

ETHOS

Fall 2010 Volume 3 Issue 1



BLACK GOLD ON THE GOLD COAST

**Finding
Kuna Yala**

**BUSTING OUT:
THE RIGHT TO BARE IT ALL**

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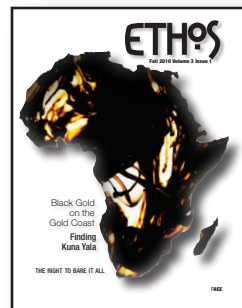
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Congratulations to the *Ethos* staff, both past and present, for its award-winning work. In 2009, *Ethos* received national recognition from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association's College Gold Circle Awards and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation.



PHOTO BLAKE HAMILTON

Hello, my name is Suji, and among a number of things—ADD, OCD, manic depression, and an overabundance of anxiety-induced eccentricities I like to think of as “quirks”—I suffer from chronic constipation.

Now, I'm not one to openly talk about bowel movements (although I am notorious for revealing a tad too much), but when I lie awake at night wondering why my guts feel like an overstuffed garbage bag, I can't help but equate my squashed innards to my own muddled self-perception of cultural identity: overcrowded.

Ethnically Korean but raised in the States, I'm constantly pigeonholed as the “ideal immigrant” whose English is SOOO good and accent SOOO American; in Korea, I'm technically considered a foreigner, balked at for being “too tan” and my native tongue tainted with an American tinge—go figure. So much for intercultural inclusion.

These days, things aren't much different—but I'm making progress. In my nine terms with *Ethos*, from copy editor to editor in chief, *Ethos* has helped broaden my cultural spectrum, that in a sense, has made me more closely examine my own cultural identity.

It is my hope that *Ethos* does the same for each of you.

Stepping out in 5-inch graffiti-etched wedges and a fitted vintage Pierre Cardin blazer, my attempt to look casually demure, (a la portraiture-ready) probably looked more absurd than appropriate amid a dusty construction zone. But against the backdrop of trucks, tractors, and chain-linked fences, this cornered-off patch of developing area nestled between impending architectural apexes, was subtly symbolic: it was work in progress.

Bits of crumbled brick, sheets of sweet-smelling plank—the remnants of old lay admix with the new, waiting to develop into something tangible. And as I teeter over the barren soil, taking heed not to trip over the previous foundation, I realize that it takes a lot more than a few stones to trip me up.

But then, I could just be full of shit.

백수지

Suji Paek
Editor in Chief

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Running with the Bulls

A fourth generation rodeo clown dishes on life in the arena

STORY LIZZIE FALCONER PHOTOS BLAKE HAMILTON



ABOVE: On the road ten months out of the year, Landis performs at hundreds of rodeos. RIGHT: Landis distracts a bull while its rider returns to safety.

Facing the crowd, Donnie Landis hoists up his striped suspenders and begins to speak into the microphone: “You know, there’s only one difference between that bull and my wife ... about 30 pounds.” His face crinkles into a laugh as the crowd roars. Donnie’s red ball nose sticks out prominently from under the brim of his black cowboy hat.

Donnie is a veteran of the rodeo clown business. He’s worked the rodeo circuit for forty years, entertaining crowds and guarding bull riders all over the country. Recently, Donnie spent some time with *Ethos* to discuss the joys, the troubles, and the misconceptions of life as a clown.

What exactly does a rodeo clown do? Donnie: Well, basically a rodeo clown’s job is to be out in the arena and keep the flow of the event going. At a rodeo, generally there are seven or eight events. At a bull riding, you’re dealing with forty-five animals and forty-five

riders, so there are times when the bulls aren’t getting loaded or there’s a lull. It’s basically the rodeo clown’s job to keep the flow of the event going.

“It’s not like softball, where you strike out and go home. This sport can kill you.”

Spectators don’t realize there’s a breakdown or a lull because the clown is doing something funny. It’s all part of the show.

What inspired you to be a rodeo clown? I’m a fourth generation rodeo cowboy. My dad was a rodeo clown and producer. He started an open rodeo association in California. My mom was a rodeo secretary. My granddad rode buckin’ horses, and my great-granddad was a pickup man. I’ve got pictures dating back to the early 1900s of my relatives rodeoing.

When did you start? When I was four years old, I was helping my dad at the rodeos. I grew up in the back pens. I helped move the animals around when I was a young kid, and it kind of taught me how the animals acted. Getting involved in the

sport was ... something that was bound to happen—I’ve been raised around it. I started fighting bulls when I was twelve years old, and I just turned fifty this year. I’m not done fighting bulls yet, but you know, it’s inevitable that time will come to hamper something.

So when you say “fighting bulls” what do you mean exactly? The bull riders get on these bulls, and they get on there for eight seconds. They’re wrestling around with a 1,600-pound animal, and they get a little disillusioned when the eight-

second whistle comes around. The bull riders really don’t know where they’re at. It’s the rodeo clown’s or bullfighter’s job to get the bull’s attention and make sure the cowboy gets back behind the chutes or gets away from the bull.

How do you deal with the fear of the job? I mean, that’s a big animal. Well, it’s kinda like you’re driving down the highway in a Volkswagen and you got an 80,000-pound semi following you—nobody ever really thinks about that. You kinda get used to it. Yeah, there is a fear factor, but I’ve got as much respect for these bulls as I do for my wife. I look at it that way. I got to deal with them; I got to deal with her. That’s all I’m saying, you know?



Have you ever been injured? Oh yeah. It’s a sport where injury is inevitable. It’s not if you’re going to get hurt but how bad you’re going to get hurt. I don’t really like going on about all my injuries much. There are some guys who’ll sit here and tell you the number of bones they’ve broke or how many times they’ve done this or that—it’s a contact sport. Once that whistle blows and time’s up, [the bulls] don’t care; they’re going to go on and do their job anyway.

It seems like you’re older than the average rodeo clown ... I’ve been around this game long enough that people think I’m a dinosaur. I’ve worked every major rodeo there is in the United States; I’ve been to the National Finals and worked the Calgary Stampede. When I took a break, everybody said, “Well, the guy got old, fat, quit,”—I did. But now I’m back, and it’s rock and roll. Game on.

Are there any misconceptions you think people have about rodeos or bull riders?

These guys are athletes nowadays. They’re not the old-time farmer-boy cowboys. If you see a guy drinking a beer and wearing a cowboy hat, well, maybe he is a bull rider, but I guarantee he’s not getting on one. Odds are, he’s just saying he’s a bull rider. Bull riding is great family entertainment and there are animals involved. I raised some bulls myself, like any kid in 4-H or Future Farmers of America or a kid who lived in an apartment and played with his Pokemon cards. When I raised my bulls, they were my Pokemon—I treated them great. These are my little animals, my jewels. These bulls are bred to do this. They’re just like racehorses. They have bloodlines that go way back to great buckin’ bulls, and that does

ride—from rags to riches. That’s why I like this sport, it’s not one of them guaranteed deals. I could get wiped out by a bull tonight. One of these bull riders could get wiped out, but he’s still got a family to feed, and there’s no compensation there. So he’s going to have to grit his teeth and get his head out of his butt, so to speak, if that’s where it got stuck, and go on with it. The heart of America is in this sport. I don’t care what anybody says. The compassion and the love these guys have for one another is beyond a person’s realm. ♡

RODEO LINGO

SEEING DAYLIGHT—When a cowboy comes loose from a bucking animal far enough for the spectators to see daylight between the cowboy and the animal.

UNION ANIMAL—An animal that bucks until the sound of the eight-second whistle, then quits.

BULL ROPE—A flat woven rope, no larger than 9/16th of an inch in diameter with a bell attached to it. The rope is wrapped around the bull’s body, just behind the front legs, and then around the cowboy’s hand to help secure the bull.

DOUBLE KICKER—A horse or bull that kicks up with its hind legs, walks on the front legs and then kicks again with the hind legs before its hind legs touch the ground.

FREIGHT-TRAINED—When a person gets run over by a fast moving bull or horse.

PICKUP MAN—The cowboy on horseback who assists the bareback and saddle bronc riders in dismounting from their stock.

RE-RIDE—Another ride given to a saddle bronc, bareback bronc, or bull rider in the same go-round when either the stock or the cowboy is not afforded a fair opportunity to show their best.

RANK—A very hard animal to ride.

Terms courtesy of Friends of Rodeo

Carrying a Heavy Load

After a gruesome civil war, Burundians search for opportunities to progress

STORY MICHELLE LEIS & ERIN PETERSON

W edged between the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, and Rwanda, sit the rolling hills of Burundi, a small east African country. It is a country with rural landscapes, crudely cultivated fields, and mountainous slopes of eucalyptus and acacia trees. Winding rivers weave their way through the hills toward the world's longest freshwater lake, Lake Tanganyika, in the southwest, and plateaus of savannah grasslands and banana groves settle the terrain in the east.

It is hard to imagine that only a few years ago this beautiful countryside doubled as a place of mass murder and chaos during the ethnic-driven civil war and genocide that occurred from 1994 to 2006. And yet, even before their most recent war, Burundians struggled to live in a country marred by extreme poverty, political instability, and virtually no opportunity beyond subsistence farming. Today, Burundians face an epic challenge: to build up their war-ravaged society and reframe their private lives in the face of a horrifying past.

Twenty-seven-year-old Peter Ndaje grew up among the violence and uncertainty of the war that now shapes his generation. His teenage years were spent literally running and hiding for his life in the African bush; many of his childhood friends did not survive. Today, Peter is part of a small minority of Burundians who have a job. He procures supplies for Village Health Works (VHW), a Burundian-American medical clinic founded by his brother Deogratias, a man whose incredible story of survival was recently documented in the New

York Times bestseller *Strength in What Remains*. In a personal interview, Peter opened up to *Ethos* about his experience growing up in Burundi and his hope for the future of his country:

“You see, we are the children who grew up running away for life and living in the forests. Others who did not go through this had a chance and time to at least be with their parents and at home. Even though they were extremely poor, at least there was peace, and people could have a conversation at home and hear what their parents said ... I grew up being afraid of death and uncertain of my

“We are children who have known no peace or progress or had the chance to be protected.”

tomorrow. I would thank God every single day I had a meal and was able to make it through the day.”

Peter grew up fighting for the chance to go to school, and in his free time, he would help his mother cultivate food on their land. But during the war, his education and family time took on secondary roles to survival. Peter and his family chose to separate out of fear that they might all be killed if found together. Throughout the conflict, he did not know where his family members were or if he would ever see them again. He believes it was a good decision to separate, “but traumatizing, of course.”

Like most Burundians, Peter was raised almost exclusively on a diet of cassava—when it was available. The tuberous root looks similar to a yam and is the staple crop for approximately 500 million of

the world's poorest people because it is a hardy plant that requires very little water to survive. Unfortunately, cassava provides starchy calories with relatively little nutritional value. In fact, the leaves, stems, and roots of the plant contain toxic compounds that produce cyanide when eaten, and long term exposure can be fatal or lead to health complications like goiters.

According to the CIA, over 93 percent of Burundians work as subsistence farmers, but less than 36 percent of the land in the country is arable. It is no surprise then that malnutrition is abundant; nearly two-thirds of the population consume less than the minimum level of calories needed as determined by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Agricultural development in Burundi is

far behind modern standards—only 210 square kilometers of land are irrigated in the entire country—and soil erosion caused by overgrazing and deforestation threatens an already insecure food supply, among other things.

Although Burundians have endured civil war in the past, Peter feels that he and his contemporaries have suffered more than past generations because of the length and gruesome nature of the recent conflict, which came on top of the extreme poverty that already burdened the masses:

“I think our generation has seen the worst in the history of Burundi. We are children who have known no peace or progress or had the chance to be protected. We feel the whole world has abandoned us as if we are not human beings like the rest of the world, especially in rural areas. We just have been confused

and overwhelmed.”

Burundi has a population of about 8.7 million people in an area roughly the size of Maryland. As the second most densely populated country in Africa, part of Burundi's struggle with poverty is tied to overpopulation; the average woman has more than six children over the course of her lifetime. With such high birthrates, most women lose at least one child to the consequences of poverty: death by preventable illness like malaria and diarrhea disease. Approximately one out of every five Burundian children will die before their fifth birthday, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

As a child and young adult, Peter experienced the debasing power of extreme poverty, but now he finds strength in his work with VHW; “misery has been thoroughly humiliating and dehumanized us, but I personally consider myself one of the luckiest people having been able to survive and do the work I do at Village Health Works for the community.”

VHW goes beyond curing people's illnesses and strives to address the social determinates of bad health. The clinic provides services that resemble that of a local government; the organization subsidizes the cost to attend the nearest primary school, supplies potable water to the town and surrounding villages, and supports agricultural development with free starter plants and demonstration gardens.

VHW's development of local infrastructure is a big step in a positive direction, but still, Burundians must overcome traumatic memories of the war. Achieving reconciliation and mental stability are awesomely daunting tasks, especially when there are virtually no opportunities in place for people to receive professional counseling and psychotherapy. In fact, there are only 200 physicians in all of Burundi—that's approximately three doctors for every 100,000 people. In contrast, the U.S. has 267 physicians per 100,000 people, according to the WHO.

Culturally, it is taboo to speak of

the dead or remind people of the conflict between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority ethnicities. “It is very hard to talk about tragic things between people who have a history of genocide. Once you do, there is suspicion, and fear, and mistrust,” Peter says.

He believes a crucial step for progress is to acknowledge but not dwell on the past: “That is how reconciliation can happen—by not talking about politics or who did what during the genocide. After all, it was not about Hutus and Tutsis, it was really the misery that got us into the horrible many years of bloody events where neighbors killed neighbors—even relatives killed relatives to own other people's belongings or because some crazy politician promised them heaven if they kill.”

The most recent civil war was incited by the 1993 assassination of Burundi's first elected Hutu president Melchior Ndadaye. Prior to Ndadaye's election, Belgian colonialists and the Tutsi minority ruled the country. After the assassination, factions of Hutu and Tutsi militia and civilians began openly fighting, resulting in the death of tens of thousands of people and the displacement of hundreds of thousands more people.

“We blame each other for our own miseries by accusing the others. There is no compromise and there is always scary tension whenever [the war] is brought up. It brings back horror and awful memories. We are a society extremely ill-educated. We are so challenged by misery. I think, step by step, we will be able to open up, but that will take several years.”

According to Peter, educating the public is the key to progress in Burundi, but “good health is prerequisite to be able to do things: study, raise children, grow food, etc.” Relations between ethnic groups remain fragile, but Peter sees amazing potential for inter-ethnic community

Quick Glance: Burundi by the numbers

CAPITAL CITY: Bujumbura

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES:

Kirundi, French

GDP PER CAPITA: \$300

(Burundi ranks the second lowest in the world. By comparison, the U.S. has a GDP per capita of \$46,000)

LABOR FORCE BY OCCUPATION:

agriculture 93.6%, industry: 2.3%, services: 4.1%

(In contrast, less than 0.7 % of Americans work in farming)

PRIMARY EXPORTS: coffee and tea

AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY: 58.29 years

RELIGIONS: Christian 67% (Roman Catholic 62%, Protestant 5%), indigenous beliefs 23%, Muslim 10%

INDEPENDENCE: 1 July 1962 (from Belgian administration)



building through the clinic. Far beyond healing sick bodies, VHW gives the poor and downtrodden a chance to see how they can “improve their living conditions and have hope for a better future.” Perhaps this is because of the organization's model of focusing on the needs of the community, needs that are determined by the people whom the clinic serves as opposed to outside parties.

