determined to do a little more investigating. When my second semester in Argentina ended, I went back to Puerto Montt instead of packing my bag and moving from bed to bed on the daily.

My second time around, I still did not speak grammatically correct Spanish, but my enthusiasm and body language fueled conversations until I was hoarse. I had a little less than three weeks, and I was determined to figure out how to use a video camera to record interviews with anyone willing to talk to me. I set up my office in Casa de Margouya, the same hostel I stayed in before. From there I commuted to Puerto Montt every day past densely packed warehouses with acres of open land behind them.

I felt awkward traveling on the bus knowing that the majority of the passengers were being negatively affected by the collapsing industry. But what was even more difficult for me to grasp was the idea that Puerto Montt might be abandoned in the future as the industry looks for cleaner waters to the south.

It was my first attempt at making a documentary and it will not be my last. There is a certain joy you get when strangers open up and talk about their experiences. Journalism allows one to enter people's lives for brief segments of time and listen to their stories. It fuels curiosity and takes you to unknown streets where you hope you are knocking on the right door. You get in cars with strangers and cross your fingers that your judgment of character will not land you on the side of the road. As a journalist you never quite know where you are going to end up by the end of the day. ☉

In Memory of Fernando Siebald

Overcrowding and excessive use of antibiotics in salmon farms around the world, has led companies like Massachusetts-based AquaBounty Technologies to propose farming genetically modified salmon. The Food and Drug Administration is currently discussing allowing genetically modified salmon to be consumed in the US.



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music art film stage culture

SPRING TERM

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
March 21- Spring Break	22-Spring Break	23-Spring Break	24-Spring Break	25-Spring Break	26-Spring Break	27-WVMF New Song Contest round 2
28- Spring Classes begin	29 - Talk Project Art Exhibit open	30-Women's Center Art exhibit open	31	April 1	2	3
4 Bias Awareness Week	5 Bias Awareness Week	6 Bias Awareness Week	7 Bias Awareness Week Dudley Edmonson Photography Reception, Workshop, and Lecture	8 Bias Awareness Week	9	10
11-PNWAA Accepted Works Due International Week	12-International Week	13-International Week	14-International Week	15-International Week	16-International Week	17-WVMF New Song Contest round 2 International Night
18-PNWAA Show Opening	19	20	21	22-Earth Day	23	24
25-Talk Project Art Exhibit ends Women's Center Art exhibit ends	26	27	28-Ben Linder Remembrance Multimedia Art exhibit open	29	30	May 1
2	3	4 - ASUO Street Faire	5 - ASUO Street Faire	6 - ASUO Street Faire	7 - Willamette Valley Music Fest PNWAA Opening Reception and Best in Show	8
<p>We are always adding events, Check out our website for updates</p>						
9	10	11	12-Queer Film Festival University Day	13-OUT/LOUD	14-OUT/LOUD	15-Queer Film Festival
16	17	18	19	20-PNWAA Show Close	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28-Multimedia Art exhibit open	29
30-Memorial Day	31	June 1	2	3	4	5
6-Finals	7-Finals	8-Finals	9-Finals	10-Finals	11	12

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The Art Behind the Music

Bass maker opens up on the industry and the meticulous nature of being a luthier

Caroline was made with a purpose. Her beauty unparalleled, one look at her would leave no doubt to anyone that a true craftsman was behind her perfect features. Her world has come together in Eugene, Oregon, but her refined look and demeanor show that she is destined for bigger things. Caroline has sailed away to Ireland to fulfill the role she was made for: as Seth Kimmel's latest upright bass. With as much time and effort he puts into each instrument, it's only right that each receive a name.

Kimmel is a Eugene-based luthier, or string instrument maker. Kimmel builds only upright basses, an intricate and highly detailed instrument with an origin dating back to the late 15th or early 16th century. Kimmel sold his last bass in 2010 in Los Angeles for \$18,000. While this price point may sound high for an instrument, upright basses can cost up to \$500,000. Of such an investment, Kimmel says, "If you're making a purchase like that you're either a really serious [musician] . . . or you've fallen in love with the thing."

Kimmel hasn't always worked with instruments. He previously owned and operated his own construction company, working primarily on home construction and renovations. However, as an environmentally conscious person, Kimmel was put off by the industry's waste-heavy practices. In construction, young trees were often cut too soon and used for only aesthetic purposes. "Even projects that were approached to be really green, [with] the budgetary constraints, [they] turned out to be very conventional projects." Construction became tiresome, leading Kimmel to pursue a new path.

Kimmel and his wife Laura took a year off of work to travel and experiment with new hobbies. Kimmel wanted to learn how to play Laura's banjo, so he put together a "canjo," a one-stringed handle with a can attached to the end. What began as a playful invention sparked a continuing interest that led to his current business. In 2006, he took on the challenge of making an upright bass, an instrument he had played for three years. After researching the bass industry, he discovered that there were less than twenty bass makers in the nation. Within the narrow market, an average upright bass sells for \$20,000. Seeing these figures as an opportunity, Kimmel decided there was room for him in the business and is now fully dedicated to the craft.

Kimmel spends up to \$2,200 on wood for one bass. Before beginning to take on

such a project, materials must be acquired, which can be the hardest part. The wood used must be cut a certain way to work for the construction of instruments. "The only pieces that work are where the grain grows across the board," he explains. Wood for a bass is typically from the trunk of a tree, which is cut into disks. Most wood milling companies cut the trees a certain way to yield different types of grain. "It's really amazing how you can get a giant tree and there's no basses in there," Kimmel says with a grin, "Ideally you mill for musical instruments, which means you cut it up like a pie . . . that creates these wedge shaped pieces that are really cool for basses."

This form is not only important for durability in structure, but also for richness and depth in tone. Being a builder first and luthier second has proved to benefit his new endeavors. Kimmel knows where to look for wood because he has friends from his construction days in the mill industry, specifically Seth Filippo of Urban Lumber in Springfield, right next to Eugene. The two have worked together recently to mill wood compatible for building instruments.

