

Winter 2012 Volume 4 Issue 2

ETHOS

**TRIPPING ON
TECHNOLOGY**
PSYCHEDELIC ART TODAY

**PETS
UNLEASHED**

PAWN SHOPS
Loaning Hope

PLUS: CRYING OUT OVER SPILLED MILK // HISTORY: CONDENSED // A CENTURY OF COOKIES AND CRAFTS FREE





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EDITOR'S NOTE



On my honor, I will try. They are six simple words most famously known for beginning the Girl Scout Promise. They're also a mantra that defines the *Ethos* staff.

All told, we are 80 students trying our best to balance, well, everything. There are people who have jobs, people in Greek life, people with spouses and kids, people carrying 18 plus credits, people who would just like to sleep in once in a while. *Ethos* adds making a professional grade magazine to the list. And so we try.

Our efforts aren't going unnoticed. I recently received news that last year's issues of *Ethos*, Fall 2010 to Summer 2011, earned eight awards from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. Such accolades are always encouraging, judged as they are on a national scale by some of the country's leading media professionals. They help solidify the truth that most student journalists hold to be self-evident: I may be young, but man, can I tell a good story.

The stories we tell in this issue highlight all sorts of trying. One of our most timely pieces profiles the Girl Scouts, a group of more than 3 million trying to remain current after almost 100 years of history ("A Promise for a New Century," page 18). It was as a Girl Scout that I first recited their famous Promise. I've long since retired my vest (except for the occasional photo shoot) but the Promise's six starting words remain. In the months to come, *Ethos* will keep on trying and, hopefully, succeeding. On my honor.

Elisabeth Kramer

Elisabeth Kramer
Editor in Chief



Illustrator Charlotte Cheng created this piece around the concept of an idea blooming: "I wanted to capture the process of imagination," she says.

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Congratulations to the *Ethos* staff, both past and present, for its award-winning work. For its 2010-2011 issues, *Ethos* received multiple awards from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, including its first College Gold Crown Award, was a Magazine Pacemaker Finalist for Associated Collegiate Press, and received a William Randolph Hearst award for editorial writing.

PHOTO ARIANE KUNZE

Living Without Restriction

Diane Holste and her story of living with a prosthetic arm.

She smiled. When others might cry, yell, or show resentment, Diane Holste smiled and explained that her life was only slightly different than anyone else's. Born with one fully developed arm and the other ending at the elbow, Holste was chosen at the age of seven months to be one of 21 children to pilot the Child Amputee Prosthetics Project (CAPP). Focused on children and their use of custom-made prosthetic limbs, Holste's program was based at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). CAPP was so successful in providing therapy and teaching adaptability with prosthetics that participants were asked to counsel an array of newcomers ranging from Vietnam veterans to preschoolers. Today, 50 years after receiving her prosthetic arm, Holste continues to counsel people, often taking time off from her position as a substitute teacher in Portland, Oregon, to give advice on adapting to life's many challenges.



Neethu Ramchandrar: What's different about your life than that of a person with two arms?

Diane Holste: Although I may look a little different, I can do nearly everything a two-handed individual can do. During one of my visits to a preschool the students wanted to know not what I could do, but rather what I couldn't do with just one arm. I let them take their guesses and they ranged from writing a letter to cooking dinner to getting dressed in the morning. I can do nearly everything and gave them a clue that the only limitations with my disability had to do with the opposable thumb. A young boy gave me a smirk and said, 'Well, you can't play video games.' I laughed and said, 'No, I can't, but that's nothing to cry about.'

NR: How did you lose your arm?

DH: I was born in 1961 in Deadwood, South Dakota, in a hospital run by nuns. My mom went into labor and was given drugs that made her unaware of what was happening to her body. When my mother woke up after childbirth, a nun came in and expressed how sorry she was. My mom thought I had died until the doctor came in and said 'Why are you crying? You have a baby. She's just missing an arm.' We didn't know why I was born this way for many years. Even today, after much education, we only know that during the fifth or sixth week of pregnancy the limbs are developed and can sometimes be limited in growth. They twist-tie off. *[Holste points to the twisted lump of skin on her elbow that marks where the growth of her arm ended.]*



Diane Holste most often uses the prosthetic arm featured below, which she refers to as her "claw." She has been using this style of prosthetic since childhood.

NR: How did your family react after your birth?

DH: When I look through the boxes of baby cards I understand why my mom was such a Mama Bear. They read: 'Congratulations on your new baby girl! I'm so sorry for what happened.' My mom taught me not to be sorry for who I am. She raised me as an independent person who can adapt to any situation. I chose my claw for maximum efficiency so that I can do daily activities with ease.

NR: How did you use your experience at UCLA to inspire others?

DH: Because I was part of the first group of participants, the engineers asked us to help new patients adapt to their limbs. I didn't really know what I was doing, but I was happy to help. When I was seven, I was asked to counsel a young lady who had been in an accident and lost her arm. She was very beautiful, grew up in Beverly Hills, and was on her way to Vassar College in New York. We didn't have much in common in terms of how we each lost our arms, but we talked about how the [prosthetic] arm felt and functioned. When she asked me about being teased, I replied, 'I usually just beat them up and don't tell my mom.'

"A young boy gave me a smirk and said, 'Well, you can't play video games.' I laughed and said, 'No, I can't, but that's nothing to cry about.'"

NR: Was it ever difficult to counsel at such a young age?

DH: It was difficult to understand the patients' anger. I wasn't angry about my arm because I was born with it, but many of the people I met had a

lot of pent-up anger. I remember working with a Vietnam War veteran when I was nine. I learned most of my swear words from him.

NR: How did you begin giving talks at schools?

DH: When my daughter, Katherine, entered preschool I felt a lot of the students peeking at my arm and wanting to ask questions. I asked the teachers if I could talk to their classes and they welcomed me to do so.

NR: What do you teach students when you give speeches?

DH: Preschoolers want to touch my claw and ask physical questions. Elementary school students ask how the arm works while middle and high school students learn about the anatomy and physics that went into creating my arm. It depends on the audience and what they want to know.

NR: What's the appropriate way for someone to ask about disability?

DH: Look into their eyes. Just by looking into their eyes you'll know if it's safe to ask. If you see pain, turn around and walk away. Don't hurt them any more than they are already hurting.

NR: Have you ever been asked a question that you weren't comfortable answering?

DH: Usually it's the way people ask that bothers me. Once there was a young lady in a middle school who marched down the hall toward me and demanded to know, 'What the heck is wrong with you?' That really angered me and so I told her that she had no right to demand an answer from me. I made her walk back to the end of the hall, return, and ask me politely. It was a learning experience that she desperately needed.

NR: Have you ever been discriminated against because of your disability?

DH: During my first week of college a boy pulled me aside at a bar and said, 'I can't believe you came here.' When I asked why, he explained that where he came from they put people like me away. So yes, it does happen. After college, when I was applying for jobs, I found it difficult to be hired because employers were nervous about sending me into the public.

NR: Have you ever struggled with having a claw or prosthetic arm?



Holste uses a sewing machine to add Boy Scout patches to her son's uniform. Using her prosthetic arm, she has no problem performing actions that require fine motor skills.

DH: I remember when I was pregnant with Katherine I visited a nursing instructor. I was planning on taking off my claw around Katherine so as to not scare or hurt her and wasn't sure how to breastfeed. Neither was the nurse. She sent me home and I began the search for literature about a handicap parent taking care of a baby. There was none and to this day there is none that I know of. So I improvised my way through three children.

NR: What advice would you give future generations of people who have the same disability that you were born with?

DH: Seek out all of your opportunities in the prosthetics community. Apply them in the ways that fit your needs both physically and mentally. Know why these options are good for you and don't be afraid to interview your doctors. And finally, don't let anyone tell you that you're less because of your abilities.

-NEETHU RAMCHANDAR



FAR LEFT: Despite her family's support, Holste was sometimes encouraged to hide the truth. In this childhood photo, which was meant for extended family members, a two-year-old Holste turns her right side away from view.

NEAR LEFT: Several decades later, Holste shares what was once

DIANE HOLSTE SHARES MORE OF HER STORY AT ethosmagonline.com

PHOTO ALBERT JUNG DESIGN BRITTANY NGUYEN

Northern Exposure



Built in the late thirteenth century, Uppsala Cathedral rises above the southeast Swedish town of Uppsala. Photo courtesy of Bennett Hubbard.

Exploring the countries of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.

Last January, the Legatum Institute, a nonpartisan think tank based in England, published a list of the world's happiest countries. Based on information gathered from sources including the World Economic Forum (WEF) and Gallup polls, the final list included 110 countries and about 90 percent of the world's population. Of the top six nations, three were from the region of Scandinavia, which begs the question: What is it exactly that sets the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway apart from other nations? *Ethos* set out to see.

Sweden, Ranked Number Six

Besides being the sixth happiest country in the world, the Kingdom of Sweden maintains one of the world's highest standards of living for its population of 9,088,728 (the largest in Scandinavia). Swedes typically live longer compared to those in other nations; the average life expectancy at birth is 81 years (three years longer than in the US). Such perks didn't go unnoticed by University of Oregon student Bennett Hubbard during his time abroad in Sweden.

"In the United States, Sweden is commonly perceived as a socialist country with a homogeneous population and a strong welfare system," he says, "but it is much more complicated than that." Hubbard cites the country's tradition of private control over homegrown companies like Volvo as an example of Sweden's "extremely competitive market." It's an opinion supported by recent information from the WEF, which ranked Sweden third in its *Global Competitiveness Report* for 2011 to 2012.

Beyond the economy, however, Sweden may be best known for its long-standing policy of military neutrality. Since the nineteenth century, the country has not initiated any armed combat, though it does maintain an army, navy, and air force. The policy came under particularly heavy fire during World War II; in the decades that followed, the Swedish government rephrased its policy and now officials often refer to the country as "non-aligned" rather than as "neutral."

Within its borders, Sweden teems with a variety of people, including world-famous groups like the Samis. Recently the stars of a *National Geographic* article, the Samis are well known for their heritage of reindeer herding. Estimated to include about 70,000 people, or just around 0.8 percent of Sweden's total population, the group historically roams with their herds throughout Sweden and neighboring Norway, Finland, and Russia. Today, many still earn their livelihoods the same way as their ancestors, but with the use of modern tools like ATVs.

Another notable minority of Swedes lives in the southern region of Skåne. According to Hubbard, other Swedes see those of Skåne as more continental because of Denmark's strong presence in the area. Although the Danes officially left Skåne in 1658, influences from the fellow Scandinavian country still remain. Not only is Skåne physically close to Denmark (it takes just 30 minutes to go from Swedish city Malmö to the Danish capital of Copenhagen), but to this day the dialect of the area, *skånska*, is hard for Swedes from other areas to understand.

Denmark, Ranked Number Two

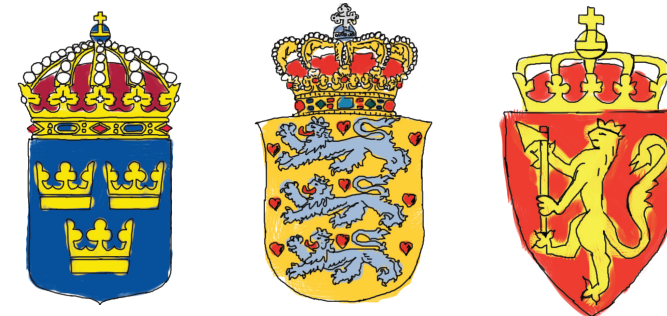
Separated from the capitals of Norway and Sweden by roughly 300 miles, the peninsula of Denmark juts out into the North Sea, making its technical geographic name of "Jutland" all the more fitting. Despite the watery distance from its Scandinavian fellows, Denmark historically has more in common with Norway and Sweden than with the continental European countries it borders.

At various points throughout Denmark's past, the country has united with both Norway and Sweden, most notably during the eighth and eleventh centuries and the rise of the Vikings. In their day, these sailor-warriors controlled much of northern Europe and laid the groundwork for the cultural similarities, such as language and government structure, which define Scandinavia.

Today Denmark, like Sweden and Norway, is a constitutional monarchy, and, like Sweden, a member of the European Union. The same Legatum Institute report that named Denmark number two in happiness placed the country first in entrepreneurship and opportunity (followed closely by Sweden). This business atmosphere has fostered some of the world's leading cities, landmarks that originally attracted Andrew Westling, University of Oregon architecture major.

"The region of Scandinavia has some fantastic examples of progressive and livable cities," says Westling, who spent seven weeks in Denmark. One of the most famous examples of Scandinavian design comes from world-famous home furnishings retailer, IKEA. Although the company calls Sweden home, IKEA often bases its products on, and even names them after, other locations in Scandinavia. In fact, in 2008 the company was accused of "teasing Denmark" by giving Danish names to low value items like "doormats and carpets." The controversy eventually blew over but not before some Danish academics called IKEA's naming practice "an example of cultural imperialism."

Such tension, however, didn't impact Westling's time in Denmark. He says the most important lesson he learned while abroad was to not let his work consume him: "Maybe this is just part of my personal development, but I like to think Denmark and Scandinavia made me realize it."



DESIGN LEO RICHARD WATSON ILLUSTRATION CARLENE HO

Norway, Ranked Number One

Raised in Bend, Oregon, Perris Claeysens is currently 4,700 miles from home. The 20-year-old University of Oregon student, who is majoring in art history with a minor in Scandinavian studies, also attends the University of Oslo in Norway. He was originally introduced to the country as a high school senior when his family hosted a Norwegian exchange student.

"Through this connection I was able to learn about a whole different part of the world," Claeysens says. The summer following the student's stay, Claeysens first traveled to Norway to visit; the trip, he says, was "an eye-opening experience that has shaped my life."

Norway differs from Claeysens' American home in a number of ways, one of the most notable being size. Norway's 4.7 million people equal just over 1 percent of the US population; the Norwegian capital of Oslo is home to less than a million. Despite being one of the least populated countries in Europe, Norway has the world's seventh highest GDP per capita and annually exports the second highest amount of natural gas, topped only by Russia.

All of this economic activity is overseen by the country's constitutional monarchy. Since January 1991, King Harald V has served as chief of state, continuing a royal history more than 1,000 years old. Over the centuries, Norway has often formed long-term unions with its fellow Scandinavian countries including one with Denmark that lasted from 1380 to 1814 and, after a brief period of independence, one with Sweden that ended in 1905.

More recently, the Norwegian government was the target of two terrorist attacks, which made global headlines on July 22, 2011. Of the attacks, Norway's Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg said, "Not since the Second World War has the country experienced such an atrocity." As Stoltenberg notes, horror of this nature is uncommon in Norway, a country the US Department of State describes as having "a relatively low level of crime in comparison to the United States." The most common

crimes include "office burglaries and petty thefts."

In his own travels, Claeysens has had an overall successful journey.

"It has been one of the greatest experiences of my life and I'm so glad I was able to come here and study," he says. "I wouldn't want to be anywhere else."