“If nothing positive is going on in the community, all you have is a tragedy you carry with you. But if there is something like VHW, there is smile and joy and you forget tragedies, you see hope and good future. That is the best way to heal. We have seen this among many people who have started to move out of their homes to get involved and be closer to our clinic where good things have been happening—that is therapeutic.” ♀

PHOTOS COURTESY ALEX GOODELL & HELEN WELD



Erasing History

How fifteen Texas school board members are rewriting America's past

STORY VICTORIA DAVILA PHOTO ILLUSTRATION SARABETH OPPLIGER

It's the first day of school at Sheldon High in Eugene, Oregon and a stranger enters Irene Alderman's classroom. The person walks up to the social studies teacher's desk, and without a word, starts rifling through its contents.

Students gasp. However, unbeknownst to them, this intrusion was planned. Alderman turns to her class. "Well, what was that?" Alderman asks, feigning confusion. Swift and hesitant hands rise with responses. Alderman, who has taught at the school since 1994, listens to an array of answers from her students—each has a different perspective of what happened. History, says Alderman, is the stranger walking into the room. How we interpret history is as varied as the eyes that witness it and the hands that write it down. The point of this exercise, explains Alderman, is to teach her students to evaluate the legitimacy of source material. "I'm going to give you many different sources but I want you to measure the evidence that you have, sometimes the evidence is incomplete,"

Alderman says, giving her first lesson of the year in subjective history.

Alderman teaches according to Oregon education standards. Although she makes the effort to use outside sources, her textbooks are selected from a list of Oregon-approved materials chosen by teachers and later authorized by a smaller committee.

This is in sharp contrast with the Texas State Board of Education's (SBOE) textbook-adoption process, in which a panel of reviewers evaluates instructional materials along with publisher-provided information and public recommendations for the Texas education commissioner. The commissioner then submits a final recommendation report according to the board's standards.

United States public schools are run largely at the state and municipal level through school boards and parent-teacher associations. But when it comes to textbooks, the control rests in the hands of fifteen members of the Texas board—

which recently voted to revise social studies standards in a move that created controversy across the nation. What gives these people so much power? The answer is simple economics.

Schools in Texas, and to a lesser extent California, are huge consumers of textbooks. Because Texas buys more textbooks than other states, textbook manufacturers nationwide have often catered to its schools and in turn, to the SBOE. Those textbooks are used in schools across the country, meaning that the Texas board doesn't just decide what schoolchildren in Texas learn, it profoundly influences what schoolchildren are taught around the country. As Texas goes, so goes the nation.

Changes in educational standards are defining what students think of as the past. And with specific requirements stemming from a polarized and personally motivated

How we interpret history is as varied as the eyes that witness it and the hands that write it down.

board to which textbook companies are all but forced to adhere, teachers are left to struggle with teaching history from a "historical record" that has been cut and pasted together.

It's no wonder that Alderman, a teacher for almost twenty years, doesn't "teach by the book" as some teachers are rumored to do. To her, textbooks are generic, stripped down, vanilla versions of the past. "I would never use a textbook for half of the information that students get. It's really a fraction, really just to get an overview," she says.

A day of change for Texas State Educational Standards

It was a hot and humid Texas Friday when the board voted to change a number of standards that would affect the nation's youth. Board members sat around a circle of desks in large brown chairs. Off to the side was an assemblage of cameras and media behind a velvet rope. Eager for a peak at the proceedings, the public filled

the rest of the available seating, spilling out onto the walkways and into the doorways. With Republicans occupying two-thirds of the board's seats, it looked as if the conservatives would rule the day. Still, tensions were high. Everyone knew the importance of the vote.

"It's impossible to be inclusive of everything, of everybody, of every idea, of every historical figure that anybody anywhere decides is important to history," Republican State Representative Wayne Christian said, addressing the crowd from beyond the podium.

Outside the building, protestors on all sides of the political spectrum were expressing their concerns by shouting and holding signs as reporters and camera crews filmed. "Don't mess with TEXtbooks," one of the signs read.

"Let the history speak for itself, absent as much of ideology as we can," said former U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige in an interview with camera crews outside the boardroom.

Amid the chaos, the two-thirds majority ruled. Social studies changes were decided by a 9:5 vote along party lines.

Whose standards are being met?

Teachers make up the first rung on the ladder of learning. Above them is a long line of selected panelists, state education board members, governors, and other politicians who all affect curriculum and textbook choices. SBOE member Mavis Knight, a Democrat, notes the distinction between setting standards and creating curriculum. "We set standards, not tell teachers how to teach," an emphatic Knight says.

In 1980, Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* radically challenged traditional American history curriculum. In his book, Zinn provided a look at history from the perspective of the conquered, not the conqueror. But his book, along with the books of fellow travelers such as sociologist James Loewen, author of *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, has not managed to find its way into

standard U.S. curriculum.

Teams of teachers, academics, and others wrote the initial standards drafts for Texas schools roughly two years ago, board members said. The SBOE then revised the standards with a number of amendments finalized with the May 21 vote.

Knight points out that standards are actually being rewritten by the board; "[The amendment process] is only there to make tweaks as opposed to using the amendment process to totally rewrite the standards. None of us are curriculum standards writing specialists." The Texas school board made more than 100 controversial amendments.

Conservative board members assert they are taking back from the already leftist-leaning textbooks by dictating standards to influence textbook companies.

Clash between political, racial, and religious tensions

It is on this politically polarized battlefield that the fight for history commenced two years ago when the standards-changing process began.

Various board members fought for different points, which resulted in a combination of curricular changes that tend to follow a conservative influence but include some more mysterious modifications like the exclusion of Columbus Day and Christmas.

To Knight, the changes are a travesty. "I had expected to work with more open-minded individuals—people to look at different points of view," Knight says.

Active conservative Republican and evangelical Christian Cynthia Dunbar has been pushing for her interests since elected in the Texas board in 2006. Author of *One Nation Under God*, Dunbar, who is also a teacher and a lawyer, recently backed the amendment requiring students be taught that economic prosperity requires a "free enterprise" system of minimal government intrusion and taxation. The term "capitalism" has been removed because of its negative connotation.

One change in particular demonstrates the board's clash of interests: the omission of Mexican-Americans in the history of the Alamo.

"[Political and racial issues] certainly polarized the board and depending on how teachers teach the subject it could polarize the students," Knight says.

The Dallas Morning News reported that racial tensions were behind the debate of who to include in lessons about the San Antonio mission. Democrat board member Mary Helen Berlanga proposed that the

"tejanos," the Spanish word for Texans, who fought alongside Davy Crockett and James Bowie be studied. It was rejected and ruled that the Hispanic tejanos were not specific leaders deserving specific recognition, although eight died during the attack from the Mexican army.

For Loewen, the omission of Cesar Chavez struck a chord. "If I lived in Texas, a state with several million Mexican-Americans, I would want them to know about a Mexican-American who, within the American political system, managed to make a significant difference nationally," Loewen says. "I think it's asking for trouble to hide such people," he continues. "Do we want Mexican-Americans to think that they cannot make a difference? Isn't that just a recipe for frustration and bad educational results followed by bad results in the community? Makes no sense to me."

The Texas influence and trail of money

"Texas historically has had a lot of influence," says conservative board chair Gail Lowe of her home state, which has nearly five million students in its public school system. Although there are other national and state standards, the proverbial purse strings of U.S. schools are what really determine the availability of educational materials. Recently, textbook companies are looking at Texas with a wider eye than California because of California's current budget crisis, which limits the state's book-buying power. It's

even projected that updated social studies books won't be bought and in the hands of Texas students until 2014.

During Oregon's textbook review process, textbook company representatives woo teachers by offering the occasional lunch as well as supplemental educational packages—a tactic that proves tempting during hard economic times.

Once all is said and done on the textbook side, it's up to the teachers to educate students on how to interpret the lessons held between the hard-backed books of history.

"I would hope that the rest of the country would look at our standard and avoid our pitfalls," Knight says.

"What Texas legislature has done is determined the interpreted framework, their own world-view, and is asking textbook companies to adhere to that world-view," Alderman says. According to Alderman, this deprives children of the chance to examine various perspectives and understand interpretive theory.

Alderman chooses to not "teach by the book." Instead, she continues to provide modern magazines, historical texts, and primary sources to help teach students that history is subjective and push them to draw their own conclusions. "In public education ... teachers really need to give kids a wide variety of ideas. This is their chance to start forming ideas," Alderman says. ☺



BLACK GOLD

on
the Gold Coast

Ghana is the center of international
attention after an oil discovery

STORY MAT WOLF

PHOTOS COURTNEY HENDRICKS

As the BP oil spill disaster played out in the Gulf of Mexico this past spring, another offshore drilling story was beginning to heat up in the Gulf of Guinea 7 miles off the coast of Ghana, West Africa. From the palm tree-lined beaches of Ghana's Cape Three Points, the small silhouette of an oil drilling platform can be seen rising from the waves.

In recent years, the West African coast has become prime real estate for oil exploration interests as they seek to discover the next great mother lode of black gold. With a resource as important to the world's economy as oil, foreign investors scramble to stake their claim on a piece of the action, and Ghana, so far, has been no exception to this rule.

In December 2007, an exploratory mission led by the Texas-based energy group Kosmos uncovered an estimated four billion dollars worth of crude oil just off the Ghanaian coast. As a result, transnational entities have been lining up to take advantage of Ghana's potential oil wealth. Frontrunners among them are Chinese and U.S. interests. The fact that this discovery came as Ghana celebrated its fiftieth year of independence from Great Britain gave the site its name, "The Jubilee."

Development and oilrig construction on the Jubilee is, at times, a slow and drawn out legal process. The Ghanaian government maintains that the state-owned Ghana National Petroleum Company (GNPC) should own production

rights to the Jubilee even though American-owned Kosmos conducted the initial onsite drilling and rig construction with Ghanaian cooperation.

Production on the Jubilee is scheduled to begin November 2010, but rights to oil production continue to be contested. Industry watchers speculate that Ghana wants to sell the rig and the refining rights to Sinopec, a publicly traded Chinese company with more than 75 percent of its shares owned by the Chinese government. Many Chinese companies in West Africa operate with a similar model, making it difficult to differentiate between corporate and diplomatic interests.

China is certainly interested in Ghana's future oil industry, but in recent years, it has also taken on a major role in developing capital city Accra's skyline and road system. By providing much needed infrastructure and local development, Chinese (state owned) companies gain the kind of political influence that is increasingly important for a superpower on the rise—influence that can determine a nation's access to lucrative finite resources and global competitive advantage.

A new office building is under construction in a formerly deserted lot across from Accra's Kotoka International Airport. A skeleton of scaffolding encompasses the building's twelve-story frame. Approximately sixty Ghanaian men bustle about the construction site in old mismatched clothes and red hard hats. On hot days, many of these men forgo shirts altogether.



Uniformed in crisp blue work suits and yellow hats, another caste of workers directs the Ghanaians. They guide the Ghanaian labor and conduct some of the more technical aspects of the building's construction, like electrical wiring.

On the back of their blue suits reads in English letters "Ke Yuan," a Chinese contractor that employs twenty or so yellow-capped workers on this site.

A Chinese man who speaks a little English and introduces himself only as Mr. Wu, says he's in charge of the Chinese workers. He is hesitant to speak and quickly defers all questions to a Ghanaian named Tei Adiog. The press is often waived to local Ghanaian employees when dealing with Chinese privatized or government-owned companies in Ghana.

Adiog is a broad-shouldered man with a worn face, large calloused hands, and a friendly demeanor. He says he has operated in Accra's construction industry for more than twenty years, but now that he's older he can no longer jump up and down the scaffolding like he used to, and as a result, now performs managerial duties. Adiog has worked with Chinese contractors for approximately the last two years and says he has mixed feelings about them.

"They work hard, and they are very technically skilled. I like that," Adiog says. "They underbid though, and that's how they get contracts. They don't pay as well as the Americans, and they take jobs away from Ghanaians. We need [America] here, we like America, we need the Americans."

The Ghanaian Ministry of Energy (MOE), is abuzz with excitement these days. MOE is the wing of government that

will oversee most of Jubilee operations when oil production begins in November. "With this discovery, Ghana is set to become one of the powerhouses in West Africa, as well as becoming powerful in the African continent in general," said MOE Deputy Minister Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah at a shipping and marine refueling seminar held on July 14.

When asked about his government's current negotiation with Kosmos, Buah offered only this blanket statement: "The government of Ghana is committed to ensure that Ghana succeeds in this industry, and the government of Ghana is determined to ensure that our past experiences, especially in the mining industry, are not repeated as we go forward. We are seriously in discussion to address all the issues, and to allow Ghana to win, and to allow Kosmos also to win." Further questions about Sinopec's interest in the Jubilee or Ghana's future refining capabilities were not answered.

Located on the sixth floor of the Premier Tower in downtown Accra, just down the street from most of Ghana's government ministries, is the office of China

"With this discovery, Ghana is set to become one of the powerhouses in West Africa, as well as becoming powerful in the African continent in general."

Geo-Engineering Corporation. The Premier Tower plays host to many international investment and banking companies, but this particular firm is 100 percent owned by the Chinese government. Requests for an interview with the company's Chinese managerial staff are quickly parlayed. Instead, a native Ghanaian assistant projects manager named Ebenezer Aceampong is made available to speak. The primary focus of Aceampong's work with China Geo-Engineering Corporation is the Sunyani Road project, which aims to improve existing

roads linking Accra to the large town of Kumasi in the center of the country. Previous projects of China Geo-Engineering include highway projects around Ghana and the construction of the Teshie Malaria Research Hospital in Accra.

Aceampong insists that Chinese companies don't hurt Ghanaian workers. Instead, they are beneficial. According to Aceampong, the average Ghanaian China-Geo employee has a monthly salary of approximately 360 dollars. This figure is more than double the average national income as reported by the U.S. State Department.

"I like the Chinese. Their technical expertise is very good, and they are always bringing new ideas," Aceampong says. "Since China emerged in Africa, they've been contributing to the infrastructure and are ready to produce at an international standard."

The Chinese aren't the only foreign players beginning to vie for a piece of Ghana's oil and construction potential, but they are a new presence on the African continent compared with European and American influences that traditionally held sway here. As the Chinese middle class explodes, the demand for manufactured goods has skyrocketed. Now China needs raw materials and energy to further its development. To this end, the country has set its sights on the African continent.

In addition to highway development, civic projects have largely defined Chinese presence in Ghana. During the 2008 Cup of African Nations, China built or renovated four soccer stadiums in Ghana. And in 2007, China completed a restoration of Ghana's National Theatre, a futuristic art deco building that has become a symbol of downtown Accra's urban renewal. Ghana's new Ministry of Defence building was also



PREVIOUS PAGE: A nighttime view of Ghana's new National Theatre completed in 2007. The construction was done primarily by People's Republic of China. LEFT: A view taken from one of the top stories of an unfinished office building in Accra. Ke Yuan, a Chinese-owned construction firm, has taken a major role in its development. ABOVE: High above Accra, a Ghanaian worker adjusts scaffolding on an up-and-coming office complex.

constructed with Chinese cooperation. In the hydroelectric sector, the Chinese have begun building the Bui Dam in Ghana's Volta region of the country. The dam could allow Ghana to produce more electricity than it needs, so it can export surplus energy to its neighbors for profit.