Not only is wood hard to find, but, as Kimmel explains, it's tricky to work with: "Wood has its own nature and it will grow." After being carved, wood is no longer supported and is prone to grow in different directions, which can injure the bass-making process. Kimmel has to gauge for this

"You have to accept mistakes. If you're afraid to cut because it's going to screw something up, you can't get anything done."

growth by cutting more than needed for each piece of the bass until he attaches the pieces together. Once the pieces are dried and adequately prepared, Kimmel quickly glues them together to support each other. When working with a fragile and unpredictable material like wood, "You have to accept mistakes," he says, "If you're afraid to cut because it's going to screw something up, you can't get anything done." However, constructing the basses is not the trickiest part of the project.

Kimmel sets his own prices and he has learned some valuable pricing approaches in the last few months: "Instruments are made more valuable by who is making them and who is selling them." At first he was pricing his basses for \$12,000, but he found that customers were misinterpreting

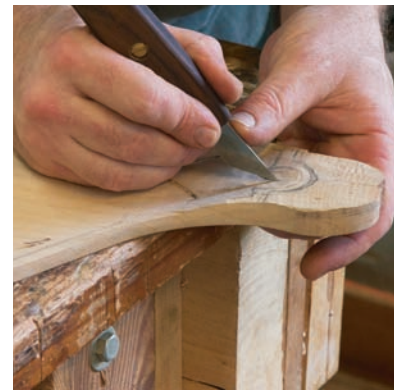
the relatively low prices as a reflection of the quality of his basses. He now considers this when pricing each bass. Customers no longer assumed the quality of the basses was inferior and started seeing them as economical. "The jump from \$12,000 to \$15,000 made my basses [go from] cheap to affordable." Kimmel explains that his new fee speaks to the value of the instruments for his customers, "They're getting a very good bass for a pretty competitive price." His pricing method is attracting buyers and paying off; he sold eight basses in 2010, which is two more than his annual goal.

Since Kimmel began working as a luthier, he has earned awards for tone from the Violin Society of America and the International Society of Bassists. Kimmel's customers now come from across the nation and around the globe. Caroline is destined for Galway, a large city in the western region of Ireland known as the country's "cultural heart" because of the number and variety of cultural, art, and music festivals it hosts each year. Kimmel also sells through well-known dealers in major cities like New York, Los Angeles, and Seattle.

Kimmel's shipping and packing expenses are yet another difficult and expensive part of the bass-making process. Shipping a bass from Eugene to New York runs between \$500 and \$600 and shipping to Ireland costs \$1,500. Kimmel has to research weather conditions at the time of shipment to

ensure the bass won't go through extreme conditions and changes in climate, which cause wood to expand or shrink, prompting breakage. One way Kimmel adjusts for this is his use of a low-intensity adhesive when assembling each bass; rather than cracking or breaking, the basses typically come unglued along the seams. Even still, Kimmel has had his fair share of bass-breaking horror stories, but he has customer service down pat in dealing with such issues. "You need to deal with it and communicate with people immediately," he explains. Since much of his business is hinged on word of mouth, for Kimmel, customer satisfaction cannot be over-emphasized.

It isn't all work and no play for Kimmel. Although committing the bulk of his days to a precise and isolating craft, he spends



Aside from the hardware, each part of Kimmel's basses are custom-crafted to create works of musical art like his beloved "Betty," which he constructed for himself in 2007. From the scroll to the neck to the bow, each component of his basses are unique. Kimmel uses a wide variety of different woods, not only to achieve a different aesthetic, but a different sound. Each of his Basses is marked by a raindrop on the back of the neck, representing rainy Eugene.

his spare time playing Betty, a blonde-wood upright bass that he made in September of 2007. Kimmel often plays with his wife and friends, as well as a number of bands in the Eugene area, currently pledging his allegiance to The Whiskey Chasers. The genre he plays is old-time music, "We play at the old haunts like Territorial, Sam Bonds, Axe and Fiddle, Lucky's, and The Granary." Kimmel and his band also play at local events and parties. He also has plans underway for another band, The Dirty Spoon, which would mix old-time and house music.

Not everyone can be his or her own boss and still be able to have fun hobbies on the side. "The support from my wife and the

community is amazing," Kimmel says. Being involved with a specialized craft has the added benefit of introducing him to a tight-knit society. "There's a lot to be said for the bass community, the makers are incredibly open with information." Sometimes they buy gears collectively in bulk for a cheaper purchase. They also swap ideas on the particular craft. Kimmel recalls a time when Daniel Hachez, a nationally-recognized bass maker, advised him to drop the fingerboard two millimeters, "I've done it ever since and it makes my basses so much more playable—a totally esoteric piece of detail."

Kimmel wouldn't have pursued a life as a luthier if it wasn't for his upbringing,

which fostered his love for building and instruments. Growing up, he admired close family friends who made instruments, although none of them were able to be full-time luthiers for financial reasons. Kimmel sees what he's doing as continuing a legacy that family and friends began when he was young. "I've brought their dreams to fruition by doing this," he says. Kimmel views his situation as fortunate; he now has the means to support his family by doing what he loves. "It's really fulfilling to play music and bring that into my life and [have] it be part of my career."

-Hannah Doyle ♀

To-mey-toe, To-mah-toe

Hydroponics allow any plant to sprout in any climate. Is this the new wave of locally-grown produce?



Joe Schneiderhan, who works at Aqua Serene in Eugene, exposes the roots of orchid plants which grow without soil in plastic crates.

Two tomatoes rest side by side at the local market. One is bright red and delicious without a blemish on it. The other is equally red, delicious, and blemish-free. The only visible difference between the two is a sticker that reads “Certified Organic.” How can anyone tell which one is better? The organic tomato was grown solely with natural plant fertilizer. This tomato is eco-friendly and lately, it’s been the talk of the town. But the organic tomato may have a new rival. It looks the same and tastes the same, and its name is hydroponic.