Undoubtedly Sweden, Denmark, and Norway share a number of similarities. All three have common geographies, governments, and histories. As such, it may seem easy to clump them into one body, but ask a countryman from Norway if Sweden is the same as his home and the answer would likely be an intense defense of his nation. These important differences between the three, be it their individual economies or diverse populations, are what make the trio of multifaceted nations the distinct and happy whole that is Scandinavia. ♀

-TIANA BOUMA

ACCORDING
TO A RUSSIAN
ACADEMIC,
EVERYTHING
WE THINK WE
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THE PAST IS
WRONG.
WHAT IF HE'S
RIGHT?



TIME IS OUT OF JOINT

In October 2010, *The Onion*, America's self-proclaimed finest satirical news source, ran this headline: "Historians Admit To Inventing Ancient Greeks." The (again, satirical) piece reports that a clique of historians have fessed up to inventing the entirety of Greek civilization out of whole cloth. One historian complains about how difficult it was to write *The Iliad*. Another is frustrated that she was "stuck in Athens all summer building a goddamn Parthenon." The reason given for this vast and intricate hoax: "Scholars realized they had no idea what had actually happened in Europe during the 800-year period before the Christian era."

According to Garry Kasparov, the chess grandmaster who in 1997 famously played against the Deep Blue computer and lost, scholars really don't have any idea what actually happened eight centuries ago. That is, except for one man: Anatoly Fomenko, a Russian mathematician and professor at Moscow State University (MSU) who Kasparov met in the mid-1990s and has been an energetic champion of ever since. Fomenko is the author of seven rather weighty volumes provocatively titled *History: Fiction or Science?* that put forth his theory of New Chronology. "New" because according to Fomenko, the "old," or current, chronology that most everyone agrees on is a misrepresentation, a distortion, a lie. When one reads Fomenko's theories, the first question that reasonably comes to mind is: Wait, what? The second question: What if he's right?

The logic behind New Chronology is a little complicated. And since it took Fomenko seven books and over 4,000 pages to spell it all out, an explanation here won't fully do the theory justice. Weaving together historical analysis, statistical correlations, astronomy, astrology, and a straightforward dismissal of accepted archaeological dating methods, Fomenko has concluded that history is much shorter—at least 1,000 years shorter—than we think.

This revised, truncated chronology comes with a raft of peculiar assertions: Jesus Christ was likely modeled after a reformist Byzantine emperor who ruled during the late 1100s AD. The legend of King Arthur, a tale proudly ensconced in British lore, is based on the exploits of a Russian prince. The supposedly ancient statues of Greece and Rome were actually cast during the Renaissance, presumably by the same clergymen and artisans who fabricated the histories of Greece, Rome, and Egypt. While these fabulists were busy weaving complicated tales about pyramids and madmen in togas and 300 Spartans, they also apparently had enough spare time to cook the books of Russian history in favor of the Romanov family, for some reason Fomenko doesn't address.

To some, New Chronology is a dizzying blur of claims and counterclaims, building up to that last, satisfying "It all comes together!" moment. To others, it sounds downright bonkers. Fortunately for Fomenko, his bank account, and maybe—just maybe—the cause of truth and knowledge, plenty of Russians

have reached that eureka moment.

Over 1 million copies of *History: Fiction or Science?* have been sold in Russia, a country that, in its present form, is about as old as the average college sophomore. Previously Russia was part of the Soviet Union, a revolutionary and totalitarian system whose founders upended a more than 350-year-old monarchy and attempted to replace it with an entirely new society governed and populated by an entirely new sort of person, described as Communist "supermen." For a while it seemed as though they succeeded, but on Christmas Day 1991, their experiment collapsed and millions of people faced a kind of national identity crisis. Generations had lived as brother and sister citizens of the Soviet Union. What now did it mean to be a Russian?

For those Russians who feel that they're living in an existential vacuum, Fomenko's New Chronology offers a sense of identity. New Chronology reconfigures world history in a way that places Russia in the middle of things—both as a dominant presence and as a victim. The Fomenko ideology is popular because it makes Russia important, and because, as one academic put it, New Chronology "keep[s] alive an imperial consciousness and secular messianism" during chaotic and insecure times. Fomenko is in the

nostalgia business, and as anyone who's sighed longingly while watching *Dazed and Confused* or *Hot Tub Time Machine* knows, nostalgia has a powerful allure.

Many others, however, dismiss New Chronology as pure hokum. One naysayer, a prominent archaeologist from Russia named Valentin Yanin, once likened Fomenko to the magician David Copperfield and scorned New Chronology as "sleight-of-hand trickery." Yanin made his accusation during a 1999 round-table conference on "The 'Myths' of New Chronology," led by the dean of the history department of MSU, where Fomenko also works. It should be noted here that MSU was founded in the eighteenth century by a Russian scientist and amateur historian called Mikhail Lomonosov, known in many a modern academic circle as having approached history with a patriotic zeal, often exaggerating or downplaying certain aspects of the historical record to benefit his motherland. That being said, he never went as far as Fomenko.

According to cultural critic Gore Vidal, history is just "gossip about the past," while Oscar Wilde once wrote that history is something only a great man can write. Perhaps Fomenko sees himself as a great gossip. History is filled with such characters, people who distort or falsify the story of our time here on Earth for a variety of causes. There is website after website listing quotes by famous people about why it's a good idea to keep that story as accurate as possible. History, after all, doesn't belong to us. We belong to it.

Maybe Fomenko does see himself as a true historian, doing his best and most honest job to hold a mirror to the past. According to him, though, objects in the mirror are closer than they appear. ☐

—JACOB O'GARA

"HISTORY, AFTER ALL,
DOESN'T BELONG TO
US. WE BELONG TO IT."

DESIGN NATE MAKUCH ILLUSTRATION CHARLOTTE CHENG

dealing in

DESPERATION

looking at pawn shops from the other side of the counter

STORY SYDNEY BOUCHAT
PHOTO MASON TRINCA
DESIGN ADAM MEEKS



In here, nothing bought is ever new. Each item comes from humble, often desperate, beginnings. Every worn out '90s television speaker, every tarnished gold necklace, every unwound VHS originally belonged to someone else—someone who saw it, loved it, bought it, and then sacrificed it. This is a treasure trove of some stranger's last-ditch effort to make ends meet. This is a pawn shop.

Northwest Pawn in western Eugene is home to a variety of storied objects. Troy Hatch runs the pawn shop with his wife Amanda. Five years ago the couple bought the building, which had been a buy-and-sell shop for most of its life. In January 2010, Hatch filled out a pawnbroker's license application through the Oregon Division of Finance and Corporate Securities (DFCS), and the buy-and-sell shop turned into a pawning store.

Now, instead of buying items outright, Hatch can dispense loans from his shop based on physical collateral. The item is kept in the shop, not for sale, until the owner can come back and repay his loan and its accumulated interest. If the loanee returns, the shop makes money from the interest—a little less than 10 percent of the total loan per month. If the loanee doesn't return within a previously agreed upon time, the shop can then sell the collateral item to make a profit, though Hatch estimates that less than 5 percent of his customers default on their loans.

"I shouldn't say it's profitable," Hatch says. "I'm still working an outside job, and my wife is working an outside job. We haven't built it up to where it will support us."

When he isn't running the store, Hatch works for Union Pacific Railroad. He and Amanda moved to Oregon from Arizona for work in 2006.

"I never set out to buy a pawn shop," says Hatch, whose background is in operating heavy equipment, not shopkeeping. Hatch bought the buy-and-sell shop on Roosevelt Boulevard as a source of income. "With the numbers that [the previous owner] had on the books, we could pay our bills. It was like we were buying a job."

Soon after his purchase, Hatch found out that the books were inaccurate; the expected profit that prompted the Hatches to purchase the shop was less than they had anticipated.

"We came to realize that whenever it's a buy-and-sell shop, you walk in and you're selling something, you want as much money as you can possibly get, but the next person that's walking in to buy it, they want it as cheap as they can get it," he says. "It makes it that much harder to try and make a profit."

While Hatch was starting to pawn as a source of income, across town, Debbie Barkley was just finishing up her pawning career.

Barkley owns the buy-and-sell shop, Your Place, on Franklin Boulevard. Her family bought the empty building in August 1991. Your Place spent 17 years as a pawn shop, but in 2008, after the passage of stricter state regulation for pawn shops that put larger caps on the amount of interest brokers could charge on a pawned item, Barkley gave up her pawnbroker status and turned her shop into a secondhand store. Now, instead of loaning

money on items, Your Place buys them outright.

"You could make a lot of money [as a pawn shop], but money isn't everything in life," she says of the change. "I've had a lot of money, and I've had a little bit of money, and I'd rather have a little bit. It's a better quality of life to make what you need to make."

While still a pawn shop, Your Place was subject to legal controversy surrounding its pawning practices and interest rates. In 2008, the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services issued an enforcement order to "cease and desist violating Oregon pawnbroker laws." According to the July 28 press release, Your Place was charged with operating without a license, charging interests rates over the legal limit, and refusing law enforcement inspections. Interest rates were estimated to be 171 percent to 1,333 percent of the total loan amount per year, and pawnbrokers are required by law to allow law enforcement or government examiners to inspect their shops without a search warrant.

"The assistance of Eugene and Lane County authorities protects consumers who use pawnbroker services as well as the businesses that are licensed, inspected, or examined and that are trying to provide a needed service in the community," said DFCS administrator David Tatman in the press release.

After the issued order, the state fined Barkley \$25,000, though this amount will be suspended if Your Place keeps a clean record until 2013. Barkley was required, however, to pay over \$9,000 to cover the cost of the audit on her business. After this, she changed Your Place into a secondhand store to avoid the stress of stricter regulations.

"For a long time, the state of Oregon wanted to get some new pawn laws and legislation. We were their example," Barkley says. "We had already made a decision to get out of [the pawning] business. It's too bad that we didn't just do it instead of being forced to. It was just a small business against the state. You can't win."

She admits that, as a pawn shop, her business was more lucrative. But now, in the absence of pawn regulation, monetary loans, and the emotional drain of everyday pawning, Barkley's store and life have become much simpler.

"It's a lot more fun because I see a whole different group of people," Barkley says. "We get people coming in that have money to buy things rather than people that come in because they need money to buy milk or gas because they need to go to work."

People without bank accounts—an estimated 17 million Americans—can use pawn shops as a means for short-term, credit-independent loans. "It's because of the economic situation," Barkley says. "The people are just living on the edge; that's the type of people who would come in. You're always seeing people who are distressed."

At Northwest Pawn, Hatch says he's seen his fair share of distressed customers.

"It's not like what you see on TV with *Hardcore Pawn* or *Pawn Stars*. It's

"People say, 'Well, you guys are supporting the thieves out there.' But there's a real need for us."



Near Right: Troy Hatch runs Northwest Pawn, one of ten such stores located near Eugene, Oregon.

Far Right: Debbie Barkley at Your Place counts out money from one of the day's transactions.



the run of the mill: electronics, TVs, rings, things like that," he says. He adds that such shows might feature more interesting items simply because the stores are located in the large cities of Detroit and Las Vegas, respectively.

Here in the smaller community of Eugene, Hatch and Barkley are used to a more desperate crowd.

"We had a gentleman come in who needed help buying high blood pressure medicine," Hatch recalls. "We're doing loans for people that we shouldn't; it's because they need it. We've loaned money to people who didn't have anywhere else to turn. We feel for them. I don't know if that will come back around to help us in the long run or if it's going to sink us, but it's the type of people we are here. We try to help."

Despite his attempts to help every new customer who enters his shop, Hatch believes pawn shops like his have gained an unfair label, especially by those who do not understand the business.

"[Pawn shops are] looked at like a bar or a strip joint in the neighborhood," he says. "Suddenly, the pawn shop is the bad guy. People say, 'Well, you guys are supporting the thieves out there.' But there's a real need for us."

Hatch thinks this negative stereotype came from pawn shops unknowingly purchasing stolen merchandise. Pawnbrokers are required by Oregon law to maintain accurate reports of all of the transactions they make, and this information must be presented to the authorities within three days of every transaction. Authorities keep an eye out for goods that have been reported stolen, individuals pawning many items within a short period of time (an indicator of burglary), and individuals pawning who have a criminal record. However, it remains difficult to pinpoint actual stolen goods if specific characteristics, such as a serial number, cannot be identified. If an item is identified as stolen, the police can seize it from the pawn shop, and whatever loan money was put out on the item may not be returned to the shop.

According to the 2010 DFCS annual report, police picked up 570 stolen items from Oregon pawn shops, but this only accounted for 0.104 percent of total pawning loans made.

Additionally, the History Channel, which airs the popular show *Pawn Stars*, mentions in an online article that "the pawn shop industry has been criticized at times for preying upon the poor with inflated interest rates and low-balling the value of goods in order to turn a profit."

Hatch, however, has a different opinion about such claims. "When it gets right down to it, the pawn shop is the one at risk. There's really not enough

"It's not like what you see on TV with *Hardcore Pawn* or *Pawn Stars*. It's the run of the mill."



money to be made in the business to take all the risk that we do," he says.

The pawning of firearms also encourages a negative reputation. Northwest Pawn has a firearms section, as did Your Place before it was transformed into a secondhand store.

Due to her financial situation, Barkley cannot hire employees to help man the shop, noting that "with only one person working, it's not safe to have guns."

For Barkley, less income is a small price to pay for more peace of mind. "It's more fun," she says of the secondhand store. "I feel like I'm playing all day. We're really happy that we chose to do a secondhand store. The stress is gone."

Indeed, the atmosphere in Your Place is cheery, matching the several giant smiley faces on the front of the building and the sign. The maze-like store is packed to the brim with hundreds of DVDs, farm tools, dozens of guitars, and other random knickknacks.

Barkley's family also owns a flea market out back and an antique store to the west of Your Place. Behind the store is a warehouse with more merchandise for sale.

"This is a cool business," she says. "When it's quiet, I can do the bookkeeping. When it's noisy, I can stay out here and talk to people. I'm a little bit of a blabbermouth, but that's what makes it neat."

But the resale lifestyle isn't for everyone. According to the DFCS, 72 pawn licenses were issued in Oregon in 2010, an increase of only one from the year before. Loan interest made by pawnbrokers, however, has increased by over 16 percent from 2009 to 2010. Pawn shops have always had the unique ability to thrive during depressions and recessions, offering a place for short-term loans that don't involve a bank and where a person's last luxuries can be turned into temporary income.

Needless to say, the job of a pawnbroker requires some strong emotional barriers in dealing professionally with those who are down on their luck.

"I miss helping people like that, but you can't help everybody," Barkley says. "It's sad. It becomes an emotional thing after a while. I loved [pawning] because I love people. But it could be me on the other side of the counter."

Hatch, similarly, has had to put professionalism over patronage for the good of his business.

"Unfortunately, you have people that are really falling on hard times, and are just bringing in garbage and wanting loans on it," he says. "It's stuff that Goodwill would throw away. Your heart goes out to them, but you just can't help everybody." ☐



A Promise for a New Century

The Girl Scouts turn 100.

STORY **BRIT MCGINNIS**
PHOTO **MARCIE GIOVANNONI AND ARIANE KUNZE**
DESIGN **ALYSSA HILL**
ILLUSTRATION **CARLENE HO**

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: During a troop meeting, Jasmine Miller, Kynna McPherson, Kaylie Blood, Kayce Vanderbeck, and Baili Williams practice the finale number of their school play.