The U.S. has not turned a blind eye to an increased Chinese presence in Ghana. To the contrary, the U.S. has a long history of political influence in the country. Following Ghana's independence from the British, the country experienced a period of political turmoil affected by U.S.-Soviet posturing during the Cold War. In 1966, Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first independent head of state, was overthrown in an American-backed coup because he was perceived to be sympathetic to communist interests. And in 1963, the U.S. established the very first Peace Corps mission in Ghana under the Kennedy Administration.

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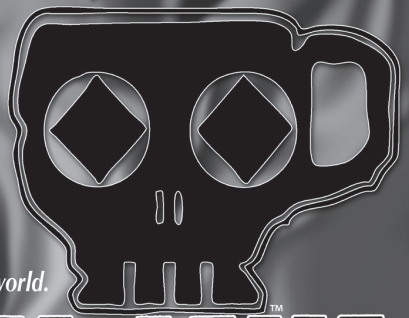
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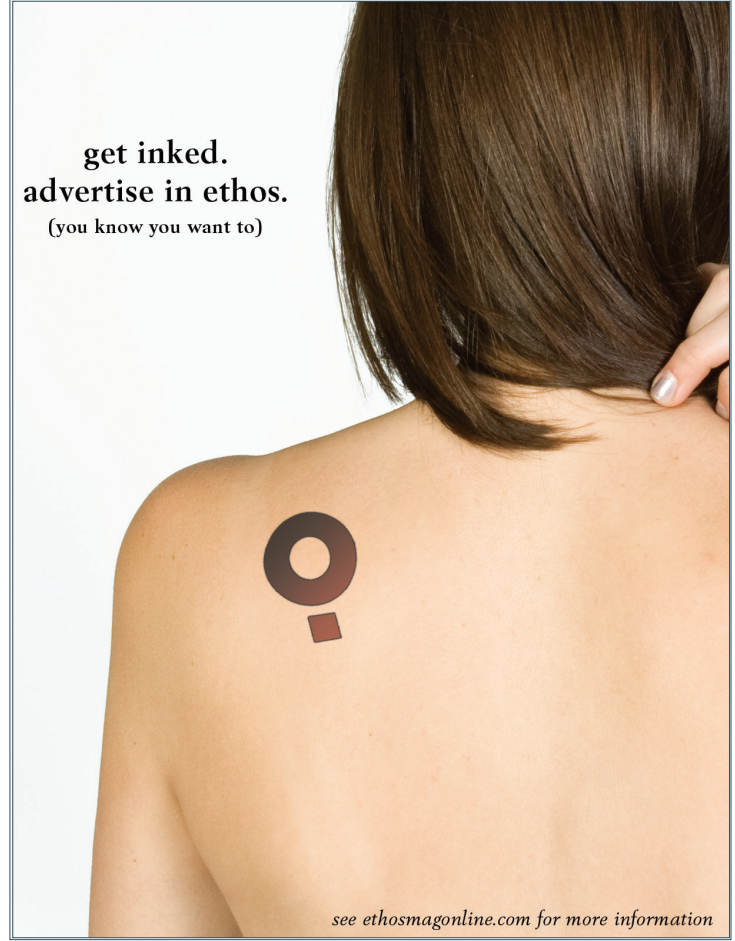
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Unlike the U.S. government, the Texas-based ExxonMobil has no overt historical presence in Ghana but has made overtures to the Ghanaian government in an effort to secure extraction and drilling rights to the Jubilee. Exxon neither confirms nor denies their purported interest in Ghana, but current Jubilee holder Kosmos has signaled interest in selling to the transnational giant. In mid-July, Exxon sent a business delegation to Ghana's presidential palace. Since then, relations between parties have not improved publicly, and the specifics of what happened at this closed-door session were not released by either faction.

As Ghana looks toward a potentially oil rich and developed future, it will no doubt continue to be a focal point of the developed world's economic interests.

Recently, Exxon has been taking out full-page ads in Ghanaian newspapers, touting the potential benefits for everyday Ghanaians if the government allows it to become involved in their energy sector—unusual behavior for a company that officially maintains it has no current or future interest in Ghana.

While the connection between U.S. government involvement and U.S. corporate interests in Ghana may seem less direct than China's, the U.S. maintains a noticeable diplomatic presence. The American Embassy in Accra is a fortress. Polished gray walls, harsh right angles, and a ten-foot-high perimeter are guarded by numerous security cameras and AK-47-armed Ghanaian police. Security on the inside of the compound is strict as well: Private security personnel screen entrants and confiscate or hold banned items like computers, voice recorders, and thumb drives.

In contrast with the building's hostile exterior, the embassy's representatives are friendly and polite, if not governed by a say-nothing-and-smile protocol. They assert that the United States is popular in Ghana and reveal little besides prepackaged statements about the history of the Peace Corps in the country and the agreement made by President Obama and Ghanaian President Mills to exchange World Cup jerseys. The increased presence of the Chinese in Africa and the situation on the Jubilee are acknowledged but not discussed.

Countering the U.S. approach to diplomacy in Ghana, China has made less public overtures and instead provides the country with needed infrastructure improvements. Ghanaians may have mixed feelings about increased Chinese presence, but one thing isn't disputed—they have more job opportunities as a result of China entering the local economy.

In what is perhaps an ironic twist, America's famous reputation for capitalism at any cost is being overshadowed by a former Cold War rival. The Chinese offer infrastructure development at an international standard for a fraction of the cost that a Ghanaian or American firm could. It is capitalism at its finest.

As Ghana looks toward an oil rich and developed future, it will no doubt continue to be a focal point for the developed world's economic interests, and how it reacts to these interests could well define this corner of Africa for many years to come. Ghana may not have to pick a side in this international tug of war; it could take advantage of the opportunities presented by both Chinese and U.S. companies. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first post-colonial head of state, offered an apt summary of his country's position in a global world, a summary that continues to stand true nearly half a century later: "We face neither East nor West; We face forward." ☉

RIGHT: The sun sets on the Shiashi office building. The presence of Chinese firms in Ghana's construction and oil sectors is strong and growing.



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Following the PAYCHECK

In order to make a living, students sacrifice summer social lives

STORY RYAN IMONDI & ALEX TOMCHAK SCOTT

PHOTOS DAVE MARTINEZ & SARABETH OPPLIGER

Jessica Stuhr emerges exhausted from the stable at 6 a.m. on a hot summer morning, the sun just peeking over the hills in the distance. A horse show will begin in a few hours, but Stuhr, who loves horses, won't be there to see it. She's been up the last ten hours, and soon she'll be asleep.

Stuhr spent an entire summer's worth of weekday nights like this. It was her job, playing a minute but lucrative role in horse shows up and down the west coast of North America. Stuhr braided horse hair, restraining their flowing manes in manageable ridges and collecting their tails into tidy ropes. Because of the hours and the nomadic lifestyle it forces upon her, Stuhr's summer job can be an unpleasant one, but it's worthwhile for a very important reason: money. A summer's worth of braiding horse hair nets Stuhr, on average, \$16,000, she estimates.

The extremely profitable short-term job, like Stuhr's horse hair braiding gig, is its own subspecies of employment. Making that kind of money in such a brief period appears to require an exotic and fantastical skill or submission to a serious privation—punishing hours or extraordinary physical risks.

College students Jordan Ritchie and Chet Hill also work these types of jobs. Ritchie earned thousands of dollars to hold a fire extinguisher on an oilrig, and Hill made out equally well for taking measurements of dams. While these students get to return to school with a nice payoff, the benefit is not without costs.

Monotony, isolation, and even danger tend to be characteristic of such very gainful employment.

These students aren't the only ones taking risks for the chance to make a quick profit. Reputedly, the most dangerous

DEATH DEFIANCE ISN'T A DUTY OF EVERY BIZARRE AND LUCRATIVE SUMMER JOB.

job in the United States is crabbing in Alaska: One crab fisherwoman or fisherman dies every week of the fishing season, on average. Despite those less-than-ideal odds, young men and women come from across the North American continent for two month-long crab seasons, piling onto grizzled but sturdy boats and motoring across churning, beyond-frigid seas, fishing up a five-figure mini-fortune in crustacean form. That, anyway, is the legend, encouraged and chronicled by the Discovery Channel's *Deadliest Catch*, which ushered in a clade of media fixated upon the high-paying but unpleasant summer job. *Deadliest Catch* primarily follows the captains of these ships, but also depicts young men and women who claim to spend much of the year living off their earnings on the boats.

The show is the highest-rated program ever on the Discovery Channel. It is so successful, the Discovery Channel created, if not a media empire, then at least a respectable media fief to mine its popularity. The show generated a successful four-season spin-off that follows the captains when they are not fishing, three autobiographies by cast members, and a *Deadliest Catch* video game so successful its makers plan to release a sequel later this year.

An entire production company, ironically called Original Productions, sprung up around it, creating similar shows that follow *Deadliest Catch*'s theme. *Lobster Wars*. *Lobstermen: Jeopardy at Sea*. *Swords* (concerning the affairs of swordfishermen). *Iditarod: Toughest Race on Earth*. *Ice Road Truckers*, for which a movie is in the works. The Discovery Channel and the competing channel History snapped these programs up.

Jordan Ritchie, a twenty-two-year-old student at Oregon State University, is a frequent flier along the lucrative summer job route. A couple of years ago, he worked on an Alaskan fishing boat. More recently, he held a quixotic position on an oilrig. Through the endless sunshine of an Alaskan summer, he stood assisting a welder on the rig. He's low-key about it now, but every time he worked, Ritchie held the lives of everyone on the rig in his hands, because his main job was to prevent fire, something terribly risky on oilrigs. This began with thorough fireproofing—he would enter the room where welding would be done, and cover all exposed cracks, crevices, and open areas.

After fireproofing, he would stand by while the welder worked, holding the extinguisher, waiting for a spark. A single spark, landing in the wrong place, can destroy an entire oilrig. If a spark caught fire, Jordan had only a few seconds to put it out with the fire extinguisher before everything went up in flames. However, in the end, he said,

he never needed to use the extinguisher.

The hours were punishing. Ritchie worked a minimum of eighty-four hours a week, and often more than one hundred. The job was scheduled on a week-on, week-off basis, meaning Ritchie was supposed to have a week off for every one he worked, but in practice, it rarely played out like that. Sometimes, he says, he would work for as many as twelve days, then get only six without work.

Nevertheless, it was worthwhile. Ritchie sought out the oil industry for one reason. "It's good money for a summer job—insanely good money—and I needed money for school," he says. In the end, he made about \$12,000 in one summer, he estimates.



Jessica Stuhr, a recent UO graduate, has spent five years worth of summer nights accompanied by only horses and her iPod.

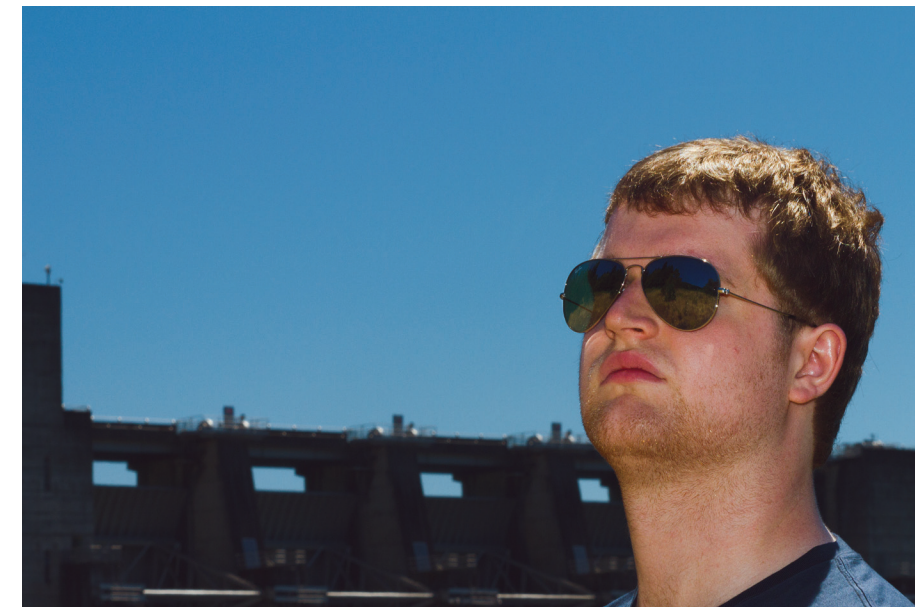
Death defiance isn't a duty of every bizarre and fruitful summer job. Chet Hill got \$4,000 for spending three weeks surveying dams one summer, and the greatest danger posed to his life arose from his diet: a Sausage McMuffin for breakfast, a sandwich with potato chips for lunch.

Other than that, his only real nemesis was monotony. Hill, a senior at George Washington University, worked with a surveyors setting up tripods and taking readings to search for weaknesses in dams across Oregon. Three weeks of fourteen-

hour days spent repetitively—interchangeable hotel rooms, interchangeable dams, the same co-worker, and no room for a social life.

Although Hill says the job is more boring than dangerous, it does require measurements of the whole dam in order to ensure that the dam has not moved. To take measurements from the base of the dam, Hill had to stand at the dam's highest point, with his arm outstretched over a ten-story drop. One slide or misstep could have been fatal.

These types of jobs are worthwhile for the money, of course, but they could be good for something else too. Clarice Wilsey, the associate director of the University of Oregon's Career



Part of Chet Hill's job is to check dams for cracks, breaks, bowing, and movement to ensure the dams are still in safe operating condition.

Center, is often involved in setting students up with summer employment. Jobs such as Hill's, Stuhr's, and Ritchie's can also boost long-term career prospects, she says. "Any work experience is valuable," she says, because they build skills.

Hill's job marks him out as a good listener, a good problem-solver. Stuhr's time working with horses, Wilsey says, will telegraph "accuracy and attention to detail," prized qualities to prospective employers. And physical stamina and concentration,

THREE WEEKS OF FOURTEEN-HOUR DAYS SPENT REPETITIVELY— INTERCHANGEABLE HOTEL ROOMS, INTERCHANGEABLE DAMS, THE SAME CO-WORKER, AND NO ROOM FOR A SOCIAL LIFE.

which Ritchie demonstrated at his job, are highly valued, too.

Of course, similar qualities can also be developed in less exacting employment too. Most of the students Wilsey sees with summer jobs, she says, go into more conventional pursuits—coffee shops, clothing stores—and those can also yield skills, such as prized "people skills."

"I don't see that very often," Wilsey says of Stuhr's, Ritchie's, and Hill's jobs. "If they have a summer job that's that lucrative, they probably would have to find it themselves."

Stuhr has braided horse hair for five years. While she was working toward a degree in advertising at the University of Oregon, twenty-four-year-old Stuhr used the job's summer windfall to feed, clothe, and house herself. Now that she has graduated, she plans to use it to pay off her student loans.

Horses, and a love of them, run in Stuhr's family. "I've been riding my whole life," she says. "My mom's a [horse] trainer, so I've had horses in my life my whole life." The love of horses manifested itself in a desire to show-jump competitively, but Stuhr had no horse of her own, so she had to resort to leasing horses from others. After a while, she hit on a fortuitous arrangement: A woman loaned her a horse to ride until it could gain experience. Most of the expenses of riding the horse would be provided, except for one: braiding.