Hydroponics, or hydro for short, is a technology for growing plants in nutrient solutions, like water or fertilizers, with or without the use of an artificial medium, such as sand, gravel, or sawdust. There are a variety of hydro systems, but all must be

enclosed in a greenhouse-type structure that can provide temperature and light control, reduction in evaporative water loss, and a reduction in disease and pest infestations.

Harper Keeler is the Director of the University of Oregon Urban Farm, a haven for fresh organic fruits and vegetables. He believes that when comparing an organic tomato to a hydroponic tomato, there is no question that the organic one is healthier for the consumer. “An organic tomato is not going to have any residue of pesticide or any fertilizers,” Keeler says. “I can’t say it strongly enough that organic is more important.”

Joe Schneiderhan, who works at the Aqua Serene Hydroponics store in Eugene, Oregon, believes that hydro is the more efficient way to farm. “For food production, especially if you’re doing a large scale, it’s easier to keep up with a [hydroponic] cycle

than harvesting and replanting all the time,” he says, lifting the top of a hydro system to show the roots of a plant dangling down into the water and nutrient solution. With soil, the farmer must often replenish the farm with fertilizer and compost. But with hydro, the farmer only needs to replenish the liquid nutrients.

According to Schneiderhan, hydro allows for a more efficient use of water and fertilizers, minimal use of land area, and better disease and pest control. “Especially for countries that don’t have good soil to begin with and have a growing population that isn’t getting any smaller, hydro could save people from being hungry in certain places.” With hydro, it’s possible to grow oranges in the icy planes of Greenland or tomatoes in the Mojave Desert.

The pro-organic debaters say that hydro

is too expensive and those countries wouldn't be able to afford farming that way. "Where is that money going to come from, especially in the developing world?" asks Garth Kahl, the Latin American Program Coordinator at Oregon Tilth, a research facility that certifies organic farms. The farmer has to buy fans, filters, fertilizer, sun systems, mineral supplements, carbon dioxide generators, and insulated ducting materials to start a hydro operation.

But at Aqua Serene, a small hydro system would cost about \$200, about the same price as one cubic yard of soil for an organic garden, according to Rexius Sustainable Solutions Inc., a garden supply company in Eugene. And Schneiderhan explains that many of the systems can be made out of regular household items. All you need is a plastic box with some water tubing and a timer in a warm room and you've got yourself an ebb-and-flow system. But hydro systems leave out what many believe is the key ingredient to growing quality produce: nature.

Keeler picks up a handful of squirming compost filled with millions of beneficial microorganisms, like nematodes, protozoas, and fungi. All these work in symbiosis with the produce. "There's no substituting the sun and soil," Keeler says. "Plant health is absolutely contingent upon that."

Kahl believes it is important to feed the soil. The pioneers of organics, Sir Albert Howard, Dr. William Albrecht, and Rudolf Steiner, stressed the importance of having organic matter in the soil medium to benefit the circle of life. The plants and animals feed on those plants, and the people eat those plants and animals. "Originally organics was in contrast to synthetic nitrogen [in conventional fertilizer], which is where the opposition to hydroponics arises from," Kahl says.

Conventional fertilizer contains nitrogen, a chemical that can turn into a harmful greenhouse gas when spread on fields. Many farmers think that the largest contribution to their carbon footprint would be the emissions from such energy-intensive tasks as transportation. However, the single biggest source of emissions is from simply growing produce with conventional fertilizer, Kahl says. This means that the carbon footprint of a local conventional farm is much larger than a certified organic farm in Argentina transporting products to the US.

Kahl believes that hydro is a dying breed and that, like in the past, it will fall off the grid. "Hydroponic agriculture is going to be a blip, an historic anomaly."

But there is some hope for hydroponics. "You can do a balance of half-organic and half-synthetic," Schneiderhan explains, and Kahl assures that Oregon Tilth will certify this type of hydro as being organic, making it much more likely to stick around. If hydro can work together with organic, maybe it will stay in town for a while, invite organic out for a drink, and turn a rival into a new friend.

-Erin Peterson

THE HYDROPONIC ESSENTIALS



ARTIFICIAL SUNLIGHT

Hydroponics require artificial light in order for the plants to survive. Since many hydroponic plants are non-native, they require varying levels of light. Lamps allow farmers to control these levels to maximize growth.



PLANTS

Hydroponics allow for a much faster grow time because the nutrients are fed directly to the roots rather than through the soil.



ARTIFICIAL MEDIUM

Baked clay pellets are an example of the artificial medium in which farmers can choose to grow their plants. Growing with an artificial medium simply holds the roots in place and provides support for the plant. Clay pellets are very porous and therefore have great water retention.



THE RESERVOIR AND NUTRIENT FILM

The big tub that sits below the plants is called the reservoir, which holds the water for the system. The nutrient film spreads a thin layer of hydro nutrients at the bottom of the grow tray and over the roots of the plants.



WATER PUMP

Necessary for hydro systems a water pump can be submersed in the reservoir or connected via tubing. The pump keeps the water constantly flowing and mixing with the nutrient solution.

Big Plans, Tiny Houses

Discovering the practical value of living in low square footage

Since he has moved into his "mobile home," Babcock has saved approximately \$250 a month in living expenses.

Gabe Babcock wakes up in a bus, staring up at a welded metal roof, his breath making clouds in the air. The view through the closely spaced windows is obscured by thick condensation. He sits up, his feet brushing against a carpet of plastic grass turf. From his perch on the bed he can see two vinyl bus seats, a metal table, and through the windshield, the beginnings of a foggy Eugene morning. Cluttering this spare setting are all of Babcock's worldly belongings: a few dishes on the table, papers strewn across the seats. Clothes are strung across clotheslines; fishing rods peek out from under the bed. The bus seems plenty lived-in, which isn't too surprising. After all, Babcock isn't just in his vehicle—he's home.