When it comes to the difference between her troop and the Boy Scouts, Junior Girl Scout Kayce Vanderbeck has it all figured out: “They sell different stuff than us.” At the weekly meeting of Troop 21075 in Shasta Middle School’s cafeteria, a number of the girls walk around barefoot in dresses. The Eugene, Oregon, troop is a mix of different ages and Scout levels, with lots of chatter and laughing. Not all the girls wear a traditional Girl Scout uniform vest or sash, though some hang loosely on narrow girlish shoulders. There’s a Neverland-esque atmosphere, a balance between order and play.

An older Scout, a Cadette named Elizabeth McCallen, sits at a lunch table pulled out for the meeting. She has only been a Girl Scout for “about a year,” but she’s grateful to have it in her life. McCallen recently moved to Eugene from Cottage Grove, and her troop has helped with the transition. “They’re so welcoming, and they make you feel good,” she says.

In the hallway, two Daisy Scouts run to the cafeteria after completing the evening’s badge activity. The kindergarten-aged girls are very excited to share snack time with the rest of the troop. As they sprint, one Daisy says to another, “Whe-oh-whe-oh!” It’s a lyric from “Fred the Moose,” a song the troop recently learned about a moose who likes to drink a lot of juice.

Right on cue, the second Daisy mirrors her, with an excited “Whe-oh-whe-oh!” There’s a moment of glee from the inside joke, then the two run inside the cafeteria, patch-decorated blue vests flowing behind them.

An Old Group of Gals

In 2012, the Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) will mark its hundredth anniversary as an organization. Across the country, Girl Scouts are making plans for activities leading up to the March 12 anniversary: East Coast troops plan to hike the entire Appalachian Trail (one section at a time), in an event lasting from March 12 to the anniversary of the founder’s birthday on October 31. The Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles are hosting a float in the 2012 Pasadena Tournament of Roses parade. Then on June 9, 2012, Girl Scouts from all over the country will come together

for a massive sing-along in Washington, D.C.’s National Mall (aptly named “Girl Scouts Rock the Mall”).

The centenary anniversary will be an opportunity for members to reflect upon the influence of GSUSA, an American institution that has worked to maintain its culture while remaining relevant in modern times. The early Girl Scouts in America learned military signaling and International Morse Code, all the better to aid their country during the Great War. Today, Girl Scouts can earn badges for learning about website design or energy conservation.

GSUSA has remained prominent in American culture because of its attempts to appeal to modern girls, while not forgetting original traditions. But some attempts to adapt have garnered criticism, and GSUSA has almost never been without controversy.

The Fiery Founder

A British veteran of the Second Boer War, Sir Robert Baden-Powell first popularized the concept of youth scouting. Impressed by the men he had recruited to serve in Africa, Baden-Powell decided to share the scout-like skills of observation and self-sufficiency in which he had versed his soldiers. But upon realizing that his 1899 training book *Aids to Scouting* was being used to teach children in schools as well as to educate soldiers, Baden-Powell decided to organize small squads of boys, modeled after military units, to spread these skills on a wider level. The idea proved immensely popular, especially after the publication of Baden-Powell’s in-depth guidebook *Scouting for Boys*. But even before the birth of the Boy Scouts, young girls were forming unofficial troops and doing activities based off *Scouting for Boys*. Seeing this, Baden-Powell created the Girl Guides in 1910, inspired by the British Corporal Guides in British-colonized India.

That’s when a 51-year-old wealthy widow from the American South entered the picture. In 1911, Juliette Gordon Low started a Guide troop while abroad in rural Scotland, eventually meeting Baden-Powell. Low was an unusual woman for her time in many ways, not least because she had money of her own (mostly due to winning a lawsuit over the will of

her late husband, who had left most of his estate to his mistress). Low was also childless and almost completely deaf. Her enthusiasm was said to be infectious, which would prove to be an asset as she formed an American branch of the Girl Guides (later to become GSUSA). Upon arriving home in Georgia, Girl Scout lore says, Low called up her cousin, saying excitedly, “Come right over! I have something for all the girls of Savannah, and all America, and all the world, and we’re going to start it tonight!”

The first two Girl Scout troops were created in 1912, both based in Savannah, with only 18 girls between them. But by 1920, almost 70,000 Scouts were registered. Today there are over 3 million, with troops in more than 80 countries. For Low, a woman who fulfilled almost none of the social expectations for women of her generation (she never remarried and continued to work for GSUSA until her death), it was a dream come true. She died of breast cancer at age 66, and was buried in her Girl Scout uniform with a folded telegram tucked into the pocket. Sent from the National Board of GSUSA, it read simply, “You are not only the first Girl Scout, you are the best Girl Scout of them all.”

A Scout’s Place

Many American women who have held positions of power have some connection to GSUSA. In fact, two-thirds of all women who have ever served in the US Congress have been registered Girl Scouts at some point in their life. GSUSA’s aim is to encourage girls to reach their full potential as individual citizens. The organization often conveys working for social change as a noble goal for members, particularly as a way to earn accolades such as the Girl Scout Gold Award.

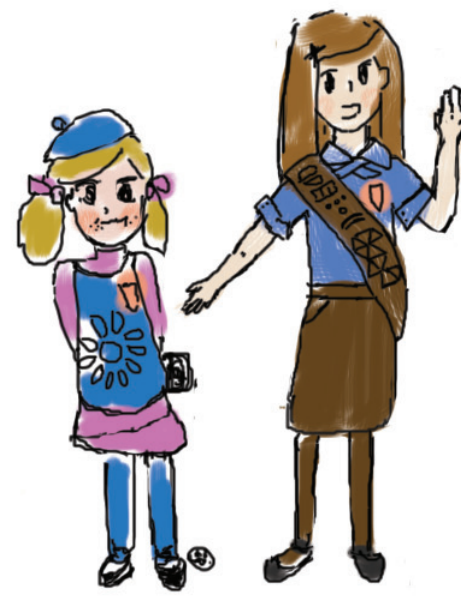
Not surprisingly, American public opinion of the Girl Scouts has often been tied to that of a women’s role in society at large. In times of war, the group was praised for work on the homefront; GSUSA troops canned food, knitted socks, and sold over \$1 million of American Liberty Loans

during World War II. But the question of femininity has always haunted the organization. Were Girl Scouts still “womanly” (often taken to mean fulfilling the traditional gender role for women at the time) if they were doing the same activities as Boy Scouts? Early Girl Guide manuals reveal this inner conflict, as some book chapters offer the command “Be Womanly” while others compel Guides to be “just as good as” the male Guides for whom they were named.

Even the right to use the word “scout” was a long struggle. Some Boy Scouts saw it as girls infringing upon a masculine identity they had originally claimed. International Boy Scout Chief Hubert Martin wrote



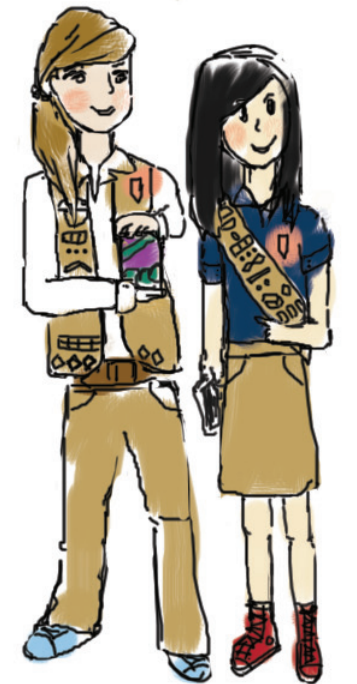
Kassie McLennan and Nikiah Walker create paper flowers at a Girl Scout event in Eugene, Oregon.



Daisy
Grades K -1



Brownie
Grades 2-3



Junior
Grades 4-5

Cadette/Senior
Grades 6-8/Grades 9-10

Ambassador
Grades 11-12



SCOUTS OVER THE YEARS

1912: First Girl Scout Troop established in Savannah, Georgia.

1913: First Girl Scout handbook drafted, titled *How Girls Can Help Their Country*.

1917: The Mistletoe Troop of Muskogee, Oklahoma, sells cookies as a fundraiser, making them the first of many troops to do so.

1927: Founder Juliette Gordon Low dies at age 66 of breast cancer.

1934: Mariner Girl Scouts, a program to teach girls boating and seafaring skills, launches. It will later merge with the coed Sea Scouts, which continues to this day.

1950: Girl Scouts of the USA officially chartered by the US Congress.

1975: Gloria D. Scott elected first African-American National President of the Girl Scouts.

1981: Noted finance writer Peter Drucker names the Girl Scouts the best-run organization in America.

2001: Establishment of Troop Capitol Hill, an all-Congresswoman advocacy group for young women's issues.

2002: Introduction of Studio 2B, an alternative to the Cadette and Senior Girl Scout standing for teenage Scouts.

2011: "Cookie Finder" iPod app goes live, helping customers find where troops are selling cookies.

in a 1926 letter to Baden-Powell, "It seems to me that the use of the term 'Girl Scout' is a big question of principle and that the persistence of use is symptomatic of the tom-boy, aping the man, instead of concentrating on woman's most important sphere—the home." Such was the atmosphere that dominated the early years of the Girl Scouts, as the group sought a balance between adventures in the outdoors and lessons in accepted "feminine" skills.

Challenges From the Outside

In recent years, members of the conservative Republican and Christian movements have accused GSUSA of becoming, in the words of Republican politician Hans Zeiger, "a pro-abortion, feminist training corp" (he later removed these statements from IntellectualConservative.com, the website of their original publication). In 2000, Kathryn Jean Lopez of *National Review* wrote in her article "The Cookie Crumbles" that the leaders of GSUSA "hope to make their youthful charges the shock troops of an ongoing feminist revolution." The accusations intensified in 2005, when GSUSA announced that Johnnetta Cole, then president of Bennett College for Women, and Kavita N. Ramdas, then CEO and president of the Global Fund for Women, were to be keynote speakers at the Fiftieth National Convention. The Life Issues Institute cited the selection of these two speakers as proof of GSUSA's "continental drift into radical pro-abortion feminism."

The tension reached a breaking point in 2010 after GSUSA took part in the United Nations' Fifty-Fourth Commission on the Status of Women. The Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute (C-FAM) reported that during this meeting, a brochure titled "Happy, Healthy and Hot: A Young Person's Guide to Their Rights, Sexuality and Living With HIV" were distributed to young Girl Scout attendees. These brochures discuss sex and abortion, and were originally printed by Planned Parenthood. GSUSA later issued a statement saying that the document handed out during the meeting was titled "The Girls' Statement," that no other brochures were distributed, and that no C-FAM representative was present during the "Girls Only" meeting. C-FAM defends its reporting.

Perhaps to plan ahead for such controversy, GSUSA issued a statement in 2003 entitled "What We Stand For." It reads: "The Girl Scouts organization does not take a position on abortion or birth control." The document says that while individual troops are free to discuss sexuality amongst themselves, these discussions must be to inform girls and not

to advocate any particular point of view. Kathy Cloninger, then CEO of GSUSA, stated in a 2004 interview on the *Today Show*, "We have relationships with our church communities, with YWCAs, and with Planned Parenthood organizations across the country to bring information-based sex education programs to girls." She was responding to a scandal in Waco, Texas, where a Girl Scouts sex education program was revealed to have ties with Planned Parenthood (the collaboration has since ended). This interview clip was widely circulated by conservative news outlets such as Newsmax.com, but was largely ignored by the mainstream media. The mentioning of Planned Parenthood was often quoted as evidence for the argument that GSUSA teaches a pro-abortion mindset.

Apart from claiming feminist icons Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan (who served on GSUSA's national board, a scandal in itself) as alumna, GSUSA has never issued an official stance regarding feminism. The group's mission says: "Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place." This isn't explicitly feminist, says Mary Anne LaBrasseur, Director of Membership South for the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington. In her view, "It's just doing our thing."

Nor is this mission the same as that of the Boy Scouts (though any man 18 years or older may become a registered Girl Scout). The Council Volunteer Policies and Procedures of Oregon and Southwest Washington states that "there shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer," though there is no official discrimination policy for younger Girl Scouts. GSUSA has worked to maintain an image of inclusivity over time, admitting transgender Girl Scouts and even allowing Girl Scouts to omit the phrase "to serve God" while reciting the Girl Scout Promise if they desire. This 1993 decision to make the phrase optional resulted in backlash from Christian groups such as Focus on the Family, but GSUSA held firm.

Into The Future

Despite these challenges, interest hasn't lessened among prospective Girl Scouts. Membership in 2010 was reported at over 3 million. Even recent troubles in the American economy haven't hindered members—it costs \$12 per year to join, with various scholarships for additional costs. Girls can earn credits from selling cookies to use when purchasing badges or uniforms from GSUSA. Policy adaptations in recent years, such as less stringent regulations on what type of uniform Girl Scouts can wear, have also been



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Shayla Fennick, Mikaila Reyes, Amanda Clark, and Sam Vaughan enjoy a troop outing.

adopted to foster a more cost-effective environment. "If a girl says that she can't afford to be a Girl Scout, we're gonna pay for her to be a Girl Scout," LaBrasseur says.

The organization has also shifted to having girls work toward the causes they personally believe in, rather than a leader deciding all troop activities. The newest edition of the GSUSA handbook for girls, *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, includes badges Scouts earn by exploring their interests in depth. Projects to earn prestigious awards have become more and more far-reaching, addressing issues like water purification and aiding victims of domestic violence.

A prime example of this new independence came in 2006, when two Michigan Girl Scouts began a campaign to reinvent GSUSA's famous cookies. The girls wanted to remove palm oil as an ingredient in the cookies because of the potential damage oil harvesting causes rainforests. GSUSA heads initially refused, saying that palm oil helps preserve the cookies' taste and shelf life. Over time, the two girls gathered media attention and drew support from organizations like the Rainforest Action Network. Finally, in late 2011, GSUSA announced that while it couldn't alter the recipe for the upcoming selling season, it would work to ensure that by 2015 only sustainable oil would be used.

Kellogg's (which owns Little Brownie Bakers, a major supplier of Girl Scout cookies) has stated that it will begin buying GreenPalm certificates to support sustainable rainforest practices. GSUSA also became a member of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. The two Girl Scouts told the *Huffington Post* that while the purchasing of GreenPalm certificates is "not quite what they would have liked," it is a step in the direction they want for GSUSA. The two girls were originally working to earn their Girl Scout Bronze Awards when they began their campaign, for which they received the 2011 Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes.

On a local level, the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington (GSOSW) are refocusing their efforts. They are particularly reaching out to Latina girls, one of Oregon's fastest-growing demographics. There's talk of Girl Scouts interacting in new ways, such as through online forums or by having older girls mentor the progress of younger Scouts. GSOSW has also participated in the larger Girl Scout trend of selling nuts, candy, and magazine subscriptions in addition to their famous cookies.

Above all, the Girl Scouts are an organization aiming to help girls live up to whatever they wish to be in the world. The Scouts' willingness to change according to cultural trends has proven to be their greatest asset for survival. Whether the Girl Scouts are embraced or derided, their influence upon American culture is undeniable.

As for Elizabeth in Troop 21075, she enjoys being a leader—even within the weekly Girl Scout meetings. When the troop leaders remind the girls that they need to clean up from snack time soon, Elizabeth drags the plastic garbage cans closer to the lunch tables. It's an example of what she says she's learned from being in Girl Scouts: Everyone has to help if there's work to be done.