Braiding a horse's mane is a tradition that reaches back to old English fox-hunts to keep tree branches and leaves from getting tangled in the horse's mane, Stuhr explains. Fox-hunting is the wild ancestor of the domesticated show-jump, or hunter-jumper sport, which presents many of the same situations horses would deal with in pursuit of foxes in artificial form.

Stuhr's benefactor was not willing to provide braiding because braiding is expensive. An efficient braider can make about a dollar a minute for his, or more often her, work, which, for the horse-owner, adds up with a preponderance of shows. Stuhr didn't have the money, so she was forced to learn braiding herself.

"For a long time, it was pretty crappy," Stuhr says of her braiding. But after careful practice, she became versed enough in the art that other riders asked her to braid their horses as well.

When the horse she used returned to its owner, Stuhr gave up riding competitively for the most part. But she had an economic opportunity open to her: braiding. She says braiding is the most gainful part of horse-jumping. Her story is typical of most in the profession, as most come from within what she

calls "the horse world," growing up around horses, learning how to braid their hair for their own personal ends, and then going professional. This, she says, is desirable for horse-owners because those who grow up around horses know how to read them as well as braid their hair, and so they can tell, for instance, if a horse is sick. "We're all horse people, so we know what the signs are."

But most pursue braiding as a career, rather than temporary, seasonal employment, as Stuhr does. There is what she calls "an

entourage of braiding women" with years of experience in the job who follow horse shows around.

"It's just a weird life, and they work year-round," Stuhr says. Many of her fellow braiders have no time to have families, as they live a nomadic life, going from show to show, and work red-eye shifts their entire careers. It's not something Stuhr wants.

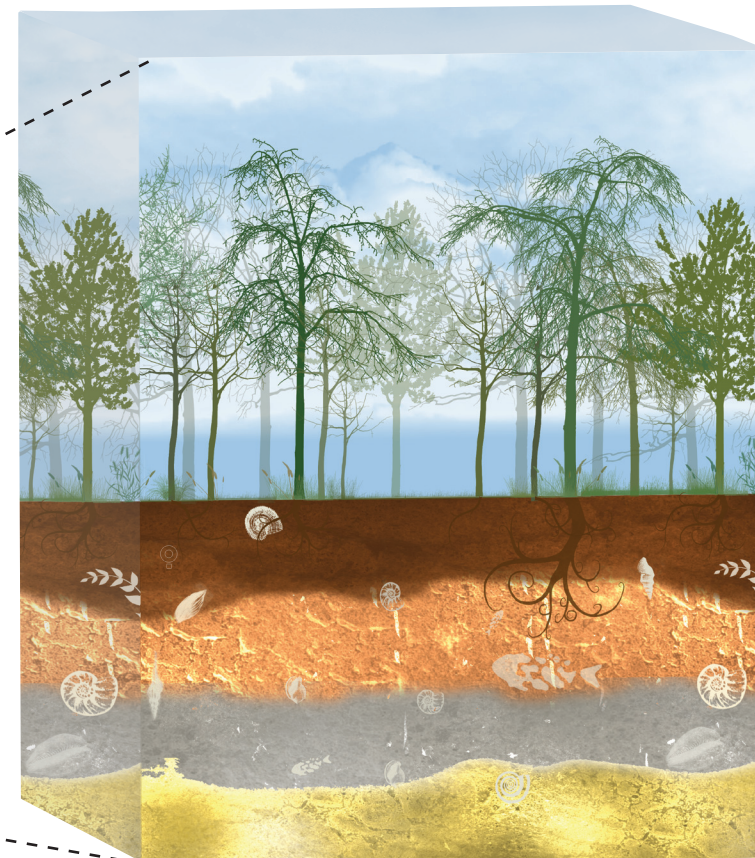
What of her most recent braiding earnings don't go to pay for college will finance a trip to South and Central America. She hopes to write about the trip and eventually establish a career as a writer.

Ultimately though, that career will lead her back to where she began.

"The only reason I want to go out and build a career," she says, "is to have a horse and to ride it." ◻

embracing the elements: Earth

STORY CATHERINE KECK & STEFAN VERBANO
ILLUSTRATIONS WHITNEY HIGHFIELD



*E*thos' "Elements" series has examined society through one of the most basic ideas humans have used to explain the world around them: four "elements," earth, water, fire, and air.

We began with a consideration of water that encompassed Yakama sweat lodges, a West African river said to have saved a nation, and the politics of water shortages. Then we wrote about the way modern societies use the air and defile it through pollution. And, most recently, we considered rituals in various cultures surrounding fire, the sun, and book burning.

The concept of basic elements underlies many cultures, but the four we've chosen are specifically

from early Greek science. Other, similar four- or five-element concepts exist outside the West—in Japan, Babylon, and China. But in some other cultures, the mixture of elements is different. It may include, wood, metal, void, and so forth.

So for our final installment, we've expanded our fourth element into a look at a more universal concept of "the elements," based in modern, rather than archaic science: the periodic table. It's appropriate in the original conception, too. From a scientific standpoint, fire is produced by a reaction between various elements. Water is a compound of hydrogen and oxygen. Air is a mixture, primarily of nitrogen,

but also oxygen, argon, and carbon.

The Earth, though, is made of all of the naturally occurring elements in various concentrations. But when we experience most of them, it's not in their natural forms.

Elements like the ones highlighted here need to be extracted from the earth, often in far-flung places and then refined so they can be used to create the products those of us who live in developed countries use in our everyday lives. That process provides one of the less seemingly forms of multicultural interaction.

In the process of obtaining these elements, in addition to cell phones, bicycle frames, soda cans,

and car batteries, among other things, we often manufacture wars in places such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the mining of tantalum, an element used to make cellular phones, fuels conflict between the government and rebel factions.

That's not to suggest that all international trade is bad—it certainly isn't. But the consumer of goods in the developed world often buys the products he or she does without a thought to the origins of their components.

We hope that, looking at the elements that make up our planet from that angle will at least shed a little light on the subject for anyone who is curious.

LITHIUM (Li)

The world's largest lithium deposit is almost entirely untouched, but that could soon change.

The chemical is used chiefly in electronics and batteries, and more than 40 percent of the planet's share is sitting in the Salar de Uyuni salt flat in Bolivia, untapped. But the Bolivian government has been looking for a partner to extract the lithium salts in the area. It may have found one in South Korea, which as of mid-August, looked well-placed in talks with the country's government.

However, the area's people don't welcome the project, saying the Bolivian government marginalizes them. They have been detaining tourists and prospectors in the region to try to get their point across.

TANTALUM (Ta)

Your cell phone battery might be fueling bloodshed in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

It's estimated that 80 percent of the world's tantalum, a metal vital to producing batteries, is found in the eastern part of the vast Central African country.

Much of that tantalum is in areas controlled by rebel groups, that are engaged in an ongoing war with the country's central government. Thousands are killed each month as a result of this conflict. Rebel groups extract the mineral and sell it to cell phone manufacturers, using the profits to fund their armies.

Australia and Brazil are still the world's largest tantalum producers, according to U.S. Interior Department estimates, while most cell phones are made using tantalum from those countries. But the trade in Congolese tantalum still poses problems for the international community.

TUNGSTEN (W)

Tungsten has the highest melting point among the metallic elements. It maintains its strength at extreme temperatures, which makes it a key component to rocket engine nozzles as well as other high-temperature technologies. China is currently the world's largest producer of tungsten.

Derived from the minerals wolframite, scheelite, ferberite, and hubnerite, tungsten is usually mined in ore form.

Among its plethora of common uses, tungsten is used as the filament inside light bulbs, and its weight makes it ideal for the stabilizing devices used in aircrafts and racecars.

Tungsten is also commonly used as an element in Dense Inert Metal Explosives, or DIME bombs. These experimental explosives are characterized by a smaller and more concentrated blast radius. The DIME bomb is currently being called the newest "genotoxic weapon," which inflicts horrendous wounds to victims in its radius of explosion.

HYDROGEN AND CARBON (H & C)

Indonesia was once one of the world's great oil-producing countries. In the 1970s, the country pumped as much as 1.7 million barrels of oil, composed chiefly of carbon and hydrogen, every day.

Now, though, oil production has stagnated in the country, to the point where it now imports more than twice as much as it exports.

The country's state oil subsidy, which has set gasoline prices well below one dollar, is a relic of time when Indonesia was rich in oil. The country's government has spent much of the decade cautiously increasing oil prices, but constant protests against its doing so make Indonesian leaders nervous.

At the moment, the cost of oil subsidies makes up one third of the Indonesian government's spending.

COPPER (Cu)

In ancient Greece, copper was synonymous with Cyprus. Literally. The word "copper" is derived from the element's Greek name, "cuprum," which means "metal of Cyprus" in ancient Greek—or maybe Cyprus itself is named after copper. Nobody can say conclusively.

Clumps of nearly pure copper lay on the ground in ancient Cyprus. Copper sculptures and tools from the island were prized in ancient Rome and Greece.

Somewhere along the line, people forgot about the association between the country and the element. Then, in the early part of the 20th century, an American geologist, thumbing casually through a historical text, rediscovered it, and copper mining resumed.

However, Cyprus' place among the world's copper producers is far more modest now. It has been estimated that Cyprus exports about \$9 million worth of copper each year, not so much dwarfed as completely eclipsed by the world's leading copper-producing economies.

ALUMINUM (Al)

The most abundant metal in the Earth's crust, this reactive, silvery white alloy is Earth's third most substantial element after silicon and oxygen. It is found in nature fused with over 270 different minerals including bauxite ore, and refined using intense heat and pressure. Global production in 2005 was 31.9 million tons, an amount trumped only by the most utilized metal, iron.

Australia produces about one-third of the world's bauxite supply, in competition with mining enterprises in China, Brazil, Guinea, and India. Construction, transportation, food, electronics, explosives and numerous other industries rely on aluminum's light weight and high thermal and electrical conductivity. Consumer demand for the metal has challenged the means of production in recent years, but the success of recycling campaigns and the availability of cheap electricity has kept the metal in abundant supply.

TIN (Sn)

Corrosion-resistant properties make tin ideal for coating steel, which is used to create eating utensils and soup cans. In addition, molten tin is also used as a component in making windows and windshields.

Malaysia, once the world's largest manufacturer of cassiterite, dominated about a third of the market in the 1970s. However, as of 2004 China and Indonesia are the world's largest producers of tin.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is also a large player in the exportation of tons of cassiterite, a tin oxide mineral. These statistics remained unreported due to the exploitation of Congolese workers by which traders profit.

The Dominican Republic is one of the largest producers of minerals such as cassiterite. Faced with the choice of either starving or succumbing to intensive labor for next to no pay, miners are exploited and subjected to arduous working conditions in areas including Rwanda and Uganda. The illegal trading of minable resources from the DRC is aiding an ongoing violation of basic human rights of Congolese workers.

GOLD (Au)

Coveted since the beginning of recorded time, this soft, illustrious metal has helped the rise and fall of entire empires. From pharaohs who were entombed in "the flesh of the gods," to the Spanish conquistadors whose lust for gold spurred a worldwide quest, no other element has mesmerized societies with its lustrous shine. But in terms of practical uses, gold is hardly important to human existence—besides in monetary value.

In 2007, China mined 276 tons of the halcyon luxury to become the world's largest gold producer, breaking South Africa's more than 100-year first place record. Certain mining techniques, including the dissolution and extraction of gold from low-concentration ore using cyanide, have proven to be environmentally destructive. A dam at a mining works near Bozinta Mare, Romania burst in 2000 and unleashed extraction wastewater containing approximately 100 tons of cyanide into the Tisza and Danube rivers, killing large quantities of fish in Hungary and Serbia.

hydrogen 1 H 1.0079	beryllium 4 Be 9.0122																	helium 2 He 4.0026																			
lithium 3 Li 6.941		boron 5 B 10.811	carbon 6 C 12.011	nitrogen 7 N 14.007	oxygen 8 O 15.999	fluorine 9 F 18.998	neon 10 Ne 20.180																														
sodium 11 Na 22.990	magnesium 12 Mg 24.305	aluminum 13 Al 26.982	silicon 14 Si 28.086	phosphorus 15 P 30.974	sulfur 16 S 32.065	chlorine 17 Cl 35.453	argon 18 Ar 39.948	potassium 19 K 39.098	calcium 20 Ca 40.078	scandium 21 Sc 44.956	titanium 22 Ti 47.867	vanadium 23 V 50.942	chromium 24 Cr 51.996	manganese 25 Mn 54.938	iron 26 Fe 55.845	cobalt 27 Co 58.933	nickel 28 Ni 58.693	copper 29 Cu 63.546	zinc 30 Zn 65.39	gallium 31 Ga 69.723	germanium 32 Ge 72.61	arsenic 33 As 74.922	selenium 34 Se 78.96	bromine 35 Br 79.904	krypton 36 Kr 83.80												
rubidium 37 Rb 85.468	strontium 38 Sr 87.62	yttrium 39 Y 88.906	zirconium 40 Zr 91.224	niobium 41 Nb 92.906	molybdenum 42 Mo 95.94	technetium 43 Tc [98]	ruthenium 44 Ru 101.07	rhodium 45 Rh 102.91	palladium 46 Pd 106.42	silver 47 Ag 107.87	cadmium 48 Cd 112.41	indium 49 In 114.82	tin 50 Sn 118.71	antimony 51 Sb 121.76	tellurium 52 Te 127.60	iodine 53 I 126.90	xenon 54 Xe 131.29	caesium 55 Cs 132.91	barium 56 Ba 137.33	lanthanum series 57-70 * * *		lutetium 71 Lu 174.97	hafnium 72 Hf 178.49	tantalum 73 Ta 183.83	tungsten 74 W 186.21	rhenium 75 Re 186.21	osmium 76 Os 190.23	iridium 77 Ir 192.22	platinum 78 Pt 195.08	gold 79 Au 196.97	mercury 80 Hg 200.59	thallium 81 Tl 204.38	lead 82 Pb 207.2	bismuth 83 Bi 208.98	polonium 84 Po [209]	astatine 85 At [210]	radon 86 Rn [222]
francium 87 Fr [223]	radium 88 Ra [226]	actinide series 89-102 * * *		lawrencium 103 Lr [262]	rutherfordium 104 Rf [261]	bohrium 107 Bh [264]	hassium 108 Hs [269]	meitnerium 109 Mt [268]	unnilium 110 Uun [271]	unnilium 111 Uuu [272]	ununbium 112 Uub [277]																										
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lanthanum 57 La 138.91	cerium 58 Ce 140.12	praseodymium 59 Pr 140.91	neodymium 60 Nd 144.24	promethium 61 Pm [145]	samarium 62 Sm 150.36	europium 63 Eu 151.96	gadolinium 64 Gd 157.25	terbium 65 Tb 158.93	dysprosium 66 Dy 162.50	holmium 67 Ho 164.93	erbium 68 Er 167.26	thulium 69 Tm 168.93	ytterbium 70 Yb 173.04
actinium 89 Ac [227]	thorium 90 Th 232.04	protactinium 91 Pa 231.04	uranium 92 U 238.03	neptunium 93 Np [237]	plutonium 94 Pu [244]	americium 95 Am [243]	curium 96 Cm [247]	berkelium 97 Bk [247]	californium 98 Cf [251]	einsteinium 99 Es [252]	fermium 100 Fm [257]	mendelevium 101 Md [258]	nobelium 102 No [259]

LANTHANUM (La)

Mountain Pass, California once sat uninhabited in the Mojave Desert, waiting for the sands to rise up and reclaim the outpost and its mine, where rare elements were extracted.