Since Babcock started living in his remodeled short school bus in fall 2010, he has changed living locations

several times, finally ending up in a friend's driveway in order to evade Eugene's temporary housing laws that prohibit living in a vehicle parked on the street.

"Basically, I'm lucky I have a friend with a driveway to park in," Babcock laughs. "Well, actually, I'm lucky to have a friend in general. I live in a bus. Who wants to be friends with a guy who lives in a bus?"

Actually, more people might like to befriend Babcock than he thinks. After all, wouldn't we all love to know the secret of living on less than \$150 a month? Babcock spends only \$50 a month on parking. The average student living on campus likely spends double this in rent alone. Babcock lived in campus housing for three years, and his mounting frustration with unnecessary costs led him to seek a better alternative.

Most people don't think of a short

yellow school bus as an impulse purchase, but to Babcock, it immediately sounded like a good idea.

"I was talking to some friends who were trying to sell me a giant full-size school bus this summer," Babcock says. "I laughed that night, but I woke up in the morning and thought, 'You know what? That might be a good way to live for a year.'"

Babcock isn't alone in his quest for a more practical and inexpensive living space. In fact, he is just part of a widespread movement dubbed "Tiny Houses." This resurgence of small living options is driven primarily by a growing number of people looking to downsize their economic burden and learn to live with less.

Babcock purchased his own short bus for \$3,500 and renovated it over the summer. He did everything himself, from installing a carpet of artificial turf to building a bed frame

out of bamboo grown by his dad. He even welded the table. He is currently laying out plans to build a wood-burning stove within the bus to replace his propane heater. All of this sounds very, to use a popular buzzword, “sustainable.” But mention the term to Babcock and all you’ll get is a hearty chuckle.

While Babcock’s way of living may be environmentally friendly—he uses no water or electricity and heats only rarely—he explains that this is just a side effect of living cheaply, not an overreaching dedication to the environment. The “green” features of his bus save energy, thus saving money.

“It’s all about simplicity,” Babcock says, shrugging his shoulders. “It’s fun. It’s cheap living . . . I spend a fraction of what I spent last year, and I am that much happier.”

Those looking to similarly enlighten themselves can find extensive information on the Internet, including the *Tiny House Blog* by Kent Griswold. Griswold posts daily about what he calls “tiny living.” Many of the posts showcase individuals who, like Babcock, have taken the initiative to build or seek out tiny living in unique ways. Griswold describes his site as a hobby that turned into a career—a personal journey toward simplicity that he found resonated with a lot of people.

“My readers are pretty much split 50/50,” Griswold says. “Some see tiny housing as a dream, an ideal, something they’d like to do. Others are out there doing it.”

In the past week of blog posts,

Griswold posted a set of floor plans, a link to a new Eddie Bauer livable camping trailer, a for-sale tiny house posting, and the profile of a man who converted his boat into a primary living space. This kind of diversity is only some of what the *Tiny House Blog* covers.

Griswold says that, in one word, he considers his role in the movement to be “inspiration.” Most of his readers are either living small or want to be, and he tries to make that dream seem attainable. “To simplify their lives, to get out of debt, to be able to live on a smaller income,” Griswold says, reeling off common reasons cited by his readers for a shift to smaller housing.

However, not all of those interested in the “tiny house” movement are sizing down by necessity. Rich Daniels builds small mobile houses in Eastern Oregon and sells them to those who don’t want to build their own.

“Most of my clients have the money to live in bigger homes,” Daniels says. “They make the choice to live in these houses in order to live more simply. Energy cost is low and taxes aren’t as high.”

After all, living small is not a new concept or even a hippie phenomenon. Since the 1950s housing sizes have more than doubled, shooting from an average of 980 to 2,300 square feet. Before the 1950s, houses of this size were unusual.

“There is a very long history of people living in tiny dwellings,” says University of Oregon professor Robert Young. “We used to live small out of necessity. We now have the luxury

to do it out of choice.”

As the world population rises, however, city planners and architects turn to the concepts behind these tiny houses. Countries such as Japan that have been struggling with rapidly increasing populations, have embraced the small home living model to sustainably provide housing for their highly concentrated populations.

“This attraction to conserving space is making its way to America,” Young says. “But mainly in larger cities such as New York. It hasn’t hit the West Coast yet.”

Because the need is not present, society has not yet adapted to accommodate small living—to situations like Babcock’s. Without the right housing laws in place, many would-be tiny home residents are left searching for a permanent place to live their desired lifestyles.

It is this kind of place Daniels hopes to provide in Eastern Oregon. He is planning on providing land on his property for tiny home owners to settle together to form some kind of community. However, on the path to making this dream a reality, Daniels continues to hit legal snags.

“There are housing laws that mandate the number of acres you need per house,” he says. “Meanwhile, these houses are only a couple hundred square feet . . . It’s frustrating . . . There is not as much freedom as you think.”

These laws also limit potential student tiny housing options and discourage those less resourceful and self-motivated than Babcock from trying out smaller living. Daniels is enthusiastic about the success tiny housing could have on a college campus if property was provided for students.

Babcock, Daniels, Griswold, and others who are living small seem to come to some kind of consensus, with a redefining of “need” at the very center of it. Griswold recommends thinking deeply about where you spend the most time in your home—what space do you really utilize?

It’s clearly a question Babcock has contemplated. He sits on the edge of his bed at the back of his bus, unlacing his shoes, looking over his Spartan living space.

“Living here has made me realize how easy simple living can be and you don’t need all those extra things,” he says, opening up a Western novel and settling back on his bed to read. “They make life easy and comfortable . . . but you don’t really need them.”