Earlier on, Elizabeth had mused about why she's decided to remain a Girl Scout: "I'm actually surprised that I like this, but [Girl Scouts] is just a different way of learning life traits." Girl Scouts helps her learn how to work better with people, a skill Elizabeth says she uses when participating in other activities.

Down the table from Elizabeth, other Scouts talk excitedly while munching on Oreos. With no provocation, one of them calls out, "Whe-oh-whe-oh!" Barely looking up from their cookies and juice, the girls at the table answer back, "Whe-oh-whe-oh!"

This is the cultural power of GSUSA—even at 100 years old, it can still capture and hold the attention of the iPod Generation, even if it's with a song about a moose who drinks a lot of juice. ♪



Kayce Vanderbeck makes the Girl Scout Sign during a recitation of the Girl Scout Law.

ROOTED IN TRADITION



The 1929 Reunion, shown above, was held at the Salem Fairgrounds.

A family honors its history, from the Oregon Trail to modern day.

STORY **LAURA HANSON** PHOTO **BRANDEN ANDERSEN** DESIGN **NATE MAKUCH**

The wagon camp awakens at the break of dawn. Families light their campfires and begin preparing breakfast. Once finished, women and children climb aboard wagons ready to roll out in an orderly line. Hours pass. The afternoon sun beats down. Dust covers everything. To ease the load of the animals, the women and children walk alongside their wagons, gathering wildflowers and buffalo chips as they go. In the late afternoon, before the sun sinks in the west, the families begin looking for a place to spend the night. They draw the wagons close together to form a circular barricade against the threat of an attack, be it from locals or thieves. Settled for the evening, camp members pull out musical instruments and begin to play, some singing, some dancing, some just listening.

This was the brief account of Mary (née Stevens) Smith who traveled the Oregon Trail in 1852 with my great-great-great-grandmother Rispa (née Stevens) Ringo, their parents—Hanson and Lavina Stevens—and six other siblings. No one in their wagon party kept a diary, so this story, told as a memory many years later, is the only “official” one my family has from the Trail. Mary

was only four years old on the trip, but she grew up listening to her siblings reminisce about their journey so that in her old age she recounted this brief summary of the journey our family took to come west.

Hanson and Lavina Stevens left Keokuk, Iowa, in 1852 with their eight children to take the 2,000-mile cross-country journey in a covered wagon. They, like so many pioneers, left all they knew hoping for a better life and the opportunity to farm the land of Oregon. Decades after the family completed their trip, at the eldest sibling’s fiftieth birthday party, the eight children started a journal to record the past year’s important family events: births, deaths, marriages, and stories. Their descendants, of whom I am one, have continued to meet on the third Sunday of July for the ensuing 120 years.

I attended my first Reunion, as we call the event, when I was 11 months old. As a child, Reunion meant camping in a tent with my cousins the night before the meeting, eating s’mores around the campfire, and waking up, some years, to soggy sleeping bags from the uncharacteristic July rain. My cousins and I would trek across the state park or family farm, wherever that year’s Reunion was being hosted, to line up behind our parents to sign in a book they told us our parents and

It’s left to the older members of the family to breathe life into the small pieces of history we’re left with.



Postcards sent between Rispa Ringo—the author’s great-great-great-grandmother—and her children from 1908 to 1912.



grandparents had been signing in since they were children. We would then be handed nametags listing our name and family branch (one of the remaining seven: Stevens, Ringo, McCubbins, Esson, Cahill, Mount, or Smith) before running off to cause the type of mischief only cousins can. One year we made a slingshot that would shoot rocks across a field—we got in huge trouble for that. Another year we managed to get stuck in the biggest tree in the yard. I have more than a few scars to account for the time I spent with my cousins at Reunion. After the traditional potluck lunch, we would escape to play games for the next few hours as the adults conducted the same meeting that the original eight siblings held for the first time in 1891.

Everything my family knows about our history is collected in a single book compiled from outside research supplemented with the notes taken at Reunion. Containing photographs, official land grants, and stories that used to live only in the family consciousness, the book, entitled *Stevens Family History: A History of the Children of Hanson and Lavina*, provides a resource for future family members while giving current descendants a tangible piece of history. While I have always known that my

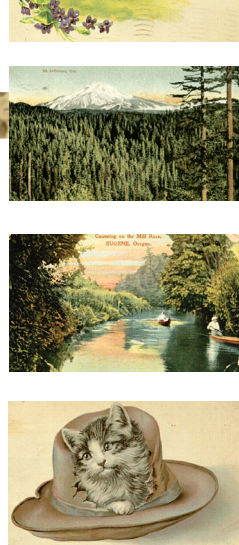
family has been around “forever,” I never truly grasped that idea until I held the book for the first time. After reading through over 400 pages about how the Stevens family started out in Oregon on a small family farm near Silverton, then spread all over the state and joined every possible industry and profession, I realized how intertwined my family is with Oregon’s history. My very determined ancestors were Oregonians seven years before our state was even a part of the Union.

They also lived through two world wars, the invention of the automobile, and the first landing on the moon, but unfortunately these major historical events often receive only a brief, summarizing sentence in the annual log. While one member or another of my family has been alive and recorded every major world event for the past 120 years, mentions of these events are heartbreakingly short: “Stories were told about the Trail;” “Guy Ringo gave rides in his automobile in February;” “Family members watched the moon landing together on television.”

These small notes are interesting, but to my family the quickly scribbled-in afterthoughts are glimpses into a past that we desperately wish had been better recorded. To be fair to those who wrote the snippets, the monumental events may not



The author and her grandmother, Jane Olsen, reminisce about past Reunions.



have seemed so monumental as they were happening. The fact that Guy owned the first automobile in the family and drove to Albany one spring to give rides to my great-great-grandmother and her sisters was of no importance to the secretary at that year's Reunion. That person was preoccupied noting all of the significant happenings of a family growing bigger every year while also trying to enjoy an event he or she had been taught to respect since childhood.

It's left to the older members of the family to breathe life into the small pieces of history we're left with. One of my favorite stories comes from the reunion of 1969. That year, the third Sunday in July happened to fall on July 20, the

teaching them the family's history and showing them how important this vast network of distant relations really is.

It falls to us younger members to pass on the stories that only exist in the minds of our grandparents. We record, record, record, but the point of Reunion, the point of meeting every single year, isn't to try and assemble a coherent family history, one to be flipped through and understood in a single sitting, but to be a part of a family identity that has inspired hundreds of us to dedicate one day every year to meet with the furthest reaches of our family tree.

Reunion is often overwhelming to outsiders. Whenever I attempt to explain the tradition to friends I am met with confused responses, and both years that I have brought guests to the meeting, they have been surprised not only by the sheer number of people milling around and comfortably chatting, but by the apparent sense of togetherness. We are a huge group, which makes it very difficult for all 100 plus people to be completely involved in each person's individual life, but at Reunion, the seven smaller branches of the family make a point to sit together. Side by side, all the Ringos—my brother, parents, grandmother, aunts, uncles, first cousins, second cousins, first cousins once removed, and I—share stories from the past year, supporting one another through the more difficult announcements. I'll see them again after Reunion, perhaps at Christmas and birthdays, graduation parties and funerals, events members from other branches might also attend, but much like the original families in 1891, every branch remains a tight-knit group year-round.

Unfortunately, the couple that started it all, Hanson and Lavina, left us few mementos to treasure. Their wagon could fit nothing more than the essentials needed to sustain a family of ten for two months. And what they did pack ended up not being enough; the family story goes that when the Stevens arrived in Oregon, Hanson and the eldest son Isaac took one route with the cattle, while Lavina and the seven younger children took the wagon down the river on a raft guided by Native Americans. When friends went searching for the wagon party, they found Lavina and the children stranded on the banks of the Sandy River, without any food to spare as they waited for Hanson and Isaac to catch up.

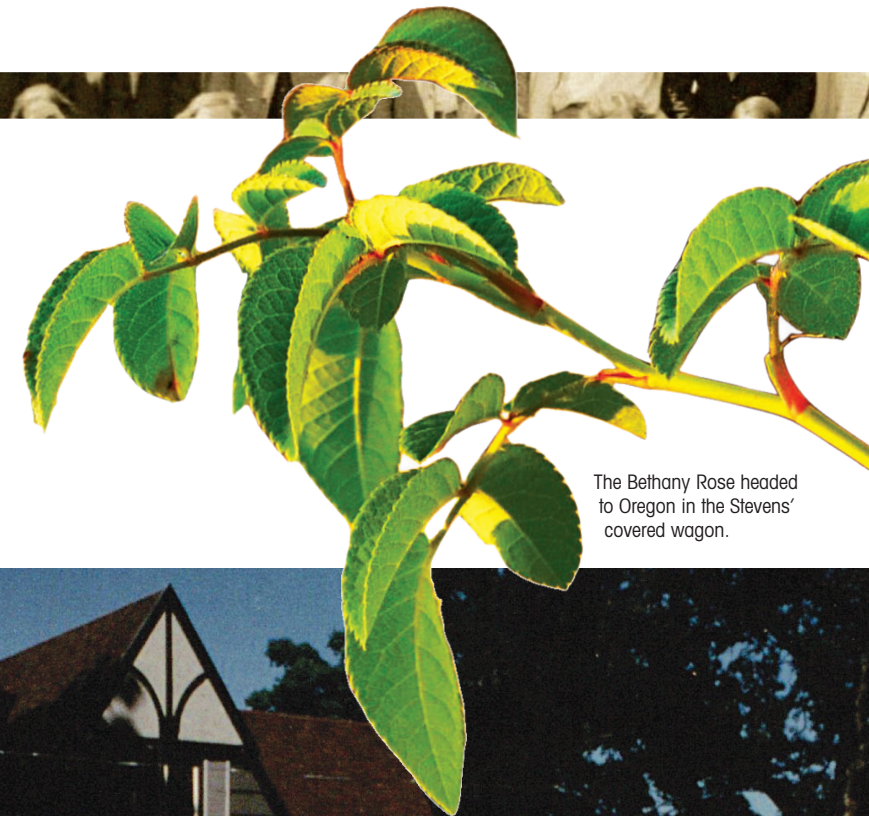
The few things the family brought from Iowa included a spinning wheel, the family Bible, and, tucked under the wagon amongst the tools, a clipping of Lavina's favorite rose. Against the odds, the rose survived the trip. Once in Oregon, Lavina nurtured the flower. Upon her death in 1859 a clipping was planted at her grave. In time, the rose in the graveyard was the only remaining offspring of the original.

In honor of our family's hundredth reunion in 1991, we submitted a rose clipping to the Portland Rose Society. Imagine the shock of then receiving the news that our rose, the one with a single plant remaining, was the only one of its kind. Previously unnamed, we christened it the Bethany Rose, after the cemetery where Lavina and Hanson are buried. Clippings were distributed to every branch of the family with the original bloom left in the cemetery to continue growing alongside the grave of its beloved owner.

Then came the groundskeeper. Unaware of both the rose's unique standing in the world and one-of-a-kind history, the cemetery's newly assigned groundskeeper declared war on what he thought was a weed. Using clippers and weed killer, he brought our family rose down to its roots. Eventually, news of the attack reached our family. Needless to say, everyone was devastated to hear that the original rose clipping had been destroyed.

Or so we thought. During a recent project to renovate Hanson and Lavina's gravesite, a small shoot was discovered pushing out of the ground at the corner of the grave. Decades had passed, poisons had been poured, roots had been ripped, but still the rose remained. The triumphant stock of a pioneering clipping grew back all on its own.

It comforts me to know that such a rose exists. Not only because it is a hardy and resilient plant that fought, and won, against the cemetery's groundskeeper, but because it is the only aspect of the continuation of our history that my family really has control over. Yes, we have painstakingly maintained the tradition of Reunion and documented the stories that have been passed down in our journal, but we aren't able to go back in time to beg our relatives to record their memories from the Trail. While I cannot speak for the hundreds of other members of the Stevens family, I can say that the Bethany Rose, despite a lifetime of Reunion memories, reassures me that our stubborn adherence to tradition and familial support can never disappear completely. Even if my great-great-grandchildren eventually stop attending Reunion and forget this story, the rose will continue to grow alongside Hanson and Lavina's headstones, a symbol of our enduring love. ☐



The Bethany Rose headed to Oregon in the Stevens' covered wagon.



The Stevens siblings in 1916. **FRONT ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT):** Isaac Stevens, Rebecca Mount, Rispa Ringo, Christina Esson. **BACK ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT):** Millard Stevens, Sarah McCubbins, Mary Smith, Martha Cahill.

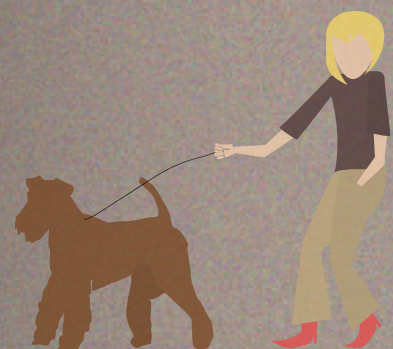
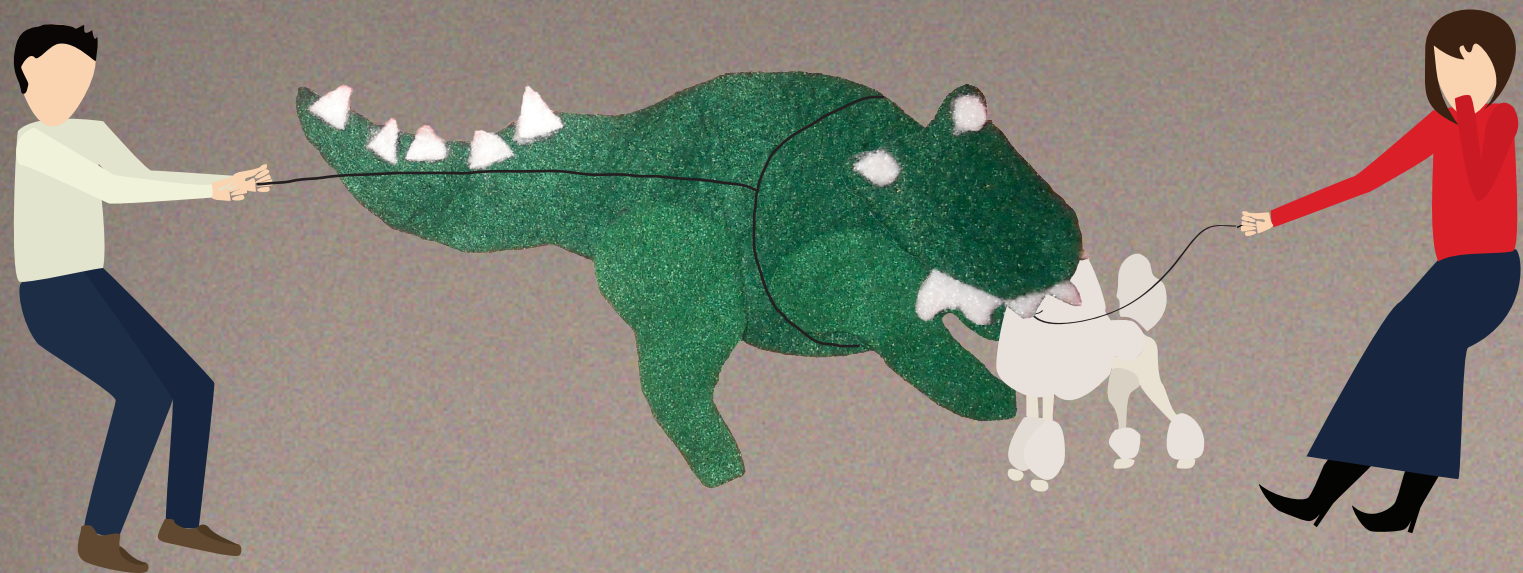


same day the Apollo 11 landed on the moon. The minutes book states that "family members watched the moon landing together on television," a short sentence that inspires a lengthy story from my grandmother, who was 39 that year. The family hosting Reunion, she says, placed four televisions throughout their farmhouse so that even though everyone was respecting the annual tradition, they could track the Apollo's progress, along with the rest of the nation. All 100 or so family members crowded into the farmhouse to watch the spacecraft successfully land. I can imagine the children jostling in the front, being told to quiet down while the adults fill the hallway, a hundred collective breaths taken in as the moment unfolds.