Then the Toyota Prius happened. The first highly successful hybrid car ushered in a new trend in fuel-efficient vehicles. Hybrid vehicles rely on batteries containing the element lanthanum, and generally making a more fuel-efficient car requires more lanthanum.

Lanthanum is primarily mined in China, but demand became so steep that the Chinese government decided to impose strict limits on how much lanthanum the country exports to avoid shortages.

In their search for new sources of the element, manufacturers turned to Mountain Pass. The outpost sits astride the world's largest deposit of rare Earth elements, including lanthanum. It was shut down in 2002 because it couldn't produce lanthanum as cheaply as China. Now a U.S. company is aiming to reopen it by 2011.

URANIUM (U)

Unstable and slightly radioactive, this silvery-white metal has been both a gift and a curse for mankind. The world got its first taste of nuclear warfare in 1945 when "Little Boy" detonated over Hiroshima killing 80,000 people and destroying three-quarters of the city.

Since then, the widespread exploitation of Uranium-235's ability to sustain chain reactions in nuclear power plants has promised industrialized nations safe and sustainable energy, but extraction and disposal methods have proven to be environmentally hazardous.

Canada, Australia, and Kazakhstan mine the lion's share of the world's uranium—with Kazakhstan as its leading exporter—and have forged regional and political trading partners; Uranium ore is present in the Earth at low concentrations, so mining is very volume-intensive and only economical in regions of the earth with sufficiently high concentrations.



Busting Out: The Right to Bare it All

STORY **KATY GEORGE**
PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS **REBECCA LEISHER & MAIKO ANDO**

The topfree movement looks beyond the taboo surrounding naked breasts

Breasts. Just over 50 percent of the population has them. American culture is fascinated by them. Slang terms number in the hundreds. They're in magazines, on billboards, in beer commercials—always as purely sexual attachments, bouncing enticingly as physical manifestations of femininity. But in spite of this inundation of busty images, one part of the breast has remained taboo: the nipple.

Despite such strong reactions to exposed nipples, going topless (or topfree, as some advocates are calling it in an effort to remove the sexual connotation) is completely legal in Oregon, as well as other states such as Vermont and New York. Oregon law specifies that nudity without the intent to arouse is perfectly acceptable. Many cities (Eugene, Portland, and Medford included) have only added statutes barring genital exposure. Oregon is a haven for women hoping to free their assets from constraining shirts and bras, thanks to a number of clothing-optional resorts and beaches. Naturists, as nudists are increasingly called, flock to the state: The Oregon Clothing-Optional Beach Alliance's Yahoo group has over 3,000 members. With the influx come more and more women who want to doff their shirts in everyday life.

Ashley McDowell, a twenty-something nurse from Eugene, is one of these women. Sitting calmly on her blanket at Glassbar Island with her boyfriend and their dog, she is as

naked as the day she was born—except for a pair of sunglasses. Her womanly body is thoroughly golden brown, with no ghostly clothing imprint in sight. “I used to love tan lines,” she admits, a slow smile lighting up her sun-kissed face. “I’d wear my bikini in the [tanning] beds so there’d always be a line.” That is, until her boyfriend—a nude sunbather since his teens—suggested she try catching some rays at Eugene’s own clothing-optional beach on the banks of the Willamette six years ago. Since then, she’s ditched both her tanning bed habit and her bathing suit. “It just feels more comfortable to be relaxing out in the sun without anything on,” she says.

Not that it has always been so easy to get naked. “The first time, I was a little uncomfortable,” McDowell acknowledges. “I was worried about taking off my bottoms.” The top, however, was much easier. “Boobs aren’t necessarily sexual to me, so it didn’t feel awkward to go topless.”

At the moment, it’s hard to imagine McDowell ever feeling awkward. She lounges in the late afternoon sun with such effortlessness that it’s easy to forget she’s not wearing clothes. “I definitely feel much more confident about my body now that I come [to Glassbar Island]. I know that I’m comfortable in my skin and nobody else seems to be bothered by it.” She shrugs nonchalantly, tossing her long blonde hair. “I just don’t see why my chest is so different from his,” she says, motioning to her boyfriend. “Maybe if people saw more naked breasts out there

Breasts, it seems, are suitable for viewing only when the center of their main evolutionary function—the nipple—remains hidden.

things would be different,” McDowell speculates. “I think a lot of people are just afraid of what they don’t know.” Her advice? “Go get familiar!”

Ashley and her fellow Glassbar Island visitors are not the only ones shedding clothing. Gennifer Moss, a topfree supporter and naturist, takes things one step further. Originally from California, she spends her time riding a bike through the streets of Ashland, Medford, and occasionally Portland clad in nothing more than a hemp thong. In her adopted hometown of Ashland, she is known simply as the Naked Lady, and her fame has grown to the point where large media organizations such as CNN have interviewed her. “Peace begins with ourselves,” she said in a 2008 feature on NBC, “and our bodies are an integral part of ourselves ... No part of me is obscene.”

Not everyone shares Moss’ point of view. The City of Ashland passed an ordinance in 2010 outlawing female toplessness

in public due to her antics. She was also denied a permit to participate in the Independence Day parade in 2008 as a direct result of her lack of nipple coverage. Parade chairman James Kidd, who denied her request to participate, was unapologetic. “We don’t feel that someone in the parade who is topless or nearly naked is appropriate for a family audience,” he told *Fox News*. “She’s welcome on any other day of the year to do that, but not on the Fourth of July while in the parade.”

Breasts, it seems, are suitable for viewing only when the center of their main evolutionary function—the nipple—remains hidden. The nipple and areola of female breasts are sexual objects to the American public, while the same parts on a man are commonly exposed. Janet Jackson’s famous “wardrobe malfunction” during the Super Bowl halftime show in 2004 cost CBS \$550,000 in fines from the Federal Communications Commission, based solely on the partial exposure of her nipple, which aired for nine-sixteenths of a second. Incidents like this have caused women all over the country to begin to reject the stigmatization of breasts, proclaiming their right to go without shirts in the same way men can. Topfree advocates say the hyper-sexualization of women’s chests has only harmed society. By hiding breasts, American culture has made them an enticing taboo and encouraged both males and females to consider them nothing more than aesthetic ornaments, ignoring their true function as sources of food for infants.

With such strong sentiments against nipple exposure and the sexual status attributed to breasts in the U.S., public breastfeeding has become a controversial action. Thanks to the general view of breasts as sex organs, many see nursing in public as an indecent and impolite act that forces passersby to be exposed to nudity. Supporters of breastfeeding, however, counter with the fact that producing milk is the only natural function of a breast and is far better for both mother and child. The World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding for six months and a combined diet of solid food and breast milk for two years. Still, 26 percent of American women didn’t breastfeed their newborns at all in 2008. Only 32 percent breastfed exclusively by the third month after giving birth. Many women cite difficulties finding places to breastfeed as a reason for introducing secondary food sources, such as baby formula. American attitudes toward naked breasts play a large

role in persuading women to make the switch to formula, as discrimination against and harassment of nursing women are all too common despite numerous state laws allowing public breastfeeding.

La Leche League International is one of a number of organizations that devotes itself to promoting breast milk over formula. With outposts in fifty-seven countries and all fifty states, La Leche League provides support and information for mothers all over the globe. The local chapter in Eugene meets every fourth Tuesday of the month in Friends Church, a Quaker establishment on the west side of town. The room is sparse but comfortable, with a circle of chairs around the outside and crates of books on breastfeeding and pregnancy in one corner. Sue Scott, a volunteer leader of the group, sits serenely near the door, warmly welcoming visitors. Her dark hair, threaded with silver, is tied neatly back at her shoulders. Around her sit a handful of women ranging in age from twenty-three to mid-sixties. Two toddlers play on the carpet under the watchful eye of their mothers; two more of the attendees are visibly pregnant.

“La Leche League is ultimately a support group,” Sue says. “Whether it’s your first baby or your fifth, you’re going to have questions [about breastfeeding]. With every baby, you have to relearn how to nurse.” La Leche League, Sue says, is there to offer the help mothers need to breastfeed in a society that normalizes bottles and formula over nursing.

Christina, a bright-eyed young woman with short black hair and sharp features who is training to become a La Leche League leader, is quick to add that the purpose of La Leche League is not to judge mothers who choose formula. “We’re accepting,” she says firmly. “[The members] have our personal opinions, and we might express them, but we don’t want to offend anyone. We just believe that mothers should have all the information that’s out there.”

Everyone in the room at meetings can attest to the fact that breastfeeding is not always easy, especially not in modern America. “People don’t always react kindly,” says Audra Williams, the mother of one of the babies tearing around the room. She watches her daughter from the corner of her eye, her slender body always ready to stop any real mischief. “I’ve had a few times where I’ve been feeding [my daughter] in public and people will stop and say something.” She shrugs her thin shoulders, a lopsided smile on her small face. “My brother really doesn’t like it, but I figure he should just deal with it.”

The topic of discrimination is a hot one; many of the women have experienced some issues while nursing outside of the home. Christina even tells of a friend who was called a pig by a man while she was breastfeeding in a mall.



Members of La Leche League International, like this mother, believe that all women have the right to breast-feed wherever and whenever is necessary for the well-being of their child.

Breasts Through the Ages

Documenting bosoms since their development to recent statistics on breast treatment in the world.

1.6 million BCE – Human evolution dictates the need for permanently enlarged mammary glands. The boob is



1598 – Spanish settlers in the Americas dedicate a shrine to Nuestra Señora de la Leche y Buen Parto—Our Lady of the Milk and the Good Birth.

1893 – Marie Tucek patents the Breast Supporter – the



1907 – The Oxford English Dictionary adds the word ‘brasserie.’

1940 – Cuba puts breast-feeding in its constitution, stating that new mothers must have two half-hour



1930 – Pasties, a nude colored adhesive nipple covering are created.

1950 – Over half of the infant population in the United States is fed



1962 – The first silicone implants are used, lessening the complications of

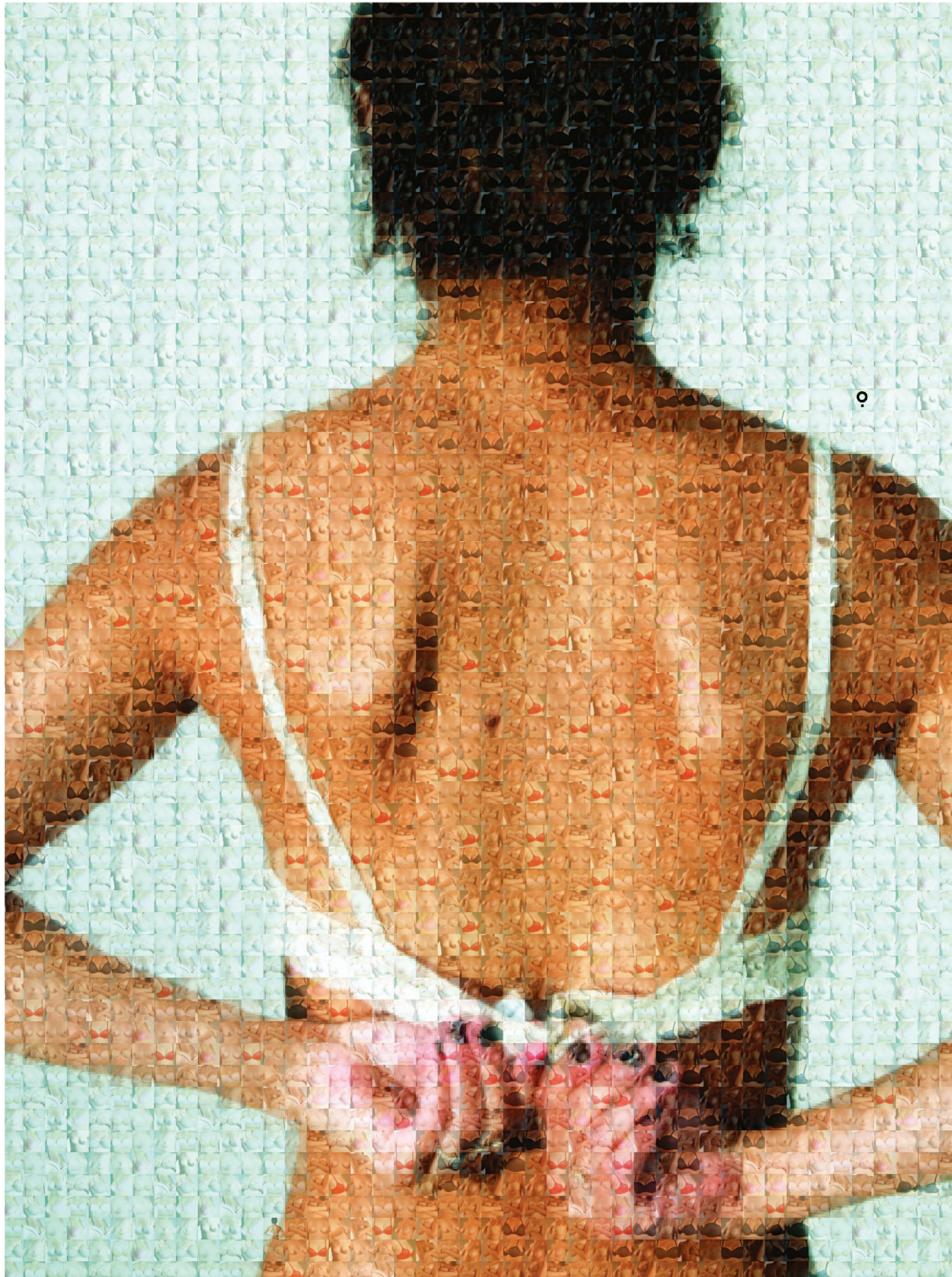
September 7, 1968 – Protesters at the Miss America competition throw bras in a trash can. Due to lack of permits, no bras are actually ignited, but the image of bra-burning feminists

1983 – **HOOTERS** is founded in Clearwater, Florida.

1990 – Madonna makes an appearance during her “Blonde Ambition”



2006 – 90 percent of women in North America wear a bra.



“You try to be discreet about it,” Williams says, “but sometimes the baby just won’t let you.” In the hot summer months it can be especially difficult, she says, because a nursing blanket traps in the heat and makes both mother and child

until the cover is removed. For women exclusively breastfeeding their children, few choices remain. Babies fed breast milk alone must nurse seven to twelve times a day, which leaves little interim time to go out without feeding. When covering up is not

Thanks to the general view of breasts as sex organs, many see nursing in public as an indecent and impolite act that forces passersby to be exposed to nudity.

uncomfortable. “I try not to just whip out my boob wherever, but if the baby’s hungry, she’s hungry.” As if to prove her point, Audra picks her daughter up and pulls down one side of her camisole to let the child eat. Very little shows—just a hint of a curve against the toddler’s soft cheek. “I’ve stopped being self-conscious about it.”