—Keeley Tillotson



Monthly Rent: \$50
Propane Heat: \$20
every two months
Water/electricity: \$0
Cost of living: Pretty
damn affordable

“I’m Gonna Rare Monk Your Ass”

After winning Bandest of the Bands, Rare Monk is ready for the big time

Mission one: don’t seem like a prostitute. Mission two: don’t get mugged. Mission three: interview Rare Monk. Waiting under the Hawthorne Bridge alone at night, mission three somehow seems the most accomplishable. I knock on the door that reads “AudioCinema” in faded white stencil letters. No response. AudioCinema is a defunct warehouse in Portland’s southeast industrial district that now acts as a rehearsal and production space for local artists.

couches and chairs, and wall panels featuring art from AudioCinema founder Guy Ilan. Whitewashed walls are adorned with framed vintage rock posters and painted canvases lit by gallery lights. Instead of rugs, artificial grass is used to cover sections of the worn wood floor; instead of vinyl, AstroTurf upholsters a few cushioned benches. An abandoned stage occupies one corner, and instrumental rock music can be heard eerily emanating from one of the practice rooms.

A dark-haired man with Wolverine

by catchy choruses urge the crowd to jump, jump, jump to Buhr’s driving beats. Thelin’s sax solos stand out during the instrumental diversions. He strikes an artful balance between soul and precision that reveals his classically trained roots. Aites’ Modest Mouse-esque vocals and keyboards reverberate through the gyrating crowd.

They’re competing head-to-head (to-head-to-head-to-head) with five other Eugene-based bands in *Ethos*’ “Bandest of the Bands” competition. For the second year in a row, *Ethos* teamed up with Ninkasi Brewing Company and the University of Oregon’s Cultural Forum to pit six local bands against each other for a grand prize of \$250 and studio time with Topsecret Productions.

Before the band relocated to Portland and found AudioCinema, where they can practice at all hours of the night, they had to maneuver around neighbors, police, and homework schedules in Eugene.

“We practice twice as much in Portland as we did in Eugene,” Martin says.

“Now we have the practice space and with all of us having different work schedules, sometimes we have practice sessions from like one in the morning to three in the morning,” Buhr adds. The dynamic between the group members is brotherly. They finish each other’s sentences, laugh over inside jokes, and share stories as easily as if they’ve known each other their whole lives.

In reality, they’ve only been together as a band for two years.

“I was introduced to Isaac in the back of the Roma,” Aites says referring to a local coffee shop just down the street from the University campus. “Back when you could smoke back there,” he adds, tossing his head to the side in an attempt to knock his hair away from his face.

If members of Rare Monk are spokes on a bicycle wheel, Thelin is the hub. Nearly everyone was brought together through Thelin. When their original drummer moved away six months after their conception, the search was on for a replacement. Enter Buhr.

“I was in a band with Rick before, so I just kind of grabbed him,” Gallien says. “We had fake drummer tryouts, but we kind of knew Rick was going to be our drummer the whole time.”

With the band complete once again, they were free to continue to develop their sound. When they originally started playing, they classified themselves as a “jam” or “party” band. Loose structures of songs guided their practices and shows, but most



Lead vocalist Dorian Aites also adds keyboard, guitar, and violin to Rare Monk’s multifaceted sound. (Photo courtesy Sreang “C” Hok)

A sedan pulls into a parking spot three cars down from me. I hesitate to acknowledge its existence, as it could contain any array of shady characters. Or it could be a member of Rare Monk. When a tall, well-dressed man with an afro emerges from the driver’s side, I know it’s the latter. He squints at me.

“Oh, yeah, I remember you,” he says. “I didn’t recognize you with all the shadows. Kind of a sketchy place.”

Isaac Thelin plays violin and tenor sax for Rare Monk. While he unloads instruments from his car, a small truck pulls up and parks to our left. A man wearing a quilted plaid jacket, his long hair strapped back in a ponytail, steps out with a large guitar case: Forest Gallien, Rare Monk bassist. Gallien unlocks the door I’ve been loitering around, and we climb half a flight of partially lit stairs into AudioCinema.

It’s a large drafty space broken up by rows of bus station seating, mismatched

sideburns and big eyes joins us on the little patch of turf we’ve chosen to situate ourselves around: Jake Martin, Rare Monk guitarist.

The last two members of Rare Monk (drummer, Rick Buhr; and vocalist, keyboardist, guitarist, and sometimes violinist, Dorian Aites) are stuck on the wrong side of the tracks behind a train. They arrive a few minutes later, toting their instruments. Good-natured ribbing is tossed between band mates while Aites and his pin-straight, dirty-blond hair finds a seat on what looks like an old bus station bench. Buhr, with his mop of wavy brown hair, parks himself at a tall retro cafe table.

Nearly a week earlier, Rare Monk is on stage at Eugene’s WOW Hall, playing to a throbbing crowd. Fans push up against the stage, holding their arms high above their heads. They jump and dance against each other in a friendly mosh pit. Extended instrumental jams punctuated



Rare Monk, the band says, was originally a verb. "One of our buddies just randomly said 'I'm going to rare monk your ass!' It was so funny at the time, it just came up when we were trying to think of band names," Martin says. From left to right: Rick Buhr, Dorian Aites, Jacob Martin, Forest Gallien, and Isaac Thelin.

of their material was improvised.

"We struggled a lot to move from jam-based stuff to actually writing songs because when we first got together, it was just so fun to jam all the time," Gallien says. "But recently, we've been really good at just focusing. We'll have a day where we sit down and write a song."

Evidence of their focus is clear at "Bandest of the Bands." With only a twenty-minute set to work with, they manage to squeeze in three full songs.

Extended instrumental jams punctuated by catchy choruses urge the crowd to jump, jump, jump to Buhr's driving beats.

"It's really cool that Bandest of the Bands came right after the tour because we've gotten so used to playing different length shows," Buhr says. "Some shows we could play two-hour sets, and other shows we could only get up on stage for thirty minutes. So we've been good about being really flexible with that."