The first year I remember truly paying attention to the proceedings of Reunion was the summer I turned 16. As that year's Reunion president, I led the family count, a tradition that started between the original children to see who had the biggest family (a part of me knows that I inherited my competitive spirit from Rispa, who had 14 children). That summer served as my generation's coming-of-age, the time when my "group" realized our new responsibilities. In the not too distant future, we will bring our children to Reunion,



On July 21, 1991, the family gathers at the hundredth reunion.



WATCH OUT, HE BITES

STORY NEIL BESCHLE PHOTO ALEX STOLTZE DESIGN ANNA HELLAND

The struggle for exotic animal ownership gets fierce.



The Nez Percé tribes of the Pacific Northwest called the American black bear a “yaka.” Hugh Reed of Mitchell, Oregon, calls his bear Henry.

At 6-foot-2 and 250 pounds, Reed could be called a bear of a man, but he is no match for his beloved pet, who outweighs him by nearly 600 pounds. In the more than 10 years Reed has owned Henry, he’s had a few close calls with his furry companion and has the scars to prove it. Henry’s violent outbursts against Reed have been caused during excitable playtime and, in one instance, over a box of cookies Reed was feeding him.

Henry once resided at Reed’s gas station, greeting customers from an enclosure near the gas pumps. After years spent as one of the area’s uncommon tourist attractions, Henry now passes his days at the Reed family ranch.

While most pet owners stick to cats, dogs, hamsters, and fish, there are some like Reed who dare to invite more intimidating creatures into their homes.

As of January 1, 2011, the Oregon Department of Agriculture no longer issues new permits for the private ownership of exotic animals deemed to be potentially dangerous. Senate Bill 391 phases out the ownership of felines, canines, and bears not indigenous to the state, as well as wolves, primates, and members of the crocodile family. These select creatures are no longer sold within Oregon’s borders, with a few exceptions including zoologists, wildlife sanctuaries, and disabled people who need authorized service monkeys. When the ban went into effect, exotic pet owners across Oregon howled their disapproval.

Owners may adore their exotic pets, but their reputation in Oregon has not gone unscathed. The 2002 escape of a pet alligator in Beaverton

initially prompted Senate Bill 391. In the following years, the legislation gained popularity with each new report of an exotic pet on the loose. One such incident involved a Siberian lynx that in 2005 escaped its owner’s Clackamas home, entered a neighboring yard, and mauled a six-year-old girl.

Grabbing a brick off the ground, Tanya Applegate rushed to her daughter’s aid, hitting the lynx several times before it released the girl. County sheriffs arrived at the scene where they shot and killed the large cat. While the girl did not suffer any serious injuries, officials say the fact that the lynx had been declawed probably saved her life.

One of the most notorious exotic pet scenarios gone wrong occurred across the country in Stamford, Connecticut. In 2009, Charla Nash arrived at the home of her friend Sandra Herold to find Herold’s enraged pet chimpanzee in the driveway. In an effort to help Herold coax Travis, the 14-year-old, 200-pound male chimp, back into his cage, Nash rushed to her friend’s aid.

Travis pounced upon Nash the moment she set foot out of her car. In an effort to get her pet off her friend, Herold stabbed Travis in the back with a butcher knife and called the police. When Officer Frank Chiafari arrived on the scene, Travis confronted the police car in the driveway, knocking off a side-view mirror and ripping open the police car door. Having nowhere to turn, Officer Chiafari fired four shots into the burly primate, which then retreated back into the house where he died in his cage soon after.

Travis had previously been considered a well-behaved, loyal pet. He had found success as an animal actor, appearing on American television shows and commercials, including ads for Coca-Cola and Old Navy. He knew how to dress himself, could open doors using keys, and had developed a fondness for ice cream. Despite his usually charming behavior and television stardom,



however, Travis will now best be remembered for the vicious assault that left Nash blind with brutal facial injuries and no hands. In May 2011, she underwent a 20-hour face and hand transplant led by a 30-person medical team. Only the third such surgery to take place in the US, Nash's face transplant was successful while the transplanted hands were later removed due to post-operation complications.

Horrific incidents like Nash's often cause those unfamiliar with exotic pets to ask: Why not just get a cat or a dog?

"Part of it is the need to express their individuality—to have something different and unique," says Mark Hlavinka, an exotic animal handler. Hlavinka works at Brad's World Reptiles in Corvallis, Oregon. Located just 15 miles away from Oregon State University, Brad's World Reptiles is one of the largest reptile breeding and research facilities in the Pacific Northwest.

While standing in the facility's snake room, Hlavinka explains that sometimes fondness isn't enough to ensure the safety of both the animal and the people around it.

"For the most part, it is not necessarily abuse as it is neglect—lack of proper caging, proper diet, and proper food," he says about the reason attacks like Travis' can occur. "What may start out the size of your hand could end up being the size of your car."

Suddenly, an overwhelming and alarming sound engulfs the room where Hlavinka is speaking. In the corner of a large glass encasement, a rattlesnake coils, peering out at its handler in a defensive stance. The tip of its tail gyrates, creating a chilling rattle that makes one heed its deadly intentions.

As Hlavinka makes his way across the room toward the rattlesnake, he admits that not all pet owners acquire their companions for the right reasons.

"I've known guys who get big snakes because they thought it was macho or cool. I don't know how much they even liked the animal; it was more of a show-off factor," he says. "But I've also known a lot of guys who say, 'Hey look at my new cool gun!' and it's the same kind of idea."

Whatever the initial motives in purchasing the animal, organizations like nonprofit Responsible Exotic Animal Ownership (REXANO) seek to protect the rights of exotic pet owners. Zuzana Kukol and Scott Shoemaker founded REXANO to represent exotic pet owners like themselves. Both believe that as long as animal welfare and public safety laws are being followed, the private ownership of any animal should be protected in the US.

A 9-foot tall perimeter fence lines the borders of the REXANO property, complete with V-arm barbwire along the top and electric wiring running throughout. All of the feline and canine cages on the property are equipped with double-entry areas and are built with 6- and 9-gauge chain link fencing. These are just a few of the precautions that Kukol and Shoemaker take to ensure the safety of their animals and fellow humans.

"There are good and bad pet owners, zoos, and sanctuaries," Kukol says. "What matters is how you take care of the animal."

At REXANO, Kukol and Shoemaker care for a number of exotic animals including 19 canines and a number of large felines. One of their most notable residents is a 500-pound lion named Bam Bam. For Kukol, it was a natural progression to become the caretaker of so many exotic pets.

"I was involved with different animals all my life: horses, cows, reptiles, dogs, and eventually exotic cats," she says. "It wasn't something I decided on overnight."

While the average citizen doesn't have a tiger in his or her backyard, a recent survey suggests it's not as rare as may be expected. According to the Captive Wild Animal Protection Coalition (CWAPC), there are currently more than 3,000 primates, 10,000 to 20,000 big cats, and 8.8 million reptiles living in the US. The American population of pet tigers, the CWAPC adds, is between 5,000 to 7,000 tigers, twice as large as the wild tiger population in Asia. These numbers, however, are only estimates as some states are more lenient on keeping tabs on exotic animals.

Two months before the January 1 ban was passed, the Oregon Department of Agriculture had 49 permits issued for 88 exotic animals. The majority of the permits were for exotic felines and primates,

"While most pet owners stick to cats, dogs, hamsters, and fish, there are some who dare to invite more intimidating creatures into their homes."

including an ocelot and Rhesus macaques. Because their permits were filed before January 1, 2011, these owners are allowed to keep their pet until it dies or is sold.

Nationwide, many states have bans similar to Oregon's with only a handful having no regulation on private exotic pet ownership. In October 2011 one of these states, Ohio, found itself the center of national scrutiny when 56 bears, lions, tigers, and other animals escaped from a private menagerie. Local authorities ended up shooting 50 of the escapees; the remaining six were caught and transported to the Columbus Zoo. In the wake of the event, Ohio's lack of regulation led organizations like the Humane Society of the United States to call for new laws regulating ownership of exotic animals.

Whatever the future holds for exotic pets in Ohio and the rest of the country, owners will continue to defend their right to keep their animal companions.

"Qualities that make somebody a responsible exotic animal owner are the same that make somebody a responsible parent or a responsible domestic animal owner," says Kukol at REXANO. "Only have as many kids, domestic animals, or exotic animals that you can safely and comfortably provide for on your own, both financially and time-wise, as many are long-term, multiple-year responsibilities." ♡

BOTTOM LEFT: REXANO's Zuzana Kukol trains with her two-year-old pet tiger Frosty on Kukol's ten-acre property in Nevada. Photo courtesy of Scott Shoemaker. **MIDDLE LEFT TO UPPER RIGHT:** A menagerie of Oregon's exotic animals. From the Wildlife Safari in Winston, a mated lion couple and Tahini the cheetah. From Brad's World Reptiles in Corvallis, a snapping turtle, a panther chameleon, and an American alligator.

FEROCIOUS FACTS

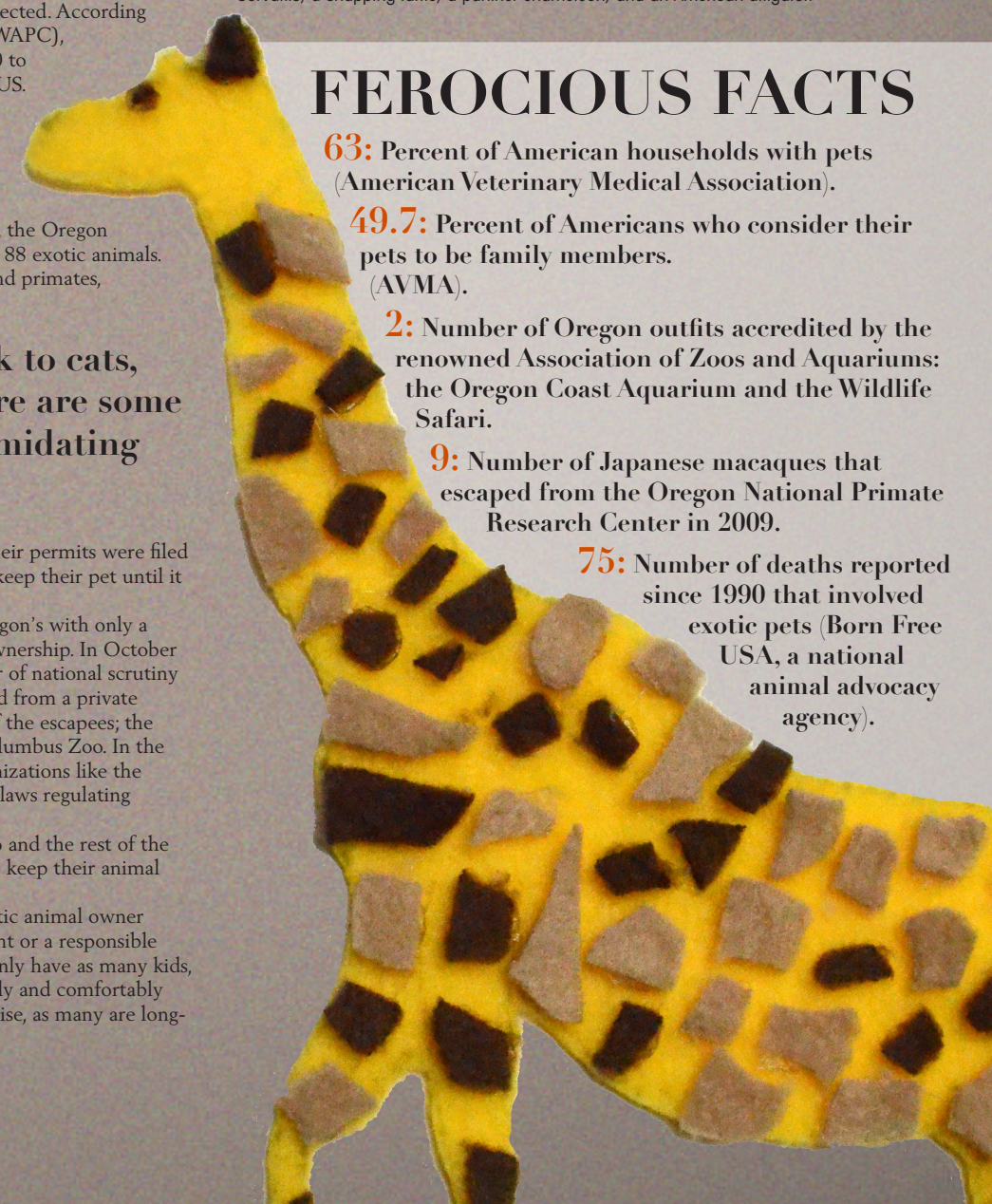
63: Percent of American households with pets (American Veterinary Medical Association).

49.7: Percent of Americans who consider their pets to be family members. (AVMA).

2: Number of Oregon outfits accredited by the renowned Association of Zoos and Aquariums: the Oregon Coast Aquarium and the Wildlife Safari.

9: Number of Japanese macaques that escaped from the Oregon National Primate Research Center in 2009.

75: Number of deaths reported since 1990 that involved exotic pets (Born Free USA, a national animal advocacy agency).



DESTINATION UNKNOWN

A hitchhiker travels through North and South America.

PHOTO EMILY FRAYSSE DESIGN LEO RICHARD WATSON

When I was 19 years old, I walked out of my front door in Portland, Oregon, with a small backpack full of books and underwear. No money, minimal planning. It wasn't running away from home; it was a personal experiment to form a new way of seeing things. On my way out, Mom gave me a \$10 bill, "to buy some granola bars or something," which I quickly disposed of in a neighbor's mailbox. I walked to the southbound I-5 freeway and stuck out my thumb. I continued hitchhiking into Mexico and eventually passed through 11 Latin American countries until I reached Santiago, Chile, nine months later.

This peek into my old travel journal picks up several months after leaving the US. I'm on the outskirts of Panama City trying to get to Colombia. My possessions consist of a backpack, a hammock, and \$48 that I saved working odd jobs in Panama City. There is no road between Panama and Colombia, so to continue my journey I need to hop a ship southward.