La Leche League meetings are a refuge for breastfeeding mothers, but outside the safe walls of the quiet Quaker church, the world is rarely as understanding. In April, Bethany Morton of Saint Paul, Minnesota, said she was asked to leave Old Country Buffet because she was breastfeeding her baby. Initially, she attempted to cover herself with a blanket, but says her baby kicked it off, leaving part of Morton’s breast exposed. Minnesota law protects breastfeeding mothers regardless of nipple exposure. Still, according to Morton, a server and a manager both asked her to leave and later called the police. They took no action, but Morton assembled a boycott of the company and staged a “nurse-in” at the restaurant on April 12, 2010. She and over a dozen mothers and supporters sat outside the buffet and nursed their children in a form of protest. Morton said the parent company initially defended the employees, stating that Old Country Buffet was a “family restaurant” and thus, could not allow women to breastfeed without covering up. They have since apologized, but the Facebook page, “Boycott Old Country Buffet (they don’t like breastfeeding),” still has more than 2,000 members.

Incidents of discrimination are not just unique to restaurants. In early June, Colorado resident Sandra Snow was breastfeeding her baby at a baseball game in Denver. She said she had moved to an empty section and covered herself fully, but ushers still came to tell her she had to leave. “[They] told me I needed to [breastfeed] in the family restroom,” Snow said, but the idea of feeding her baby in a bathroom did not sit well with her. “What other time do we eat and use the restroom? That was not an appropriate area for me to feed a child,” she said. Colorado law allows nursing mothers to feed their children in any location, public or private, but the humiliation Snow felt at the rebuke caused her to leave early.

Critics, male and female alike, argue that public breastfeeding is disrespectful to anyone who might not wish to see a naked breast. “Cover up or stay home,” a commenter on the *Star Tribune’s* website stated in response to Bethany Morton’s story. The argument is that nursing indiscriminately, without any attempt to be discreet, is what causes confrontations. But what can women do when their babies refuse to eat under a blanket? Many nursing mothers report that their infants scream and kick

an option, mothers can either nurse uncovered and risk offending people, stay home for the majority of the day, or forgo the exclusive breastfeeding recommended by the WHO.

In her essay on public nursing, Jacqueline H. Wolf, a professor of social medicine at Ohio University, says freedom to nurse is an essential ingredient to raising breastfeeding rates. “Women who have successfully breastfed for long periods of time know that unless women can feed their babies anytime, anywhere, they’re going to end up housebound,” she says. When women do not have that key ability, due to either perceived lack of legal protection or social stigma, they are less likely to breastfeed as recommended.

It is no wonder, then, that the United States has one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the developed world. 007 Breasts, a website devoted to normalizing the use of breasts to feed babies, has a section that allows readers from around the world to write in with their viewpoints. Responders from six continents and hundreds of countries have left their cultural perspectives about breastfeeding on the site, and the vast majority support nursing anywhere, anytime. A Sri Lankan poster identified as Ruhunu wrote that despite his country’s relatively conservative culture, nursing is perfectly acceptable outside of the home. “Women do not go topless at the beach [in Sri Lanka], but they have absolutely no hesitation about breastfeeding in public,” he wrote.

“Breastfeeding is considered something sacred and natural, and I hope it remains that way in my country for generations to come.”

Americans, however, often view things differently. When the general public is uncomfortable with the act, mothers are hesitant to nurse. The underlying sentiment is that breastfeeding is somehow dirty and shameful—an attitude directly related to American society’s highly sexualized view of breasts. The end result is that many children do not benefit from the myriad of health advantages associated with breast milk. Formula feeding is associated with increased chances of allergies, obesity, gastrointestinal problems, and a lower IQ. Breastfeeding, on the other hand, passes on antibodies from mother to baby, nurtures their bond, and even helps women lose the weight they may have gained during pregnancy.

To women like McDowell, Moss, and the members of La Leche League, the censoring of breasts in America has gone too far. Whether large or small, perky or pendulous, boobs are more than just funbags—they have a biological function to fill. There is nothing inherently indecent or obscene about them. They’re just breasts. So the next time the heat gets unbearable, think about busting them out. ♀



FINDING KUNA YALA

The San Blas Islands struggle to remain culturally autonomous in the face of global tourism

I am *niga sipu*. Between some broken Spanish and Kuna, I understand that I am being told I am a white man. On my second trip to the San Blas Islands, during an eight-month hiatus touring Central and South America, I found myself in a small communal hut sharing equal parts rum and confusion with a few Kuna locals. Whatever joke I was the butt of was obviously pretty hilarious, so as I do in any situation I don't understand I pretend that I get it and laugh along. As I glanced around the hut, dimly lit by a single light bulb rigged to a car battery, I felt slightly uncomfortable

comarca, stretches about 124 miles along the eastern coast of Panama and about 9 miles inland, though most of the roughly 40,000 inhabitants occupy the nearly 400 islands that make up the San Blas archipelago. Some islands have thousands of inhabitants. Some have just one.

The Kuna are considered among the most autonomous indigenous groups in the world. The rugged, mountainous terrain along their section of coastline has helped keep Kuna Yala relatively isolated from the influence of neighboring Panama. The relationship is a special one: simultaneously, Kuna is allowed to

are called). Driving along makeshift roads, we bumped through gnarly mountains and rough terrain, even crossing a river. Thankfully, cars are pretty good about going through water.

Beyond the streets of Panama City, my first experience with this fiercely independent culture was in the back of a pick-up truck. I left my hostel at a moments notice, hitting the road with three strangers I met along the way, singing along to reggaeton blasting over the radio. Eventually, the cars began to fade from the road and the pavement gave way to gravel. I felt a bit disheartened at the

I felt a bit disheartened at the sight of road construction as it made our drive a bit less adventurous, and would eventually make way for crowded tour busses and sedans.

being the center of attention. At the same time, I felt invigorated, deeply content, and completely out of my element. As serendipity would have it, I managed to graduate from gringo to guest as I eagerly kept pressing my hosts to teach me about their culture. Despite how privileged I felt to be temporarily accepted into Kuna culture, it was just that: temporary. I was still *niga sipu*.

Arriving in the San Blas islands is one of those rare moments when you realize that a postcard doesn't do justice to the palm-studded, white-sand islands dotting the turquoise water. Kuna Yala, which literally means "Kuna Land," has been home to the indigenous Kuna people for several centuries since. The reserve, or

participate in Panamanian politics while as maintaining autonomy. Still, machine gun and fatigue-clad police check passports, and Kuna elders are careful to decide which islands tourists are allowed to stay on. There are no hotels, running water, or roads anywhere on the islands. Electricity is scarce and, powered by car batteries or the occasional generator. The price of a lobster is equal the price of a beer: just one dollar each. Modernity seems to have passed over Kuna Yala and time has more or less been forgotten. Life is the same as it has been for centuries, save for a few modern amenities—and of course, tourists.

What was once a difficult, treacherous journey from Panama City to the San Blas Comarca is now streamlined into a three to four-hour trip with private operators shuttling tourists down a new gravel road in comfortable four-wheel drive vehicles. For about twenty bucks roundtrip, I crammed myself into the back of one such "Jeep" (what all land-rover type vehicles

sight of road construction, as it made our drive a bit less adventurous, and would eventually lead to crowded tour busses and sedans.

But not yet. Four-wheel drive was still necessary for a river crossing, and the Panamanian Tourism Institute still advised against undertaking the journey without a guide. As luck had it, we picked up six Kuna road workers, who in exchange for a ride helped direct us to the end of the road at which begins the boundary of the San Blas Comarca, or Kuna Yala. We were all headed to the same place: the San Blas Islands.

Culturally and politically, the Kuna people have historically resisted foreign influence. Allowing outsiders on the reserve is still a sensitive issue, and only recently has it become more culturally acceptable.

My host, Ina Robinson, the elected head of the island I stayed on, which is by no mistake named Robinson Island, is part of a growing population of future Kuna leaders who believe that a sustainable eco-tourism industry is possible. Ina, unlike many young Kuna men, had been raised by his grandfather with the understanding that tourism can play an important role in the preservation of Kuna culture while contributing to their economic prosperity. The Kuna have had to make room for visitors in order to remain economically secure—but many are wary of the growing presence of



LEFT: A map of Kuna Yala. RIGHT: Realizing the potential benefits of island tourism, natives offer visitors the chance to vacation among local communities.



PHOTOS NICK COTE



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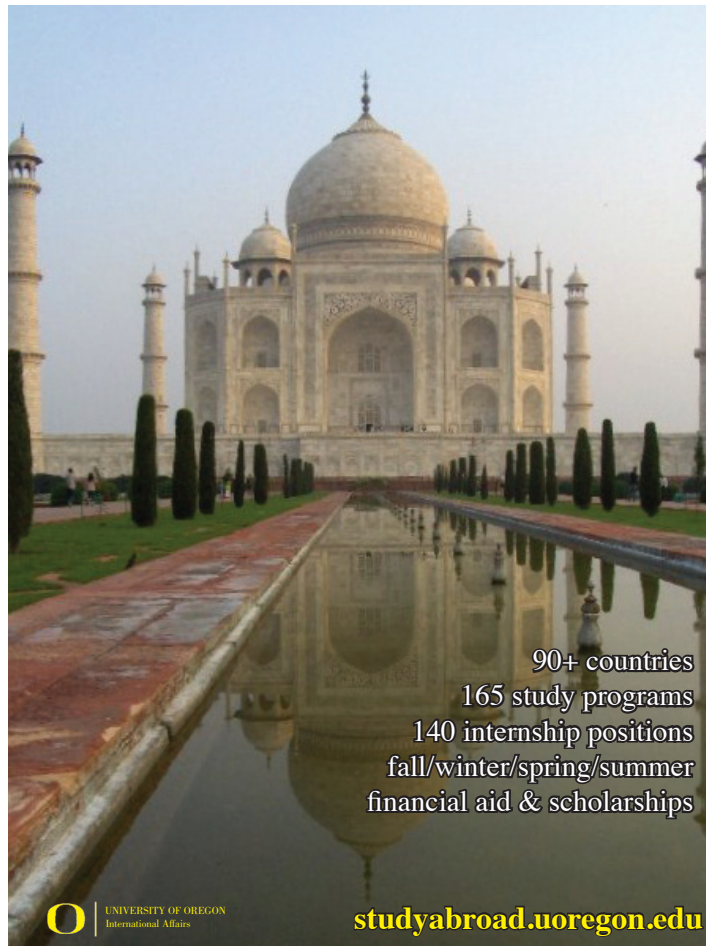
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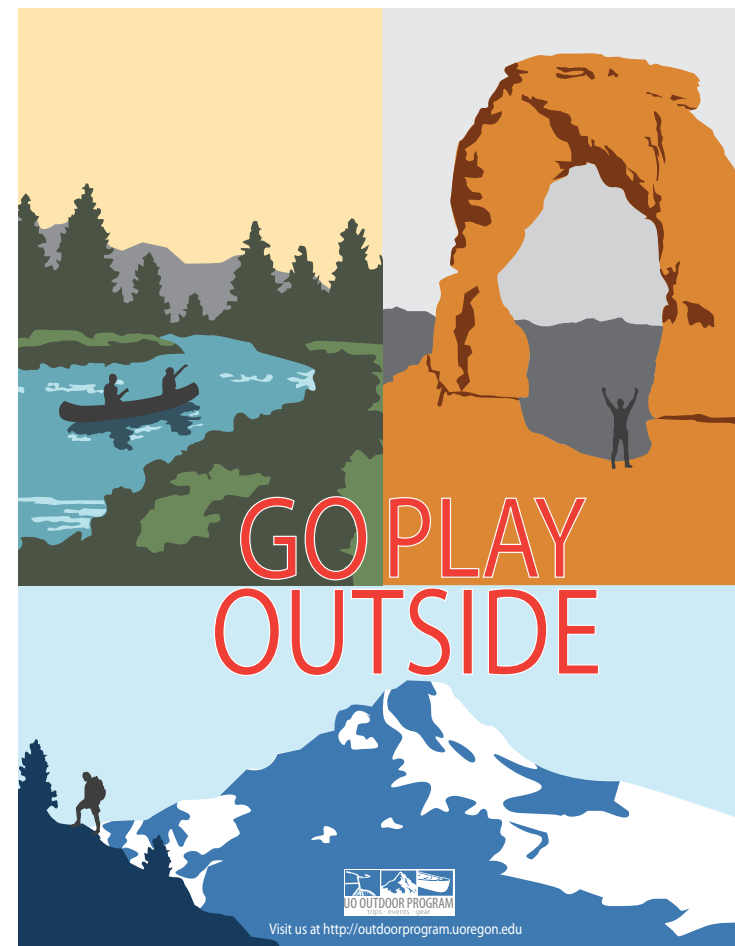
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foreign businesses and outside influence.

The autonomy that the Kuna enjoy today is the result of their fierce, sometimes violent resistance to be governed by others. Ina witnessed the expulsion of one indignant American who wanted an island for himself. Initially, he had made a ten-year agreement to live on the reserve. But once he outlived his stay, his stubbornness to leave resulted in 25,000 Kuna showing up on his doorstep and burning his house down. A North American-owned hotel was burnt down in 1969, and again in 1974. A few years later, in another standoff between the hotel's owners and the local people, one of the owners was shot in the leg and both were forced off the reserve. Needless to say, the Kuna want their culture and their territory

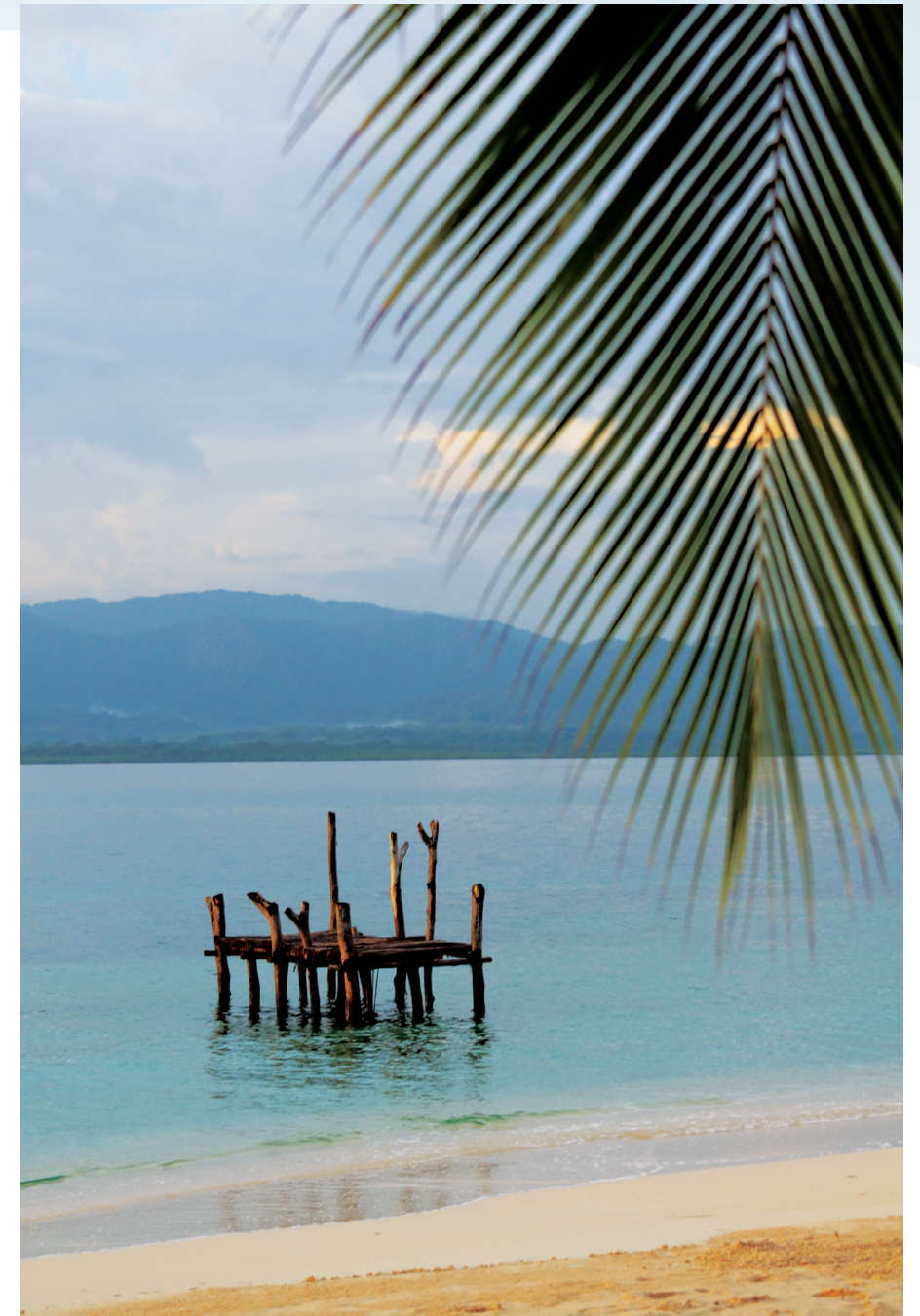
An unfortunate paradox is at work here: For some places to remain enjoyable, not everyone can enjoy them.

to remain distinctly their own.