Rare Monk's very first tour wrapped up in late January. They traveled in a van through Oregon, California, and a little slice of Nevada, playing fourteen shows in eighteen days.

"It was definitely part trial," Gallien says. "To see if we would implode spending three

weeks together in a van."

Deemed a success (the van breakdowns were kept to a minimum and no one died), the group now wants to focus on expanding their fan base even more.

"We recorded a little EP about a year-and-a-half ago, and we basically just weren't very happy with how it turned out with how much time and money we put into it," Gallien says. "So we're just trying to do it right this time. We just want to have a good display of our music recorded."

"Yeah, it's not a good representation of what we are anymore," Aites adds. He seems to have surrendered in the battle with his hair, as it actively hangs in his eyes now. Gallien picks up where Aites leaves off.

"As soon as we get an album out we'll have something we can push to people," he says. "Like magazines for CD reviews, hopefully radio. The album is the thing."

Back at WOW, the guys have wrapped up their sweat-inducing set and are clearing their equipment from the stage. Clearly disliking this, the crowd chants their name repeatedly in an effort to retain them, but their cries go unheeded and

the band leaves the stage.

About forty-five minutes later, Rare Monk's win is announced, and the anxious crowd is in full support. The band, previously standing composed in the middle of the floor, are now jumping, laughing, and hugging each other ecstatically. They take the stage to accept their first-place plaque, and Aites says a grateful thank you to the crowd and event sponsors. The kind of smile that splits cheeks is plastered across each of their faces. They are victors for a night.

"It probably wasn't our best performance, but the energy was great," Martin reflects on their winning set a week later.

"We had our first little mosh pit," Gallien adds. "That was exciting."

Sitting around our patch of turf, the group is starting to get antsy. Their instruments lay in their cases, littered around their feet and not in their hands. Martin leans back against the red couch he shares with Thelin and Gallien. I fear if I don't leave now he may fall asleep before they get around to practicing tonight. Their songs have to be in pristine condition if they want to lay them down in their recently acquired studio time. The members of Rare Monk thank me again as they gather up their instruments. The sound of their animated voices bouncing around inside the cavernous AudioCinema follow me back into the shadows of the Hawthorne Bridge.

-Natalie Horner

Hi-Definition Clay



Las Vegas go-go girls and a model skeleton by Bent Image Lab featured in a MasterCard commercial.

By combining new and old technologies, animators, filmmakers, and CGI specialists continue to expand the animation industry

Remember The California Raisins? They danced around singing Marvin Gaye's "I Heard it Through the Grapevine," sporting black sunglasses, or blasting on a saxophone. They were the coolest, most soulful dried grapes of all time. Those colorful, wrinkled characters, created as part of an ad campaign for the California Raisin Advisory Board, exploded onto the TV screen in the mid 1980s. Everybody sang along. Three-dimensional plasticine rock stars, the "raisin sensations" spawned merchandise from video games to figurines, and achieved extraordinary market success for over a decade.

The Raisins were brought to life by an animator and filmmaker named Will Vinton. In the late 1960s, while a junior architecture student at the University of California, Berkeley, Vinton began experimenting with a filming technique that Albert E. Smith and J. Stuart Blackton invented almost a century before: stop motion.

Equipped with a 16mm camera that "shot stop motion pretty well," Vinton began blending the filming technique with a model building made of plasticine clay as a 3-D presentation tool for architectural design. "You bring some element of a building, a model, to life using stop motion," he says.

From there, Vinton began focusing on organic structures. Utilizing the superior malleability and toughness of modeling clay to create organic shapes—"Crude things, initially"—Vinton realized he could do something new.

"This had never been done," Vinton

says. "Sculpting in clay, crossing paths with experimental stop motion filmmaking." He unknowingly made one of the initial pushes that brought on a groundbreaking tidal wave of animation.

Stop motion, sometimes called "stop action," is a technique filmmakers and animators use to create a sense of movement with inanimate objects. By taking multiple still images of an object on motion picture film—say, a clay model of a raisin—then moving it, meticulously and ever-so-slightly, then taking another shot, then repeating those steps over and over thousands of times, filmmakers eventually come up with a series that, played in sequence, brings life to patient visions. A tedious method, one short scene could take months to finish. "One thirty second commercial spot took about nine weeks," Vinton says. This new style revolutionized the creative process of animation by introducing a new form Vinton patented in 1976 as "claymation."

"It was sort of my epiphany," he says, "to realize how much life could be breathed into a lump of clay sitting on a table." Vinton continued to apply a growing knowledge of stop motion videography to increasingly more intricate, handmade clay figures in complex, 3-D scenes. In 1975, Vinton launched what would become an extensive, successful career by winning the Oscar for Best Animated Short for *Closed Mondays*, the story of a drunk man who wanders into a closed art gallery where the paintings on the walls come to life.

Vinton created animated dimension in space with elaborate scenes and meticulously molded characters, but in order to complete the illusion of depth of field, he also utilized stereoscopy. 3-D images are produced with stereoscopic cameras, which animators use to produce exact duplicates of every image. Exhibiting a flowing series of these identical images, stereoscopic films trick the human brain into combining them, which gives the distinct, but false, impression of a third dimension. Polaroid glasses with differentiated red-and-blue lenses allow only one eye to see each image, the left, or the right, producing stereoscopic vision and finalizing the illusion. An antiquated technology, invented by Sir Charles Wheatstone in 1838, stereoscopy has undergone vast improvements and technique variances.

Stereoscopy and stop motion are still used widely today, but Vinton says, "it was cumbersome in those days. There wasn't really a good system in the theaters for creating 3-D. There were a lot of problems with it."

Then, in a mad rush during the 1990s, computer technology exploded, providing animators with swiftly evolving technologies that produced three-dimensional animation with high definition resolution in a fraction of the time. In the 1990s, CGI, or

computer-generated imagery, became the most popular medium for animation. Today, it dominates the industry.