JUNE 13, 2010

After a few hours of waving my thumb on the side of a two-lane road connecting Panama City and the Caribbean coast, I am delighted when a semi-truck slows and pulls off to the shoulder. The driver and I chat until he drops me off in the port village of Miramar. Here, the locals inform me that merchant ships never accept extra passengers, much less tall, blonde, eccentric-looking, backpacking gringos like myself.

I march to the dock. The air smells like crisp, salty seaweed left by the tide to dry under the hot afternoon sun. Only one small ship remains in the harbor. There are four short Kuna men wearing denim shorts and baseball caps, busily carrying boxes onto the ship.

Clenching my teeth, I pick a box from the pile, and stack it next to the others on the ship. The sailors seem indifferent to my presence, so our work continues in dedicated silence.

Once all the cargo is loaded, an older man, apparently the captain, emerges from the ship and asks what I am doing. I request to work on board in exchange for passage to the Colombian port city Puerto Obaldia. He frowns, glances curiously at my mud-caked backpack, shrugs, and says, "Why not?"

Yes!!! This is the ticket to South America! I toss my backpack onboard. The crew glares at me as if I am a landlubbing hobo who doesn't belong here. Well, that's true.

The ship's cook invites me to eat dinner with the crew, where he serves us beautiful steaming bowls of rice and soup. Swimming in my meal is the stinking carcass of some creature that looks like a crossbreed between a crab and a space alien. The cook laughs while I probe its spiny exoskeleton with a fork. After dinner, the crew members retire to their respective hammocks. The sunlight has almost faded.

JUNE 14, 2010—DAY 1 AT SEA

That space alien was delicious.

Looks like this boat, the *Algo Mera*, will be my home for a while. The crew consists of the captain, cook, four other grunt workers, and a man with a clipboard. My job, like the other workers, is to throw and catch boxes. The clipboard man is a walking personality disorder with thick-rimmed glasses. He is in charge of counting the boxes we throw and scribbling on the clipboards.

Tomorrow we begin the route south to the Kuna Yala islands.

JUNE 15, 2010—DAY 2 AT SEA

This rice pot is especially overcooked today.

Through the screeching sound of my tin spoon scraping away burnt charcoal crust, I hear faint reggae music from the handheld radio in the

next room. A stack of plastic plates stained with ketchup and fish oil awaits me in the washing tub. My fingertips are slick with soapy residue. I glance around the small kitchen to make sure no one is watching, scoop up a weightless cloud of bubbles, and clap, sending an explosion of little white soap globs floating into the air. I smile to myself and look through the kitchen door.

Outside is the ocean and a rugged wooden dock. A green parrot perches on the thick nylon ropes anchoring the ship to the dock of the island Soskantupu. The beefy clipboard man paces down the platform. Before him stands a single-file line of indigenous Kuna women, each one holding a handwritten carbon-copy order form for crates of Pepsi.

"¡GRINGO!" Clipboard Man calls to me. "¡Saca doce cajas de Pepsi! Llévalas aquí."

"¿De donde?" I set the rice pot and spoon aside.

"Alla." He nods towards the cargo hold below deck.

Scurrying out of the kitchen and down the ladder into the dimly lit hold, I rummage through heaps of cardboard packages and heave the boxes of Pepsi skyward. Counting as each box surfaces, the crew passes the *cajas de Pepsi* across the ship and to Clipboard Man, who stacks them. "Ocho, nueve, diez ... diez, todavia falta dos cajas ... once, doce. Bueno, ya listo."

A light rain begins. The Kuna women remain poised, staring straight ahead. For a moment I am captivated as the rain droplets bounce off seawater. The rain reminds me of my home. *Staying safe inside my house, I think, I never could have imagined being anywhere as strangely beautiful as here. I wish my family could see this.*

JUNE 18—DAY 5 AT SEA

Early in the morning, before the sun comes out, I climb to the kitchen roof to lie on the plastic tarps. The bow of the ship nods left and right, absorbing the calming rhythm of the waves. The ship's gritty diesel engine chugs underneath the cold iron deck. A dense jungle of vines and ferns on Panama's mainland coast passes on the starboard side of the ship as we head southeast through the Kuna islands that pepper the coastline.

Merchant ships like the *Algo Mera* are the remote islands' only physical connection to the rest of the world, delivering products from the industrial mainland. Before this trip I had some romanticized idea about the Kuna tribes still living untouched by the Western vending machine diet. As it turns out, the Kuna also enjoy eating packaged foods from factories in Costa Rica; the plastic wrappers line the beaches like shiny seaweed.

JUNE 20—DAY 7 AT SEA

Today Panama celebrates *Día del Padre*, one of those holidays for which the original meaning has become mostly irrelevant. The modern purpose is, of course, to get madly intoxicated. Many who want an early start (such as our ship's cook) will take the day off work to ensure they are drooling and stumbling around half-naked before suppertime.

In the afternoon, I climb over the rusty sun-baked metal railing of the ship and walk down the concrete dock. Looking over the endless water from the island shore, I feel as though I'm standing on the rim of a contact lens floating in a swimming pool.

The soft skin of my toes feels the ground change from concrete to pebblestone to sand to soil. The footpath winds like an ant trail through palm groves into a blooming grass field, speckled with bright violet patches of wildflowers. The humid air swirls with intoxicating smells of tropical spices.

I wander into a neighborhood of Kuna houses neatly made of thick yellow and brown mangrove wood. Here I meet a group of about ten children, who spend an hour or so interviewing me about my favorite soccer players, if I have a wife, and all the animals that live in my home country. Feeling satisfied, they invite me to play *beisbol*.

CRACK. The bat, a two-by-four with a nail poking out, collides with a blue rubber ball and sends it soaring over the grass-thatched rooftops. The child tosses the bat aside and sprints toward first base. The other kids shout for him to run home: "Go *ohm!* Go *ohm!*"

Our *beisbol* game rages on until it is too dark to play. The grown-ups are still celebrating *Día del Padre*. I follow flute music and soon the swarm of children leads me to a large clearing in the middle of the island. A generator sputters nearby. A yellow floodlight roped to a towering palm tree illuminates a central circle. An explosion of movement comes as a

chorus of 25 colorfully dressed performers springs into the light and begins to dance. Panpipes penetrate the misty blue night air with sweet melodies. The faces of the dancers are radiant and for a moment it seems that an entire constellation of dazzling stars has come down to dance for this little island. A few hours pass. The light, dusky drizzle intensifies to a soggy tropical downpour, and I head back to the dock passing by huts lit by silver moonlight. On the ship I pull my feet back over the rusty iron railing, crawl over cajas of beer cans toward my hammock, and breathe in the familiar, lingering smell of burnt diesel.

JUNE 21

After working eight days on the *Algo Mera*, this island is our last delivery. I curl my fingers around my last crate of Pepsi, and give it a slight hug just for good measure. By nightfall we arrive in Puerto Obaldia, Colombia. The crew of the *Algo Mera* leaves me alone on the dock, just as they found me. I step onto a new continent with nothing but my backpack and my memories. Tomorrow I'll continue down the Pan-American Highway, following the road south.

On shore I lie down in an empty field and feel the breeze. As the cool, clear air above hums with stars, I straighten my spine, spread my arms, and listen. It is in these odd little moments that I feel as if the whole universe is surging through my fingertips. As I travel and connect myself with my ever-changing surroundings, the only direction I have really been going is inward. As the Kuna dancers' feet skipped through the sand, I felt my body wanting to move with them. Like our little ship, I am a pilgrim adrift, a speck of dust floating in the sky, suspended among a magnificent swirling dance of dust specks.

People ask me about hitchhiking through other countries as if it's a disease: "Isn't it dangerous? Why didn't you die?" For me, hitchhiking became the practice of tapping into internal resources while experiencing external scarcity.

This trip ended more than a year ago, and today where I've been is not as important as the way I continue to live my life. Amidst my day-to-day routine at the University of Oregon I must remember to regularly have spontaneous little moments of wonder as if I am still traveling.

And sometimes, just to keep the wind in my face, I still hitchhike up the freeway to visit my family. ♀
-STEPHEN FREY



After reaching Colombia, Stephen Frey continued on to Santiago, Chile, before returning home to Portland, Oregon. All told, he made a round trip of more than 12,000 miles.

The author in his element. Frey is an undergraduate human physiology major and creative writing minor at the University of Oregon.

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THE FABRIC OF LIFE

Quilting remains a vibrant tradition in the modern world.

The bustling atmosphere in the Masonic Lodge near Autzen Stadium hums with the chatter of girls and women between the ages of eight and 80. They peruse tables and catch up with each other on events. All of them wear nametags and have at least one thing in common: a passion for quilts.

This gathering is the monthly meeting of the Emerald Valley Quilters, established in 1995. The 140 members that make up the nonprofit group are highly focused on charity as well as on providing a place for quilters to trade fabrics, patterns, and techniques. The organization also gives members a chance to meet other quilters, an invaluable aspect to the culture behind the craft. "It becomes almost like a sisterhood," says Bev Harrison, a member since 2000.

Starting with textile traditions brought over from Europe, quilting began as an expensive, labor-intensive craft done completely by hand. With the introduction of inexpensive cotton fabrics in the 1790s and the sewing machine in the 1850s, quilting grew more accessible to middle class women. Quilters quickly created communities around the craft, which offered a new form of self-expression. Such a woman would make many quilts throughout her lifetime, the most intricate being her wedding quilt. According to the

Metropolitan Museum of Art, home of many historic quilts, the wedding quilt served as "an important keepsake from a woman's old life" as she left her childhood home for that of her husband.

Reminders of home were especially needed during America's push westward in the nineteenth century as travelers endured harsh weather and unfamiliar landscapes. "Women used their needles to make quilts that reflected the passages in their lives," writes quilt historian Mary Bywater Cross in her book *Treasures in the Trunk: Quilts of the Oregon Trail*. By interpreting the Oregon Trail through their work, pioneer women created, as Bywater writes, a "natural creative enterprise."

They also produced one of the few familiar aspects in the West's rough-hewn cabins, bringing both color and warmth. From those scarce times flowered many different quilting styles, including scrap, string, and patch. All three techniques reuse fabric, conserving a homesteading family's limited resources while also providing the fabric for small square, triangle, or strip pieces to add to a quilt.

In modern times, it is now the craftsmanship rather than the necessity of quilts that keeps the art relevant. In Springfield, Oregon's traditional quilting store Something to Crow About, lush greens, deep blues, and

autumnal browns sit on the shelf next to rich purples, barn door reds, and poppy oranges, creating a pastoral landscape of colors. The quilts covering the walls recall the warmth and nostalgia of a bygone time, but for the store's customers and owner Kennette Blotzer such sentiments are very much a part of the present.

"I have cupboards and closets at home filled with quilts," Blotzer says. "People ask me how many quilts I make in a year. Thirty, maybe 40?"

Blotzer initially began quilting during high school. Since then, the craft has taken on a much more personal level for her. After losing both her husband and three-year-old daughter to cancer, Blotzer turned to quilting for healing. "I had a big tragedy in my life," she says. "Part of my grieving process was quilting."

Blotzer's store specializes in Civil War era fabrics. With smaller designs and deeper, subtler colors, these traditional materials contrast starkly with the radiant hues and large patterns of contemporary fabrics. New styles of quilting are the focus of the Eugene Modern Quilt Guild (EMQG). A local offshoot of the international organization the Modern Quilt Guild (MQG), the EMQG celebrated its one-year anniversary in October 2011. "It's taken off like crazy," says Becky Fetrow, owner of Eugene store Piece By Piece Fabrics.

In 2009, the first MQG was founded in Los Angeles. The idea of having quilters share their techniques and styles was boosted heavily by the Internet, where quilters could share their ideas through blogs, Flickr, and other such networks. Soon MQG groups began to sprout up in cities all over the nation as well as throughout Europe, Canada, India, Australia, and New Zealand.

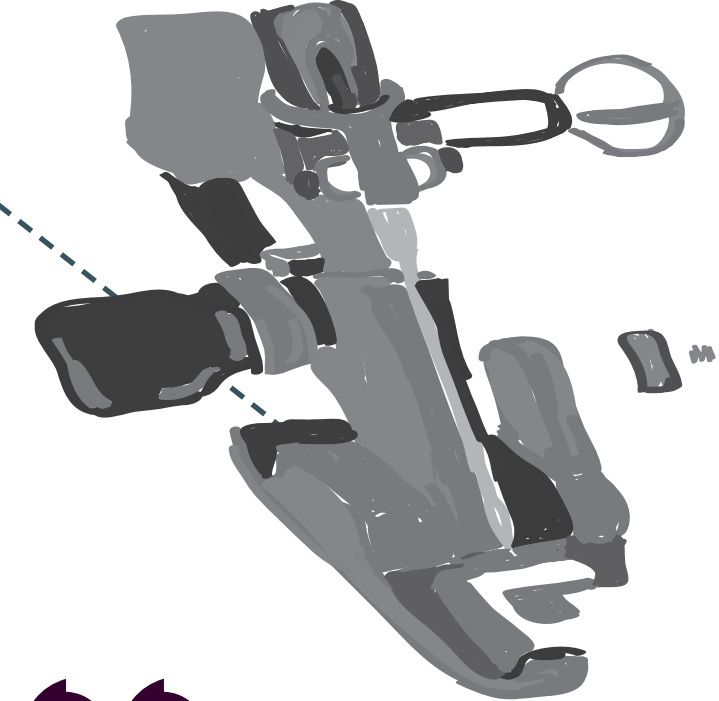
Modern quilters typically use fabrics with bold prints and solid colors. Contemporary designs are often very similar to traditional patterns with only slight modifications, or as the MQG phrases it, "reinterpreted traditional blocks." Modernized versions frequently disregard strict measurements. The result is imperfect, but also unique.

"The patterns are bigger, bolder, and brighter, and there's more of a push to use asymmetry. Things that aren't quite so defined," Fetrow says. Another newer method is to put aside the measurements and use arbitrary sizes of fabric pieces to give more character and individuality to a quilt.

"It is only through working with the design, colors, and thread selection, that I become open to letting the quilt 'talk to me' so I can create a quilt that is truly unique," says Mary Olson, whose work won multiple awards at past Oregon State Fairs. "The beauty of a quilt is taking a hand-drawn concept and creating a one-of-a-kind work of art." As Olson points out, it's easy to buy a blanket off a shelf, but a quilt has the ability to express color, imagination, time, and love.

Olson is a devoted quilter of appliqué, a time-intensive form that literally means both "applied" and "painstaking" in French. It involves sewing small pieces of fabric onto a larger background to create a specific image, often animals or flowers. Olson's first appliquéd quilt took her around 1,100 hours to complete. She was recently accepted into the American Quilter's Society Paducah Show, which she describes as the "Super Bowl" of quilt shows.

A major component of quilting communities is the giving of quilts. Blotzer at Something to Crow About often donates quilts, frequently giving her work to the American Cancer Society, as well as to her daughter's high school in Springfield. Members of the Emerald Valley Quilters also donate quilts and handmade teddy bears to over 17 local nonprofits. Last



The beauty of a quilt is taking a hand-drawn concept and creating a one-of-a-kind work of art.

year, Piece By Piece Fabrics provided ten quilts to the Independent Living Program (ILP), part of the Eugene organization Looking Glass Youth and Family Services. The Piece By Piece quilts went to high school seniors, some of whom were the first in their family to graduate.