I felt like an intruder at times. It's hard not to imagine the Kuna feeling like a tourist attraction—their lifestyle gawked at and their image plastered on postcards like a spectacle. When something so unique as the Kuna Yala are recognized, it's hard not to tell the whole world to come see. Tourism on the comarca is only in its infancy, but I felt sickened to imagine a luxury resort swallowing up an entire island.

Having grown up in a tourist destination myself—the small town of Jackson Hole, Wyoming (adjacent to Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks)—I have seen how a place can dramatically transform once it has been “discovered.” The slope I learned to ski on is now a high-end condominium development. The humility that made the locals seem friendly has given way to frustration. Their essence has been mimicked, mocked, copied, and regurgitated for everyone to gape at. An unfortunate paradox is at work here: For some places to remain enjoyable, not everyone can enjoy them.

For the Kuna, their cultural legacy will be finding a balance between maintaining a twentieth century lifestyle while being twenty-first century savvy. Keeping their doors shut to the outside world will



ABOVE: Kuna Yala is made up of approximately 400 islands.

eventually strangle their growth, but opening the floodgates will possibly dilute their identity and ravage their habitat.

The most difficult aspect for the Kuna will be finding business partners who are as invested in their cultural interests as they are. There is a lot that the modern world can teach the Kuna and a lot it can take away from them. It can offer solutions to eliminating the trash that is floating around the more crowded islands and the human waste that is dumped straight into the same ocean that is in their bread basket. As history demonstrates, the Kuna have every right to be skeptical of modern

Western society, as it has tried numerous times to exploit them. Yet the Kuna must cast a weary eye toward the interests of outsiders if they wish to keep their way of life intact.

I hate goodbyes. Leaving a tropical paradise makes goodbye especially difficult. But after my stay, I knew that the San Blas Islands are more than just beautiful islands. They are a way of life for thousands of people, a way of life that scarcely exists in the modern world. The Kuna have a way of life that can at any time be paved, marketed, developed, and forgotten. —Nick Cote



Shoot it, Skin it, Stuff it?

Taxidermists exhibit their love for animals by creating art from their deaths

Well, when I first get the animal, I guess that's the gross part." David Clark stands in his garage-turned-workshop, hands on his hips, Oregon baseball hat perched on top of his graying hair. "You know, I have to skin it and then salt the skin to get all the moisture out." He motions to the hide of a huge animal sprawled out on the floor, 3 inches of salt covering it from top to bottom. He later mentions it's a mountain lion that was shot after it killed six of a farmer's sheep. "After that, I send the hide out to the tanner, and when I get it back that's when the fun starts." Clark is a taxidermist—he skins and mounts animals for a living.

Taxidermy, the art of preserving and reproducing a lifelike representation of a dead animal, is a practice that makes some people squirm. In Clark's shop, Golden Eye Taxidermy Studio, the blank, glassy gazes of deer, bears, and various species of birds stare down from their places on the walls. The animals all appear in moments of action: a bear's mouth open in a forever growl, a pheasant posed for take off. The light from the window glints off the iridescent feathers and the question arises: Are these animals macabre or art?

To answer this, it's necessary to look

back at the history of taxidermy. Derived from ancient Greek, "taxidermy" loosely translates into "the movement of skin"—or more specifically, its removal. Humans have been utilizing the skins of animals for everything from shelter to religious artifacts for thousands of years. Native Americans used deer hides to cover their teepees and ancient Egyptians used preservation techniques to mummify cats for the afterlife.

But creating animal reproductions

for decoration is more recent. Its history lies parallel with the explosion of the fur industry in Western Europe during the 1700s when the demand for quality leather and fur was high and every small town had its own tanner. The increase in hunting and accessibility to a tanner led many hunters away from using their animals only as clothing and toward showcasing their kills on the wall. Deer heads began appearing on the walls of homes and taverns. The method of preservation? Arsenic on the skin and stuffing the insides with rags. Not surprising, this primitive method led to

many disfigured mounts rotting on their wooden boards.

This all changed with Carl E. Akeley in the 1860s, who pioneered modern taxidermic methods for museum displays. An American explorer and naturalist, Akeley focused his taxidermy on African mammals, leading many expeditions to find and hunt elephants, cheetahs, lions, and rhinos. Akeley's interest lay in preserving the world he saw around him, and he placed his

animals in postures and environments that mimicked real life. Instead of stuffing his animals with rags or straw as was common, he used plaster of Paris to cast a mold of the animal's body, which he would "fit" with its actual hide. Thus, he was able to mimic exact muscle structures and veins making his mounts incredibly lifelike.

Around the same time in the Northwest, a doctor by the name of J. Linsey Hill was creating his own taxidermy paradise. After traveling the Oregon Trail with his family in 1853, he set up shop in Albany, Oregon. Highly

respected in his community, Hill was the mayor in 1884 and served as the surgeon general of the Oregon National Guard. A history lover, he set up a museum in his house, where he displayed many of the animals he had personally taxidermied. Some of these animals now reside in a cold, well-lit room adjacent to the Benton County Historical Society. Hundreds of boxes line the walls, all labeled "Critter #__" and then "mammal/bird/reptile" depending on the species inside. One of the strangest members of Hill's collection is a full grown Saint Bernard that is posed lying down, its mouth drooped and glass eyes murky. In a sepia-toned photo Hill is captured walking down a street of Albany, all of his mounts sitting comically on a cart the size of a truck bed, being pulled by oxen, like a creepy homecoming float.

In cases like Akeley and Hill, it is clear that taxidermy is not used only by hunters. With Akeley's mounts, schoolchildren in New York and suburban housewives—those for whom the wildlife of Africa were only seen in picture books—could see a lioness and her cubs or a cheetah preparing to run. Hill built a museum in rural Oregon as an educational tool, and his animals will be available for public view once again.

More than a hundred years later, David Clark is still following the basic method of taxidermy pioneered by people like Akeley. Instead of working on gorillas or elephants, his primary business consists of animals hunted from around the Northwest. Instead of plaster of

beauty of their subjects. Their practice is artistic, their tools the same as many other forms of more mainstream art, but in their case, they attempt to put life back into a place where it was taken away.

Bryan Bradburn is an attorney by day and a taxidermist by night. An avid hunter, Bradburn became interested in taxidermy when he visited a competition with his brother a few years ago. "I've always really enjoyed art and building things. I've always loved working with my hands. It seemed a natural thing for me to start doing. I love hunting. I love animals. Why not?" Bryan, unlike David, uses his reproductions to compete in taxidermy competitions. Put on by the National Taxidermists Association, these large competitions draw taxidermists from all over the region looking to win money or taxidermy supplies by displaying their best work. Mounts are judged by how lifelike they appear and the quality of the work. "The eyes have to be moist looking, no cowlicks in the fur, no paint flaws, the pupils straight, the ears straight." Every animal is different, and the taxidermist has to be aware of every minute detail, including what angles the eyes need to be positioned in. For deer, eyes must forward 45 degrees and tilted out 10 degrees. Most often the eyes are glass, and bought through wildlife supply and taxidermy catalogues. These catalogues also offer the polyurethane mounts, teeth, and other "accessories" like antlers, earliners, and neck foam for support. The process of taxidermy is long and arduous, and taxidermists need to be artistic, creative,

sometimes feel that taxidermists are disrespecting animals, he insists that their actions are exactly the opposite. "Hunters love animals. We are the biggest conservationists in the United States," he says. Bradburn explains that the money from hunting licenses goes to forest restoration, ensuring that these animals will have a place to live. "We respect these animal, and the work we do as taxidermists is another way to show the beauty and triumph of nature."

Both men also note that many hunters believe in using all parts of their kill. Mounting the skin of their animal is another way to make sure the animal was not killed in vain. "They are hunting these animals for food," Bradburn says. "And they appreciate the animal for everything it gives them."

Clark also finds inspiration in the natural world. "I've always loved nature. And I've always noticed things. Most people go around this world not noticing, but I love watching animals and the way they move."

The art of taxidermy lies in the detail of the work. It reads like an inherent contradiction: a love for nature with a love for taxidermy. But the men and women who do this job must use their appreciation of nature and understanding of animals to cut, paint, and stitch an accurate reproduction. The creepiness of the work can be negated by understanding the value of it: for scientific purposes, for display, or simply because nothing should go to waste. At the end of the day, Bradburn is a taxidermist because, "I like



LEFT TO RIGHT: A bear head in its final stages—with the exception of a factory-fitted prosthetic nose; A fox fastened in place, boxed in storage at the Benton County Historical Society & Museum. BELOW: An elk mount in various stages of completion.

Paris, he uses polyurethane molds to give structure to his animal skins.

For many, the idea of a taxidermist conjures up the image of Norman Bates, Dr. Frankenstein, or a hillbilly hunter posed over a deer carcass with a knife. But looking at the process of taxidermy counters these misconceptions. Taxidermists cut, sculpt, paint, and sew all in an attempt to preserve the natural

and fastidious in their work to create a realistic result.

For both Clark and Bradburn, their favorite part of the process is the finished product—and it's easy to see why. Where before they had only skin, they have turned the hide into something beautiful, and in their eyes, respectful to the animal. Taxidermists, Bryan feels, are misunderstood. While people

working with beautiful animals." He refers to his workshop affectionately as his "little shop of horrors." When asked about his own hunting habits he said, "I bird watch more than I hunt. I would barely step on an ant." He chuckles, the lines around his eyes crinkling as he laughs. "I'm getting soft in my old age." At the end of the day, it takes a great animal lover to be a great taxidermist. —Lizzie Falconer

PHOTOS IVAR VONG

From Trash to Table

Local businesses reduce waste by finding new uses for soon-to-be discarded food



The bruised apple, the almost-expired milk, the day-old French baguette—perfectly edible food often finds its way into the dumpster. Americans throw away more than 25 percent of the food they prepare. Food waste, including food preparation scraps and uneaten food, accounts for 12 percent of the U.S. waste stream—the third largest portion of all waste after paper and yard refuse. That’s about 475 pounds of waste per person and 96 billion pounds of food per year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Worldwatch Institute.

The costs of this waste are high: energy and money are depleted and the environment suffers. According to a 2009 study by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, each year 25 percent of U.S. water consumption and 4 percent of U.S. oil consumption contribute to producing and distributing food that is never eaten. The disposal of food waste costs about one billion dollars a year, according to the Environmental Protection Agency and USDA. In 2008, less than 3 percent of the total 32 million tons of food waste was recovered or composted. What is left ends up in landfills or is incinerated. When organic material decomposes without oxygen, bacteria produce methane gas, a leading greenhouse gas that is twenty times more effective in trapping heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide.

Major retail supermarket chains often throw away edible produce, dairy, bakery, deli, and meat products rather than donating these perishable items to food banks.

David Davoodi, a former employee at Fred Meyer, saw firsthand the amount of food the store had to waste. “If something hit the ground, like an apple, once it touched the ground it was dead.”

Employees scan items for inventory purposes and then throw them in the dumpster, a process that Fred Meyer employees call “shrink,” Davoodi says. Stores keep track of the food waste: The dairy department, where Davoodi worked, threw out \$500 to \$1,500 worth of food each week.

“I mean, you could just wash the

Instead of throwing extra food into a landfill, Sundance Natural Foods offers it to anyone who has

apple off, and it would be perfectly fine,” Davoodi says. “It was kind of depressing to see how much we threw out.”

Across the country, many grocery stores are concerned over their legal responsibility when it comes to giving away food. “They said we’d be liable if someone got sick off of expired, outdated, or damaged food,” Davoodi says.

Despite stores’ concerns, federal and state laws protect food donors from liability. The 1996 Federal Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act and the Oregon Good Samaritan laws protect stores, companies, and individuals when they make donations

modern, and clean.”

Food banks and other nonprofit organizations try to protect their donors by offering a range of liability securities, including strict rules of warehouse equipment operation, safe food handling practices, proper storage, product tracking, and recalls.

But food is still being dumped in landfills, while many Americans are still going hungry. In fact, hunger rates are increasing. According to the USDA, a household is “food secure” if each member of the house has daily access to enough food to ensure an “active, healthy life.” Approximately 15 percent of all U.S. households were food

Major retail supermarket chains often throw away edible goods rather than donating these perishable items to food banks.



A number of recipes call for less than fresh food such as apple crisp, banana bread, and bread pudding.

in good faith. Donors are only subject to criminal penalty or civil damages if injury is caused by gross negligence or intentional misconduct. To have a case, a plaintiff has to prove that a company or individual deliberately tried to harm another person by donating food known to be unsafe.

Studies conducted by Fork It Over!, a food-donation program run by Portland’s Metro regional government, found no cases or suits related to food donation liability in the last few years. “Folks are just paranoid about things,” says Jennifer Erickson, Portland Metro’s senior planner of resource conservation and recycling. “There’s this old fashioned view of food rescue agencies [when] they’re actually sophisticated,

insecure in 2008—the highest amount observed since national food security surveys were initiated in 1995.

Oregon is currently the second hungriest state in the nation. According to a 2008 survey by the Oregon Food Bank, unemployment, low-wage jobs, debt, and the high costs of housing and healthcare make it difficult for low-income households to afford food. And while food stamp programs help alleviate insecurity, food stamps often don’t last a whole month.

Many companies and organizations are attempting to do something about food waste, either by reducing the price of perishable items, composting, or donating food—and thus helping those in need.

“If you’re hungry in Eugene, you can go all over and get food,” says Anthony Billington, a forty-nine-year-old homeless man who has been using food pantries like Catholic Community Services of Lane County for two years. “You’ll never go hungry in this town.”

Sundance Natural Foods store in Eugene composts deli leftovers, hot food bar waste, and damaged produce on a daily basis. After 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, the compost is free and available to the public. During the day, Sundance regulars pick up batches of compost to feed their livestock, such as ducks and chickens.

“We do all we can do to help eliminate waste,” Produce Manager Andrea Pierce says.

In addition to composting, Sundance also has a half-off shelf stacked with slightly damaged food. Since the items are below actual cost, Pierce views it as “a kind of community service.” Sundance also offers local organizations 5 to 20 pounds of free food per week in exchange for advertising Sundance as the source.