Animators however, are loyal to stop motion, and they've figured out how to use computers to aid in the creative process of this time-honored technique. Undoubtedly, a vastly greater number of still film images can be stored, manipulated, projected, and/or replicated using software than by hand. According to Dr. Sanjeev J. Koppal, a Harvard University research associate, in a technical presentation written for IEEE Computer Graphics and Applications, "a digital editing tool provides the timeline control necessary to tell a story through film. But current technology, although sophisticated, doesn't easily extend to 3-D movies because stereoscopy is a fundamentally different medium for expression and requires new tools."

Many animators and stereoscopic 3-D filmmakers "totally believe in stop motion," Vinton says. "It gets under their skin. They like the handmade feel of it," asserting that the clarity, texture, and effect are unique and impossible, as of yet, to recreate with software. "But definitely," Vinton adds, "most animators use computers today."

Ray Di Carlo, co-owner of Bent Image Lab in Portland, Oregon, along with Vinton, of the now huge animation scene, agrees. "But they each carry their own weight," he says.

"When I started in this business, there was no CGI," Di Carlo explains. "I remember when we started using computer-controlled camera rigs. We were excited, but that was it." Then he took some time to work on a low-budget feature film. "It had ten minutes of CGI in it. And that's where my background started . . . from the ground up. Computers controlling all the camera moves was a huge improvement," Di Carlo says. With time, computers and software became so advanced and sophisticated that the necessity of producing animated films in the old tradition became obsolete.

"We rarely shoot film now, if ever," Di Carlo says, "and then only for specialty purposes. You can do

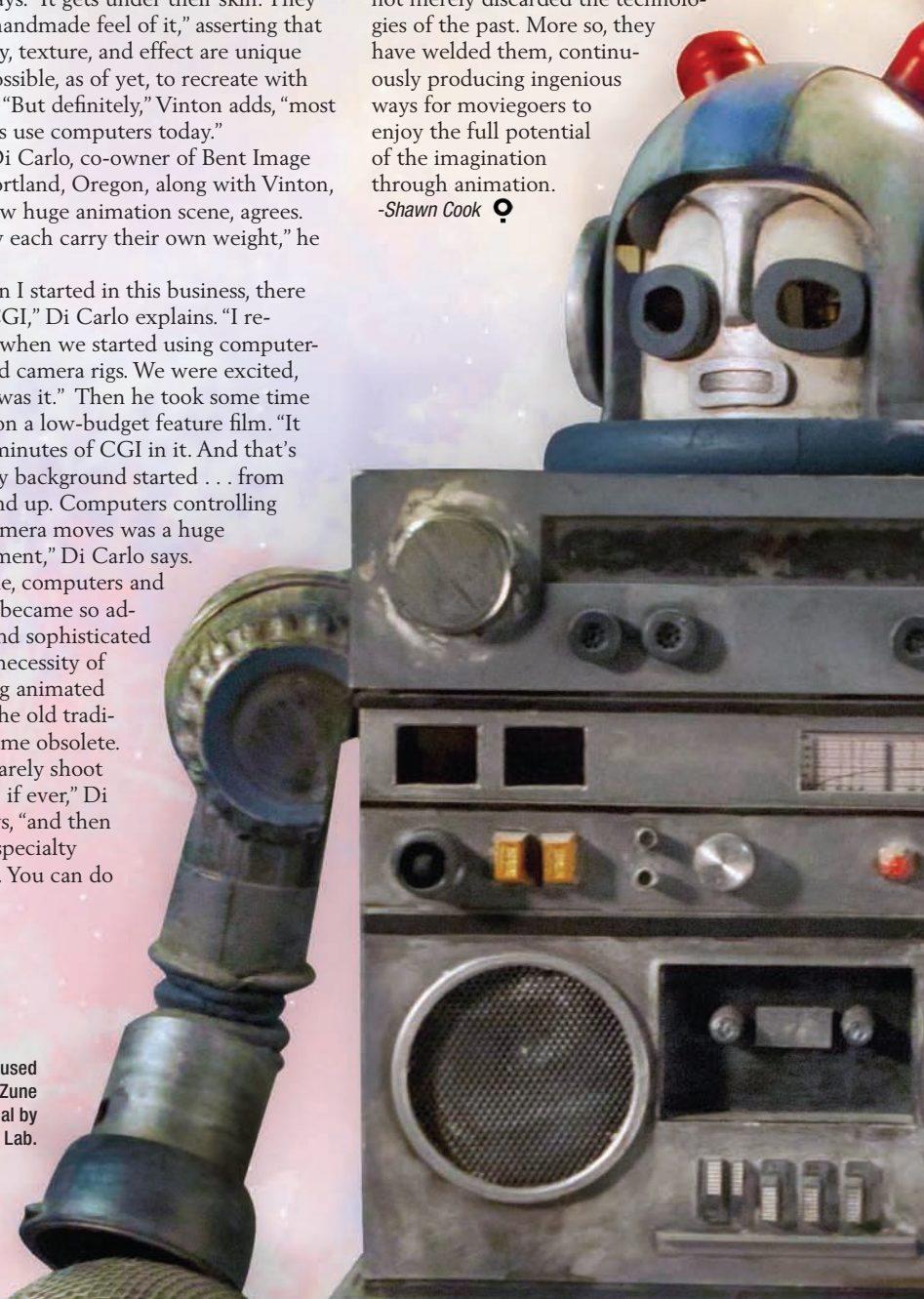
things now that you couldn't possibly do before. You can sit at a desktop and produce a visual effect by yourself, with software that's available off the shelf. Before, you couldn't do complicated effects. Try to do a *Benjamin Button* without a computer, you know?" According to Di Carlo, computers are now close to actually producing realism. "This was impossible before," he says. "Now you can do it. Stop motion is just its own thing."