"Many of our youth don't have a lot of items they can call their own," says ILP supervisor Andrea Hansen-Miller. "It was great to watch them open a gift specifically meant to congratulate them on a job well done." The ILP hopes to continue the program in years to come.

The individual mark of its owner is apparent in every quilt, from the fabric pieces chosen to how each scrap is measured. This individuality is precisely how the art of quilting has survived as long as it has, a tradition easily picked up by younger quilters. Fetrow cites do-it-yourself television shows like *Project Runway* as having an influence on young crafters, inspiring them with a can-do attitude. "People don't want something that everybody else has so they make it," Fetrow says.

"I think the most beautiful thing when you make something for someone is when they use it so much that they wear it out," she adds. "I think that's the best thing."

-ANNA SMITH

People don't want something that everybody else has so they make it.

PHOTO MARCIE GIOVANNONI DESIGN ADAM MEEKS

Notions, including needles, thread, and measuring tape, are the staples that make every quilter's masterpiece come together.

RAW

Oregon's unpasteurized dairies expand their herds despite government concerns.

Sitting atop a blue milk crate, Joseph Bray looks tiny in comparison to his bulky milk cow, Grandma. While his rust-colored heifer may be small by cow standards, her 800 pounds still pose a formidable challenge to the slight, red-bearded Bray. Nearby, a mechanical milking machine pumps rhythmically, imitating a snare drum. It hisses and snaps as Bray cleans Grandma's udders and attaches black rubber nozzles to each of her teats. The nozzles begin to mimic the action of a suckling calf, causing warm, white liquid to slowly flow through the clear plastic tubing now resting in Bray's hands. At his feet, the creamy milk collects in a stainless steel basin, waiting for its final transfer to a glass jar.

Bray and his wife inadvertently discovered a new passion for dairy farming five years ago after realizing that their son Jackson was lactose intolerant. Together they decided to seek out alternatives to pasteurized milk, which Bray and his wife believed was causing Jackson's congestion. A friend suggested they try unpasteurized milk, which many natural foodists claim is digestible by those with milk allergies. The Brays decided to test the theory.

They borrowed a goat from a friend and Bray tried his hand at milking. Though he had never been a fan of milk, the next morning Bray was compelled to taste the freshly chilled beverage. He was pleasantly surprised by its rich flavor. When his son tried it without any negative reactions, Bray was sold. A year later, he purchased a cow. Then, in May 2011, the family of nine made a radical change, moving 150 miles across Oregon from Bend to Cottage Grove to establish their own dairy business, Wholesome Family Farm.

The Brays are not the only ones turning to unpasteurized, or "raw," milk. Many Americans are investing in family cows or starting small dairies because of a burgeoning niche market for unpasteurized products and an audience looking for a closer relationship with their food. "People are starting to think a lot more about the food they're putting into their bodies," Bray says. "I think they're starting to recognize that we want the butter and we want the honey, not the stuff that just looks like it."

While the exact number of raw milk consumers is unknown, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that approximately 1 percent of all milk purchased in the US is unpasteurized. The increasing interest in such products offers small dairies an exciting opportunity. However, the high number of food-borne illnesses associated with raw

milk worries government officials. The CDC reports that between 1973 and 2009 raw dairy products were responsible for approximately 82 percent of all dairy product-related outbreaks of disease. Between 1998 and 2009, raw dairy led to a reported 1,837 illnesses, which resulted in 195 hospitalizations and two deaths.

As of now, all cow's milk sold in Oregon stores must be pasteurized. State law forbids dairies that produce unpasteurized milk from advertising their products, selling in stores, and delivering to customers. Raw milk dairymen are also prohibited from owning more than two lactating cows, nine lactating goats, or nine lactating sheep.

Public health specialists view pasteurization as a key tool in the fight against food-borne illness. The process raises the temperature of milk for an extended length of time killing off life-threatening pathogens like salmonella, listeria, and brucellosis. Pasteurization was introduced during the early 1900s in response to an epidemic of food-related illnesses associated with factory-processed raw dairy. According to an article published by the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* in 2009, in the early part of the twentieth century infant mortality rates in cities hovered around 30 percent due in part to "swill milk," contaminated milk that was often laced with additives like formaldehyde or animal brains to prevent spoilage.

The government responded to the crisis by passing the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906. The law instituted new food processing regulations and laid the foundations for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Following the Act, many local governments began adopting ordinances that mandated pasteurization, leading to widespread use of the technique. Today, pasteurization remains the industry standard for safety despite raw milk advocates who argue that the process destroys important nutritional benefits found in milk like lactase-producing bacteria. By removing such bacteria, raw milk advocates say the beverage becomes indigestible for some and harmful for others.

"There's no reason to pasteurize perfectly good milk," says Nicole King, a 12-year dairy industry veteran who runs Polyrock Registered Jerseys, a raw milk dairy in Lorane Valley, Oregon. "Pasteurization is used to kill the bad bacteria, and unfortunately it's killing all the good bacteria that is in there too. When the bacteria are heated, it changes how your body reacts to milk."

Ed Starr, a raw milk dairyman and rancher at Milkin' Deer Ranch in

"[People] are starting to recognize that we want the butter and we want the honey, not the stuff that just looks like it."

Colton, Oregon, has been milking cows and drinking unpasteurized milk since he was six years old. He raised his family on it and credits raw milk with keeping them healthy. "I kind of wonder why [raw milk] was okay for 2,000 years and all of a sudden now it's not," Starr says.

Like many raw dairy advocates, Starr sees a connection between the large commercial dairy industry and the need for pasteurization. "I've been to big dairies and I certainly wouldn't want to pop the bottom of a bulk tank and drink raw milk after cruising through some of them. They're absolutely disgusting," Starr says, adding that others he has visited have been "incredibly clean."

In February 2011, raw milk farmers assembled in Oregon's capital to testify in favor of a bill that called for the relaxation of laws involving unpasteurized dairy products. Friends of Family Farmers (FoFF), an Oregon-based organization that represents independent family farms, proposed House Bill 2222, also known as the Family Farm Act. The bill aimed to ease some of the demand pressures on raw dairies by proposing changes like allowing a raw dairy farmer to own ten lactating cows, five times the number the law currently permits.

Tillamook dairy farmer Sue Emerson testified in opposition to the proposed changes. "This is dangerous," she told the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources. "My big fear, and other dairy farmers' fear, is that when some child gets sick and dies, *USA Today* and the *Oregonian* won't say 'raw milk.' They will say 'Milk killed this child' and it will affect me economically."

Jerome Rosa, an organic dairy farmer who also testified against the bill, recounted his two-year-old daughter's two weeks spent in the hospital after allegedly ingesting *E. coli*-contaminated raw milk from his dairy. The bill never passed the hearing.

"I think we were half-heard," says Starr, who attended the hearing as a FoFF representative. The testimonies were held at the end of the day and as a result, many of the legislators left before the hearing ended. "I felt that was extremely unfair," Starr says.

While he was disappointed with the outcome, he expects that FoFF will revisit the topic in the future.

To help expand their business under current regulations, the Brays began selling shares in their farm's raw milk, butter, and cream last June. As a herdshare—a business model where the farmer sells partial ownership rights of a cow to an individual while boarding the animal on the farm—Wholesome Family Farm can exceed the two cow law and deliver directly to customers. The Brays currently own eight cows and deliver to several locations, including Bend, Portland, and Eugene. They plan to expand into the grass-fed beef and poultry business within the next year.

Back in the milk room, Bray releases Grandma from the milking machine as two of his children coo in the next heifer. "You've got to figure out the cows' personalities," he says as he sprays the udders with a hose, cleaning off the dirt and debris accumulated from a night in the wet pasture. "You can't make an 800-pound cow do what you want. You just suggest that they want to do what you want." It's a tactic that may be employed in the debate on raw milk as it lumbers onward to a yet unknown conclusion. ♀

-BRENNNA HOUCK

Warm raw milk fills up mason jars at Wholesome Family Farm. The milk must be chilled as soon as possible.



At Wholesome Family Farm, the cows wait for their turn in Joseph Bray's milk room.



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PEOPLE IN MOTION

Deck the Streets



Vagabond Skateboards customizes
the skating experience.

Tucked away in the single-car garage of an inconspicuous duplex in Eugene, Oregon, business partners and brothers Brian and Kurtis Hester effortlessly weave around each other, gathering tools and staging their work area with grinders, sanding pads, and saw horses. The faint sound of jazz floats them through the routine as Kurtis sands and contours a blank Canadian maple skate deck before Brian applies a carbon copy stencil to the freshly prepped wood. Shortly after stenciling, the sweet smell of burnt wood lightly threads its way across the room. Almost 20 minutes later, the process culminates as Brian puts the finishing touches on the face of a three-eyed hobo, the official company logo of Vagabond Skateboards.

At Vagabond, the Hesters draw on the same innovative spirit that inspired many of the world's first skateboards, which were custom-made by nailing discarded roller skate wheels to a two-by-four. However, instead of haphazardly marrying two unlikely components together like their predecessors, the brothers use one-of-a-kind techniques like custom contouring and pyrography, or wood burning, to parlay used skateboards into recycled, functional works of art.

"We're trying to bring something new to the Eugene skateboard scene,

a creative outlet for ourselves and for people who want custom-made boards," says Brian, who at 28 has been skateboarding for over half his life. A 2007 alumni, Brian graduated from the University of Oregon (UO) with a bachelor's degree in digital arts, a major he says laid the foundation for drafting designs of his company's unique product.

The brothers' recycled creations have included titles such as "Death Banana," a bright yellow skateboard redesigned in the shape of a banana with glaring eyes, bared teeth, and a pointy flared tongue, and "Tuna Fish," a fish-shaped deck with a blue and gold scale-like pattern and anatomically correct fins. The outlines of each of the scales, as well as the fins of the "Tuna Fish," were wood-burned by hand, giving it a rich mottled coloration and deep texture. In fact, every board the duo produces has a custom wood-burned element, whether it's the Vagabond logo or a hand-etched tree.

"Wood burning sets our boards apart from other companies because it's a technique that can't be mass produced," Kurtis points out. At age 25, Kurtis is currently studying history at the UO, and like his brother, has been skateboarding for much of his life.

But aside from the gratification of exercising their creative talents,

recycling skateboards has a deeper meaning for the Hesters: preservation. The North American sugar maple, known for its durability and high-impact resistant characteristics, is highly sought after by skateboard creators worldwide. Many other manufacturers, including in the furniture, home construction, and maple syrup industries, prize the tree for the same qualities. The brothers take pride in knowing that recycling skateboards relieves pressure from this valued species and that their concept could someday play a role in conserving the tree.

"We have stacks [of skateboards], and our friends have stacks [of skateboards] so we're taking advantage of a resource that's already available," Kurtis says.

To date, Vagabond has designed over 130 custom skate decks out of old skateboards donated by friends, as well as new blank decks and longboards, which are purchased online. The new decks are sold to skaters interested in doing tricks because the new wood is considered "crisp," meaning it responds better to impact. Recycled skateboards, the duo's first passion, can also be used for tricks, but are primarily intended to be used as cruisers for transportation.

"We've never made the same thing twice," Kurtis says. "Sometimes we use the same design, but we always use different colors or put it on a different-sized board."

An average recycled deck can take as many as eight to ten hours to rework, but greater attention to detail means longer hours. As each new design develops, used boards go through a stripping process before they're reshaped, sanded, and smoothed over. After a board is prepped, one of the brothers will lay out the new design prior to wood burning, taping, and

painting it with a premium quality spray paint.

"There are very few other brands that make skateboards like Vagabond," says Portland skateboarder Garrett Weber. When buying a skateboard, Weber, who owns four Vagabond skateboards, says he looks for characteristics like the quality of wood and shape—two details he knows the Hesters pay close attention to.

Most recently Weber has been riding a skateboard called the "Vagabomb," which is named after the slang term skateboarders use for skating down or "bombing" hills. With a rounded nose and a tail cut into two triangular fins, the design mimics the iconic outline of a nuclear bomb. It is also set up with 60-millimeter urethane wheels for cruising.

Reflecting fondly on their company's start—Vagabond began in a detached three-by-five utility closet over two-and-a-half years ago—the Hester brothers contemplate their future.

"Back then, we had to run a 20-foot extension cord just to get power to the building," Brian says with a laugh.

In the years since, the company has expanded, adding a table saw and a chop saw to their repertoire of tools. They have also created a Vagabond website and sold numerous skateboards at skate parks around Eugene.

"We would really like to see Vagabond grow into a full-blown skate shop someday," Kurtis says.

But regardless of what the future holds, the brothers plan to continue producing their custom-made "Oregon-grown" skateboards. As Kurtis says: "Recycling skateboards is good for the environment, it's good for the skate scene, and it's good for us. It's a win, win, win." ♀

-LACEY JARRELL

"Recycling skateboards is good for the environment, it's good for the skate scene, and it's good for us. It's a win, win, win."

COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Vagabond Skateboards recycles skate decks to create brilliant new boards including one with the company logo of a three-eyed hobo and Vagabond's custom creation "Death Banana." Brian Hester sits on the far left of the Vagabond office, a single-car garage in Eugene, Oregon, while brother Kurtis shapes the tail for a "Tuna Fish" board. Later at Amazon Park Kurtis tests the quality of Vagabond's product.



PHOTO BRANDEN ANDERSEN



TALK THERAPY

A family finds
peace through
poetry.

ON OPPOSITE PAGE FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Every month Melissa Overton and her son Davan Overton make the 40-minute drive to Eugene from their home in Walton, Oregon, to perform at Tsunami Books. At a slam in November, Melissa shared, and in some places sang, a piece about meeting her husband.

"Toast, toast, toast. Toast and pepper jelly? Josh, can you hear me? We can all see you beautiful people, but we want to hear you too," says Jorah LaFleur, as she giddily checks the mic.

It's a typical night at the Eugene Poetry Slam, hosted every second Saturday of the month at local bookstore Tsunami Books. After a few minutes of mic checks by LaFleur (the night's host) followed by several open mic presentations, the main event begins.

Four poets into the competition, a lanky teenager dressed head to toe in black, save for a red tie, strides up to the mic. His hands are shaking exiguously, despite a confident tone in his voice. When he begins speaking there's a slight lisp, but looking out on the crowd from his unmistakable place of power on stage, he doesn't care. Neither does the audience. They're hanging on to his three-minute performance as if it's their only sustenance. The mic is solely his.

This is Damien Maxwell. A cool, confident, nonplussed 15-year-old who can spin words like Arachne spun silk. Life is sharp and discordant, but Maxwell can make even the most cacophonous sounds flow like birdsong.

Davan Michael Myrand Overton is none of those things. Davan is a slightly unsure freshman at Mapleton High School, a small school of only 86 students. Davan skips words when he's writing due to Dandy-Walker syndrome, a cyst in the brain that affects his writing and gross motor skills.

Damien and Davan couldn't be more different. That is, if they weren't the same person.