Some computer animators claim old techniques are inefficient as they take too much time to produce even a few minutes of footage. Then, some hands-on animators think that computers take the fun out of animating and channeling creativity into actual substance. But each technique seems to play a vital role, and has a distinct, individually evolved purpose. Combined, they continue to propel the animation world into new territory.

Twenty-first century animators, filmmakers, and computer graphics specialists have not merely discarded the technologies of the past. More so, they have welded them, continuously producing ingenious ways for moviegoers to enjoy the full potential of the imagination through animation.

-Shawn Cook ☉

Moodbot used
in a Zune
commercial by
Bent Image Lab.



Returning to a Place Unchanged

STORY ALEXANDRA NOTMAN



Alexandra on Robben Island, 2008. (Photo courtesy Johanna Vlak)

It was the night before Christmas when a man knocked on my grandparents' door. He was a black man and, in 1993 South Africa, he was in the wrong neighborhood. I was watching television in the living room when my grandfather unlatched the door, revealing a tall, slim young man with his head bowed.

I could not hear the man, but could see his mouth moving quickly. With his back to me, I am not sure how my grandfather responded to the man, or if he responded at all, but my grandmother quickly disappeared into the kitchen. Moments later, she returned with a sack of food and handed it to the young man who nodded his head in thanks. They motioned for him to leave and latched the door behind him.

The whole episode lasted no more than a couple minutes, but I was completely mystified. Who was the stranger at the door and why had he come that night?

It was four months before the fall of apartheid, and segregation in South Africa was still thriving. As my grandfather explained after he closed the door, the man had come in search for food in a white neighborhood, from which he was forbidden from entering. All black South Africans over the age of sixteen were required to carry a passbook that specified where and when they could legally be in certain locations. A white South African of any age could demand to see a passbook at any time. Any black South African who violated this law could be arrested and potentially killed.

Many aspects of this holiday season had already left me with disquieting emotions for a nine-year-old. This was my first time abroad, the first time I had seen the land where my mother spent her childhood, and it was the first time I stepped foot into my grandparents' home.

I have returned to South Africa four times since that Christmas and there has been significant change. In April 1994, apartheid was abolished following the election of the African National Congress. A month later on May 10, 1994, after almost 400 years of European colonization, Nelson Mandela became the country's first black president. In 1997, South Africa adopted one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, with priority given to human rights, including the legalization of gay marriage. There are no passbook laws now. There are no longer "white" or "black" neighborhoods.

But there is racism. On one of my recent visits to Cape Town, I was again watching television in my grandparents' living room. The nightly news was on with a breaking story about four white students at South Africa's University of the Free State. The male students created a video showing black housekeeping employees of the University who had been tricked into eating a meat stew mixed with urine. The video was meant to mock the University's progress in desegregating student housing. As with many South Africans, I was horrified. Disgusted. Repulsed. There were protests, the University banned two of the students from campus, and this past summer the students pled guilty to charges of "illegally and deliberately injuring

another person's dignity."

Beyond institutionalized racism like apartheid and hate crimes like that at Free State, there is a different kind of prejudice that has reared its head on the Cape. The legacy of colonial racism has been replaced with racism born from resentment. The kind of racism that travels in hushed tones in white social circles: The black government is so corrupt. It was better for everyone under apartheid.

Of course, some allegations are not unfounded. South African President Jacob Zuma has been accused of racketeering, fraud, rape, and will forever be known as the man who claimed showering would prevent him from contracting HIV after intercourse. And the ruling African National Congress party has a history rife with scandal. But corruption in politics is hardly unique to South Africa. The government is not corrupt because it is run by black politicians; the government is corrupt because it's run by politicians.

When I raised this objection with white South Africans who say they preferred their lives under apartheid, a common response has been, "But it was better for blacks too." The economy was better, they say.

Is a better economy worth the legalized segregation and oppression of millions of people? I would suggest posing this question to the tour guides on Robben Island, home to the apartheid-era political prison that held Nelson Mandela for eighteen years. The guides too were once political prisoners and they will tell you about the years they spent damaging their lungs during forced labor in the island's quarries, the torture they were subjected to by the guards, the death of fellow prisoners who were denied medical care, and the families who were torn apart. Or ask the millions of black South Africans who lived in a police state where they were the enemy and the victim. Or the millions of black South Africans who lived without clean water or electricity.

In December, I drove past Khayelitsha, a shantytown of 400,000 people where the majority of residents live in shacks cobbled together with cardboard and tin. Cape Town and Johannesburg have been deemed some of the world's most dangerous cities, and South Africa has more people living with HIV/AIDS than any other country. But serious flaws could be pointed out in any nation, including the United States.

Is collective memory so brief as to rationalize returning to an era of institutionalized racism? Can we really say to our fellow man that it would be best to return to the past? Or perhaps we can choose to be dissatisfied with the past and the present and progress toward a future where the choices are better than oppression or corruption.

Spending time in South Africa has forever changed my perception of humanity, demonstrating that laws are easier to change than mind-sets. As Nelson Mandela once said, "There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered." ♻️



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THEME
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DEADLINE
May 7, 2011

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8th Ave

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Art Competition brought to you by Copic Marker

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The City of Eugene, Ethos Magazine, Ninkasi Brewery, and Copic Marker are hosting a public art design competition to promote cultural diversity in downtown Eugene. The City's Public Art Program and EPark are combining efforts to add color and vibrance to the Arcade garage on 8th Avenue and Willamette Street. The competition is open to all local artists. Submissions are due no later than May 7, 2011. The winning design will be displayed in banner form all summer long on the Arcade parking structure located on Willamette St. and E 8th Ave. The winner will be selected by representatives from the City of Eugene Public Art Committee, Ethos Magazine, Ninkasi Brewing, and Copic Marker. All contest terms are at the discretion of the City of Eugene. Full submission guidelines can be found at ethosmagonline.com/events.



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