Damien is the pen name and alter ego Davan created for his work in slam poetry. "I was in a deep, deep depression so I was writing really dark, sad stuff. Once I found this poetry slam, it was like a second life for me. The first life, which has all of the baggage and everything, goes away when I'm in the second and it's just an amazing feeling."

Davan explains all this while sitting nervously on the couch in his family's Walton, Oregon, home. His mother, Melissa, sits to his left, facing him for reassurance. She is a matronly woman with short, fiery red hair that matches her vivacious, sharp personality. Davan's mother is an important guide for him in the world of slam as she herself lives, writes, and performs with a disorder; Melissa is bipolar.

The Overtons first found the welcoming world of slam poetry a little over a year ago when Melissa took Davan to participate in workshops held by The Young Writers Association. The last day of class dealt with poetry and featured Eugene Poetry Slam MC and spoken word artist Jorah LaFleur as a guest speaker. After talking to LaFleur and making sure a slam could be a safe and accepting platform for expression, Melissa began bringing Davan to the event at Tsunami Books.

"Because of the material a lot of people read, you don't see that much family involvement," LaFleur says, referring to slam topics like sex and death. "I appreciate that for [Melissa and her kids] slam is a really healthy decision. They all feel good about it, and it's obviously something powerful and meaningful for each of them individually."

Since her bipolar disorder tends to "run on the high side," Melissa says she is considered legally disabled. For this reason, she can't drive, so her father takes the family to the Eugene slam, a roundtrip of 80 minutes.

"It's very much a family affair," Melissa says of the monthly pilgrimage. It's also an essential tool for communication between Davan and Melissa. There are things, Davan says, that he and his two sisters have learned about their mother through slam that they may never otherwise have known. The same is true for Melissa.

"I learn a lot about you through your poetry," she says to her son, placing a reassuring hand on his shoulder. "[It helps with] learning about you and helping you through what you need to go through at that time. We're really lucky we have that."

Many of the topics slam has opened up for the family delve into the complex. For example, the poem Damien read at a performance in October dealt with paranoia brought on by an ex-girlfriend before she moved to South Dakota.

"Her boyfriend there actually threatened to kill me and it was freaky," Davan says. "Paranoia really set in and I kept looking over my shoulder every five seconds. I just couldn't handle it. [It helped when]

I got a lot of thoughts out on paper."

According to Melissa: "Davan's paranoia got very severe at points, but the writing is definitely an outlet for him to work through what is going on in his head."

A focal point in Melissa's poetry is her mother, whom Melissa cared for until her mom's death from diabetes in 2001. Melissa says everything that could have gone wrong with her mother's sickness did.

"You know when you let the string out on a yo-yo and start swinging it? The sicker [my mom] got, the faster it went, and when she died it was like someone let go of that string and I went hurtling through space. That was my first truly manic episode, and it was a difficult time for me," she says, looking at a photo taken of her and her mother on Melissa's first Mother's Day.

Through slam the Overtons met Nigel Burch, a 29-year-old poet, preschool teacher, and musician, who has become a mentor to Davan. According to Burch, writing poetry and attending the Eugene slam is a therapeutic practice for both Davan and his mother.

"He and his mom are a good combination," Burch says. "They're very similar, and I'm happy that they're able to express themselves like that because they do a pretty great job. I think it's just so powerful, and it helps them in their lives."

Though a fundamental premise of a poetry slam is the scoring of poems on a 10-point scale, most participants agree that, above all else, a slam is about expression.

"The point is not the point. The point is the poetry," LaFleur says. "It's just yourself and your voice and your words. I really like the levelness of that and I like that people can come to this art form from all different places and you're not inhibited by insecurities."

Both Burch and LaFleur believe that with the continuing support of his family and the growing confidence that comes from speaking at the monthly slam, Davan has the ability to go far.

"I think this is just the beginning," says Burch with an enthusiastic grin on his face. "I think Davan's going to make some serious, positive changes [in the world]. He's very young, but he's going to be a writer of some sort if he wants to be, and a performer also if he can harness that potential."

Davan has a similar dream. Back in Walton, Melissa and Davan get up from the couch to greet a neighbor on the front porch. Outside, Davan divulges his dream of touring as a spoken word artist.

"It would be really cool to just stop school and do that," he says with a meditative look in his eyes. "But we'll see." ☐

-MEAGAN MORAWSKI



"Once I found **SLAM POETRY** it was
like a second life for me."



PHOTO SEAN DANAHAR DESIGN JONOTON MARCUS BOOZE

PSYCHEDELIA REBOOTED

Modern artists take audiences to the brink of technological overload.



ABOVE AND RIGHT: Portland-based artist Christian Oldham appears amid projections from a video he created to mirror the song "Preyouandi" by musician Oneohtrix Point Never.

Born out of a powerful convergence of social consciousness and a widespread availability of mind-altering drugs, "psychedelia" burst out of the 1960s like the beads of a shattered kaleidoscope. It was a movement characterized by tie-dye and fringed vests worn by hippies who danced to the likes of Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead at places like Woodstock and Ken Kesey's notorious Acid Tests in San Francisco. The substances that defined the culture—mescaline, peyote, hallucinogenic mushrooms, and, most infamously, lysergic acid diethylamide, or LSD—were embraced by youths who found themselves seeking heightened states of consciousness while "tuning in and dropping out" across the nation. The psychedelic art of the culture, comprised of free-flowing forms, vibrant colors, and hyper-detailed mosaics, helped shape and will forever identify the time's vibrant counterculture.

Fast-forward 50 years: The bell-bottoms and love beads of yesteryear have been replaced by skinny jeans and ear buds. Gone are the days of velvet trousers and flower power, and as all such things must evolve, a new generation of artists has emerged, producing intense imagery similar to that of the 1960s, though not quite for the same reasons.

This modern genre, known as "dense" videography, has been dubbed psychedelic because of its use of deep color layering, flashing lights, and stratified visual media. But rather than trying to convey the "far out" experience of hallucinogenic drugs, contemporary artists create these multi-dimensional videos using digitalized shapes and media-sourced imagery that embodies the present technological age. Inspired by an unprecedented flow of non-stop information, these artists aim to offer an engaging alternative to the monotonous narrative of mainstream media.

"Part of the intent [of the videos] is to purposely put more in there than you can get out of it in a passive way. We're already bombarded with so much information, and everything is created to be so passive. It was kind of a reaction to our current environment," says Portland-based multimedia artist Eric Mast, who is professionally known by the name E*Rock.

"Palace of Light (Revisited)," a collaboration between Mast, who

recorded the video's soundtrack under his record label Audio Dregs, and New York-based multimedia artist Yoshi Sodeoka, begins as an assault of layered colors and flashing light that smears across a computer screen to a staggered electronic drum beat. The intermittent bass takes a back seat to tunnel-like effects that originate from a distant vanishing point in the center of the screen. A confetti of white lights erupts as the seconds tick by; muted red faces begin to wash in and out of view as laser patterns play against a starry backdrop. The visual layers get deeper and deeper, and as random imagery flashes on-and-off screen, complex scenes emerge with information so densely put together that the video requires repeated viewing to process everything.

"My stuff is for your senses. If you see one of my videos and you get stressed out, that's one thing. But, if you see a video and it makes you excited, that's good too," explains Sodeoka, who has been creating videos for over 15 years.

"I've never done drugs. I don't know if my videos look like an acid trip."

Other artists, like Christian Oldham, known professionally as Megazord, are taking the dense video art form to another level entirely. "Psychedelic is often associated with the artwork of the 1960s and 1970s, which was often inspired by LSD acid trips," Oldham says. "I've never done drugs. I don't know if my videos look like an acid trip. I'm trying to express something more along the lines of a [technological] lifestyle."

In early 2011 Oldham debuted his real-time Internet-based



performance piece "Burning Down Your Facebook" to a crowd of about 40 in the basement of Portland concert hall, the Artistry. Dressed in head-to-toe black, a style he best describes as cyberpunk, Oldham sat with his back to the audience. IDM (intelligent dance music) saturated the lower-level floor as he used the large wall screen as a canvas upon which to deliver a rapid-fire assault of technological overload.

"I was showing Mark Rothko paintings next to photographs of war crimes with iChat right under that, and then a YouTube video of a Hummer going off-road all at once," Oldham says. "Within the one screen there would be about six different things going on."

He explains that despite the overwhelming effect of the initial layers, which overlapped each other in quick succession, the levels actually went much deeper. By opening and closing programs, Oldham had real-time video chats with audience members while looping videos flashed in and out of view at high speeds throughout the performance.

Adam Forkner, who was in the audience live video chatting with Oldham, says that the show stirred mixed feelings in the audience, as some members were uncomfortable with the intensity of the show's intimacy. Such reactions, Forkner says, reflect how he believes people privately engage on the Internet by scavenging around and overwhelming themselves with random information—a time-wasting behavior they may not want to discuss publicly. "It was a good mirror cast to what goes unsaid about how people spend their time on the Internet," he adds.

Even while each artist manipulates

electronic media to express his or her own stylistic nuances, there is no denying that the psychedelic genre utilizes the ubiquitous nature of modern technology not only as a delivery method, but as a source of inspiration. An array of influences from characters inspired by the original Nintendo Entertainment System to clips of kabuki dancers in Japanese make-up advertisements can all be found streaming through dense media layers. Music of all kinds—electronic, punk, and even metal—also plays a powerful role since many artists often design their videos to complement music they have already created.

"It just makes sense to do everything at once. If I made a painting, I wouldn't let other people touch it," says Sodeoka, who creates dense videos as a compliment to his self-produced albums.

Regardless of its source, every layer created by a dense video artist is designed to stimulate the audience, although the narrative may not always be instantly understandable. But, like bringing any new art form to fruition, it's all about pushing boundaries. In the 1990s when Mast began experimenting with videos, files had to be the smallest size possible in order to maximize the amount of content jam-packed into one video. The limited technology and dial-up Internet of the time restricted the density of layers and would often cause Mast's computer system to crash.

"Part of the exercise was based on how much you could make with how little you had," Mast recalls. Now, he says, technology is so advanced that it is harder to push those limits, but it also means that the possibilities are infinite. ♀

-LACEY JARRELL

PHOTO WILL KANELLOS DESIGN MICHAEL CHEN ILLUSTRATION CHARLOTTE CHENG

A Wanderer's Tale

Traveling abroad helps one man move forward after his mother's death.

When my mother died of recurring cervical cancer, it was, needless to say, devastating for the 17-year-old me. My nearest relatives—my dad, stepmother, and half-brothers—lived in distant Colorado and weren't really part of my daily life, which left me to handle the change more or less on my own.

So while most teenagers were trying to figure out romance, where they were going for college, how to get a job, or just what to make of their final years in high school, I was doing far more adult things. After my mom's death, I technically had a legal guardian in the form of a family friend, but no one else really knew anything about my mother or her way of doing things. This meant that, despite my guardian, I had to manage thousands of dollars that had been in limbo for the painful year it took my mother to die. I was coordinating information, events, and people involved in transitioning my mother's worldly possessions into a trust. All in all, I was largely living an independent life. It was a little too much for me, and though I managed, I soon slipped into a low-intensity, yet constant, depression.

Then the summer after graduating from high school, I sold most of my worldly possessions and embarked on a trip to the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. I went alone with only a backpack full of clothes, a tent, and some saved money. No tour groups, no friends tagging along, no plan for when I got there. Nothing. All I knew was that my return flight was six weeks out and that I was going.

It was the single best thing I have done in my entire life.

One of my more profound experiences on the trip occurred during my stay in Bath, England. I was sharing a room with a British Royal Marine recently back from Iraq. The poor man had been in Basra during the worst of it and he woke up screaming every night. Before I left Bath, I bought him a pint and asked what had brought him to town. It turned out that before enlisting he'd been a student in Edinburgh, Scotland. Now back, he'd decided to wander around the UK for the same reason I had: to clear his mind a bit.

For him, wandering without a goal was a way to finally deal with the past year's burdens of making daily decisions that might mean the difference between life and death for himself and his fellows. He told me traveling was like slowly lifting a weight off of his shoulders. Although I've never been a soldier, I understood. As I wandered without goals or responsibilities, I too left some weight behind.

When the soldier and I parted ways, off on similar quests in different directions, I headed to Edinburgh. I arrived during the Fringe Festival, one of the world's largest open air festivals. The number of cultures represented in the people I saw was staggering. I befriended an Australian who had spent two years wandering the globe, working at a number of youth hostels and bars. Then there was an Israeli soldier, fresh out of mandatory military service and looking to explore the world. I even got to know the hostel owner—a Scottish man who had spent half his life in Ireland.

All three, as I discovered after a few pints into an evening together, had fascinating stories to tell and wandered not only to experience freedom from responsibility, but also to experience truth. There are stories you never hear in the safety of your own society, stories essential to understanding the nature of the world, and that, as much as anything else, was what they sought in their travels. Their stories inspired me to find out the truth of things, driving me to become a journalist in the years following my journey.

After a week, three spontaneous train rides, and countless pints later, I finally made it to Ireland. When I arrived in the land of myths, high kings, and tragic history, the lessons learned in Edinburgh were immediately put to the test. I was and always have been a regular financial contributor to Sinn Féin, one of the political parties most dedicated to a unified Irish Republic. When I got to my hostel in Belfast, I found myself in the middle of the Loyalist part of town, where the people were British and damn proud of it.

To make matters more uncomfortable, I arrived during Marching Season, a time when Loyalists celebrate the British conquest of Ireland and often get into fights with their Republican counterparts. Someone with my views could get attacked, and I did. One night, while attempting to help break up a fight started in a Republican pub by an already extremely drunk Loyalist, I caught a fist to the jaw. I was awarded a drink on the house, but more importantly, I saw—and felt—first-hand how much something that happened centuries ago was still a very real point of contention. The Troubles, as the situation is called in Ireland, is more complex than anything I'd ever encountered. It gave me some much needed perspective on my own troubles.

Later in the trip, everything came together while I was lying in the middle of a 5,000-year-old ring fort. I was visiting a tiny Irish island where locals still converse in Irish Gaelic. This land was filled with tragedy and joy, prosperity and poverty, all part of a story that, for its many twists and turns, turned out beautiful. Not unlike my story, I realized.

However, there's one crucial problem with experiencing such absolute freedom: When you've enjoyed it, it's nearly impossible to go back to the way things were. In fact, I'm not sure it's possible at all. Liberating yourself from responsibility to wander foreign roads with only your own thoughts as a guide—that's a rare and addictive kind of freedom.

I believe that too often people get caught up in trying to find a particular adventure while traveling. Intentionally or not, this is what keeps many from having a simple vacation turn into a life changing journey. They bring home with them, and in doing so miss the entirely different world that awaits.

I can't promise that fellow travelers will experience such a profound change as I did, but I can promise that anyone brave enough to take the plunge will never forget nor regret the experience. So at least once in your life, give it a try. You can't understand what you're missing until you do.

—KEEGAN CLEMENTS-HOUSSER



The author, age ten, and his mother enjoy an afternoon in Florence, Oregon.

The Palace of Holyroodhouse (center) sits in the historic Old Town district of Edinburgh, Scotland.

PHOTO KEGAN CLEMENTS-HOUSSER DESIGN MICHAEL CHEN



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