Other stores donate perishable food items directly to food banks like FOOD for Lane County (FFLC), the second largest food bank in Oregon, which supplies provisions to twenty-six distribution pantries and twenty-three ready-meal sites.

FFLC’s Fresh Alliance program works directly with grocery stores. Contributed items generally include boxes of fruit with a few over-ripe specimens or dairy products that are nearing their sell-by date.

Market of Choice, Walmart, Albertsons, and Fred Meyer are among several of the Fresh Alliance participating chain stores. In 2009, FFLC welcomed new grocery stores to the Fresh Alliance food recovery program, resulting in donations of 608,710 pounds of fresh produce, dairy, and meat—a 52 percent increase from the previous year.

“We can go in and rescue food,” says Dawn Marie Woodward, FFLC events and media relations coordinator. “Every food product has a window of opportunity.”

FOOD for Lane County offers its own liability protection with grocery stores. In the Fresh Alliance Agreement, participating supermarkets promise to store food properly, and FFLC promises to assume responsibility after pick up.

“We try very hard to work with donors,” Woodward says. “When stores understand that once the food is in our possession, it’s us not them—they’re eager to help.” —Rebecca Sedlak

PHOTOS MAIKO ANDO & CATHRIONA SMITH

The Venue Speaks Volumes

Go inside the world of Oregon's home grown music scene



Local rockers "The Blimp" practice for a show at their home-turned-performance venue dubbed "The Basement" in Eugene, Oregon.

Anging scenesters regard the commercial dimension of the music industry with the same heavy-hearted disdain normally reserved for an adulterous ex-lover or former best friend. With vague recollections of "how things used to be," they view the commoditization of the art form as the proverbial "end of the affair." It's true, these days, it seems many musicians are cashing in on selling out. Still, there are those who haven't lost faith.

"Music that's popular right now, I feel personally, is trash ... I feel like it's just a repetition of what has come before," says Pence Stanton, an ardent music enthusiast, art student, and resident of the north Portland community dubbed the "Failing House."

According to Stanton and her roommates, today's popular music is a commercial wasteland of imitation acts, cheap gimmicks, and uninspired compositions. Yet their faith in the local, homegrown music scene counters

this pessimism.

Stanton and her roommates are continuing a time-honored tradition by opening their doors and sponsoring musical performances in their basement. At a recent house show, nearly fifty people attended a two-hour jam with five local bands, all in a 25-by-15 foot space.

While many musicians don't find these small venues worthwhile, history proves that some of America's celebrated artists performed their best work in the comfort of their homes. In the summer of 1966, folk legend Bob Dylan went on a hiatus from a frenetic tour following a traumatic motorcycle accident. During his long convalescence, Dylan recorded a series of demos with The Band at Big Pink, the venerated retreat of Dylan's band mates. The demos would later become his seminal album *The Basement Tapes*. When asked about the production of the album in a 1969 interview with *Rolling Stone*, Dylan waxed poetic: "That's really the way to do a recording—in a peaceful, relaxed setting, in somebody's basement

with the windows open and a dog lying on the floor."

Ever since Dylan extolled the virtues of crafting homespun rock'n'roll, countless other bands have followed suit. Post-punk greats Fugazi gained notoriety in the early '90s for their insistence on playing free, all-ages shows in basements across the Washington, D.C. area. Lead singer Ian MacKaye even ran a record label from his living room, releasing music from local bands and promoting a musical aesthetic based on self-reliance and anti-commercialism.

"I guess that's what's so cool about house shows ... You get to hear the bands that are making good stuff and trying new things," says Stanton, who considers Fugazi among her favorite bands.

Across the Portland cityscape, another house opens its door for musical performances.

Located in the hills of southeast Portland, the Canby House is a haven for musicians and music-lovers alike. Long-term resident Candice Theissen says that

everybody who lives in the house is either a musician or close to one.

The Canby House possesses a whimsical air. In the study, a tired banjo gathers dust alongside copies of classic literary works. Behind the house, a makeshift chicken coop stands beside a well-manicured vegetable garden, and the living room serves as the unassuming setting for impromptu house shows.

Theissen says that musicians often feel more comfortable performing in the Canby House opposed to larger, more established venues where artists sometimes struggle to reach their audience. By playing in homes and other humble settings, bands connect and interact with their fans on an intimate level, and occasionally, attendees can catch a glimpse of the creative process that sculpts musical composition.

"I've noticed that musicians have a tendency to talk more about their songs or about themselves during house shows because it's not so much about the performance as it is about sharing a moment," Theissen explains.

A past Noah Gunderson performance exemplifies this intimacy. The Seattle-based folk artist interwove reflections from a trip to Palestine with music and poetry readings about his travels overseas.

On a sunny summer afternoon, the Canby roommates have gathered in the breakfast nook to discuss their favorite musical moments, recalling intimate candlelit sets by acoustic balladeers and lighthearted bluegrass jam sessions marked by audience participation and the informality of campfire sing-alongs. At a recent show, the roommates assembled makeshift percussion instruments using loose change and mason jars to accompany a local bluegrass artist.

The list of former guests and past performers reads like a who's who of Northwest folk musicians, (Garage Voice and Seth Martin & the Menders!, to name a couple). While Canby House residents are always willing to provide bands a place to perform—and crash if necessary—their hospitality stems from more than just a love of music.

As a self-proclaimed "intentional community," the Canby House strives to be all-inclusive, rebuking myths of urbane musical elitism. In an intentional community, unlike most other neighborhoods, residents purposely choose to live with each other, typically on the basis of common values. The residents of the Canby House are also united by a shared belief in Christianity.

"It's kind of this movement to resist individualism [and] to come together with like-minded people to live together in a

"It seems like every time we play somewhere, they tell us to turn our guitars down. Here, we can play as loud as we want."

community," Theissen says. "We became a place for people looking for community—a place to belong."

Although the Canby House provides a platform for acoustic artists to share their music with listeners, the proximity of the house to other residences sometimes prevents electric bands from playing their music at full volume.

For The Blimp, a Eugene-based rock 'n' roll band with a penchant for loud guitars and raucous house shows, their basement is simply the most suitable venue for sharing their music.

"We're banned from a lot of places, so we just play here, in our house," lead guitarist Mikhail Swanson says.

It's two o'clock on a Friday afternoon and band members have congregated in the living room of the house they share. Fading posters of rock icons adorn the wall, and a spare trumpet sits atop the coffee table. In the corner of the room, an antiquated record player rests alongside a crate of old vinyl.

The group looks charmingly disheveled and surprisingly taciturn for a band that plays at such a high volume. Mention the current state of rock music, however, and they become agitated.

"It seems like every time we play somewhere, they tell us to turn our guitars down. Here, we can play as loud as we want," lead singer Lucas Gunn says.

Known locally as The Basement, the house has served as a performance venue for nearly three decades. Legend says innovative punk band Black Flag even played a show there in the late 1980s. Today, the stage belongs to The Blimp.

As the band begins to play, it is evident that this is where they belong. The music is loud, but no one seems to care—many of the neighbors are

in fact fans of the band. Although the tiny basement may not be the ideal rock venue, certain stylistic additions—a piecemeal collection of oddities from the past twenty-five years or so—have added considerable charm to the dingy space. Years of spray paint and art deco castaways lend character to the space, and several mod mannequins provide The Blimp with an attentive audience for every practice.

An anonymous partygoer has issued a call-to-arms before the stage: the word "DANCE" emblazoned in black paint on the basement floor. The word and the house serve as a reminder that great musical moments aren't inspired by the dream of cashing royalty checks or making the Top 40, they're born from the energy of live sound and the simple pleasure of sharing a song and dance with a room full of strangers. —Jordan Bentz

Fans enjoy a more ambient experience as a band plays at the Failing House.





Ready, Set, HUMP!

From hard-core to hardly sexual, this amateur porn fest promises to indulge almost any fetish

If Dan Savage has any nerves about hosting the sixth annual HUMP! film festival, he doesn't have to imagine the buzzing, raucous crowd naked. A good portion is about to be on the screen behind him.

And not just naked either. HUMP! showcases amateur pornography.

After five years and a whole of lot breasts, penises, and vaginas, HUMP! stays true to its motto, "the film festival that allows you to be a porn star for a weekend—not for life." From all around the Northwest, kinksters, exhibitionists, and porn enthusiasts share and embrace a diversity of sexual fetishes—from couch sex to couches having sex—all in the

name of good ol' fashioned fun.

HUMP! 2010 will be screened twice—November 5-6 at On the Boards in Seattle, and November 13-14 at Cinema 21 in Portland.

HUMP! began with a name. The logistics, the venue, and format all came later. In 2005, the staff at *The Stranger*,

"What makes it so unique is that it's the guy who makes my coffee or the person who sits next to me in math class."

an alternative Seattle newspaper, found humor in the idea of organizing an amateur porn fest titled HUMP!

Caroline Dodge, who produces the festival along with sex columnist Dan Savage, realized early on how interesting

it is when average people take part in something as outrageous as filming themselves having sex and showing it to an audience full of strangers. "By popular demand, we really try to keep it locally amateur," Dodge says. "What makes it so unique is that it's the guy who makes my coffee or the person who sits next to me in math class."

But the knowledge that the guy behind the Starbucks counter was in a double penetration, cum-shot extravaganza stays between Dodge and the attendees. At the end of every HUMP!, all copies of submissions are returned or destroyed on-stage. Such anonymity is an open invitation for anything and everything—with the

exception of poop, animals, and children. People can participate in sexual show-and-tell without the fear of possible repercussions—at least in the form of tangible souvenirs. "It makes everyone feel like they're seeing something private," Dodge says.

Perhaps it's that notion that helps draw people in. Today, mainstream movies are chock-full of nudity and sex scenes. Porn is readily available on the Internet. But just a few decades ago, even the slightest bit of skin was not allowed. The only way you could indulge in such prurient pleasures was to sneak away to a porn theater. By making these films a one time only deal, HUMP! returns that feeling of illicitness to porn.

Private, yes—but not all the footage is candid. In fact, most of the submissions are created by fledgling filmmakers and feature scripted actors. *The Stranger* even has a HUMP! classified section to help connect local participants with perspective cast and crew. And in the case of the 2009 Best Comedy winner, some of the films weren't even intended to specifically play at HUMP!

Bridget Irish and "Missus" Sarah Adams volunteer at Capitol Theater in Olympia, Washington. Their body types and personal styles have little in common with the multi-billion dollar pornography industry. But in 2008, the two starred in the humorously awkward five minute short film titled *Butthole Lickin'* directed and produced by friend Kanako Rinku. Amid a heated oral encounter of the backside, Bridget and Sarah come to the realization that kissing after anal pleasure is an act far more disturbing than the original tongue-to-butt connection.

"It's funny, because it's the type of conversation Sarah and I would have if we were dating," Bridget says laughing. "I just thought of [*Butthole Lickin'*] as more of an inside look at two people and the issues they run through." In terms of subject matter, Bridget wasn't the least bit self-conscious. "I've made short films and videos for about twenty years, mostly performance pieces. I use my body as the catalyst or medium for my pieces—usually nude."

Butthole Lickin's content represents the rare avenue HUMP! provides. While other film festivals provide platforms for social commentary, political frustration, or human reflection, HUMP! allows filmmakers to touch on the aspects of unfiltered commentary, frustration, and reflection on sex. The humorous, the disgusting, the sexy, and the awkward attributes revolving around the topic are open for documentation.

And while a porno might seem like an odd place to find such artistic expressions, that wasn't always the case. Early erotic representations often had religious or spiritual meaning. And in the 1970s, porn was on the verge of hitting the mainstream and gaining respect. Films like *Deep Throat* fused plot and comedy with sex. HUMP!, it seems, is a throwback to the days when more seemed possible with porn.

The annual HUMP! line-up is full of sexual interaction at all levels. Transgender, gay, straight, lesbian, animation, soft-core, and the crowd-pleasing hardcore mixes with horror, comedy, drama, documentation, sci-fi, and romance in an eclectic sexual medley.

Matt Slater, a former Seattle-based comedian who now lives in Chicago, noticed this his first year attending the festival. "The year that I was in the festival, the film that won was an S&M video with two women. After a round of cunt slaps, the women held each other and cried," Slater says. "I remember there was a movie that was just pictures of people's feet while they have sex for like ten minutes."

Slater's own video projected a mixture of sex and creativity. Built upon the concept that furniture is constantly abused by human sexual encounters, Slater documented the love-making of two couches.

The festival also inspired the 2009 indie film *Humpday*. In the film, two male friends come up with the concept of making an artistic rendering of two straight males having gay sex with each other to make a film for HUMP!. The film projects a reality that many real life HUMP! participants experience: the realization of filming yourself having intercourse with another person.

While some films mock the "real" porn industry or attempt to prove a point about the nature of human physical interaction, others exist for the sole purpose of inducing a laugh. Regardless of why participants of HUMP! choose to enter the contest, one thing is for sure: The festival provides a unique outlet for the public to embrace the freedom of sexual expression.—Ryan Imondi

Each year, HUMP! filmmakers can score extra points by including specific themes, props, and locale. This year's theme: teabagging. Anyone down for a cuppa?



PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS MCKENNA JOHNSON

The Cleaner Sister

STORY RACHAEL MITCHELL

In between minor disputes over what TV show to watch or who borrowed whose shirt without asking, my twin sister Amelia and I have expressed a sisterly love that is difficult to expound. We did not always get along, or have the same group of friends—especially senior year of high school when I ran for student body president and her stoner friends dubbed me “Bitchell Mitchell”—but we’ve always been closer than any siblings I know.

Amelia’s butt-length purple hair brings out the glow in the olive skin I’m eternally jealous of; her warm brown eyes gleam curiously from behind skinny rectangular frames. Tie-dyed scarves and body-hugging leotards drape Amelia’s dancer’s body, and then there’s me, Rachael, stout with my dad’s fair freckled skin, outfit lacking neon adornments and flair—we stand in stark contrast, united by shared experience. Our relationship has transcended the typical “twin thing” because of numerous bumps in Amelia’s medical history and one very prominent chemical imbalance.

From the day the two of us made our entry into the world, six weeks too early and twenty minutes apart, it was apparent that Amelia was not like other babies. More than the usual jaundice and nutrition problems associated with premies, Amelia’s stomach was too fragile to hold down food. Everything we owned was stained with vibrant splashes of mashed peas and blueberries. Ceaseless ear infections blighted her infancy. There was the hernia when she was two. In elementary school, it was hypoglycemia that posed a challenge, causing low-blood sugar attacks characterized by incessant whining. By middle school, she’d contracted every illness from chicken pox to pneumonia and endured extensive testing to diagnose why she wasn’t growing.

Accompanying her list of medical woes was a number of unusual behaviors. As a baby, she had a strange affliction toward fans and flip-top trash cans—anything that moved in a circular motion sent her into distress. When she was two, her morning activity included collecting every bar of “I-shope” (soap) in the house and carrying it in a cloth bag for the remainder of the day. At four, it was her fixation with “pitty dess” (pretty dress) that drove my parents crazy; the only time my mom could change it for washing was after she was already asleep. I don’t remember a time when my parents weren’t worried about something Amelia-

related. The stress was constant and it took a toll on all of us.

By third grade, Amelia’s hands were so cracked and dry they bled. She refused to sit down in class, and as peaceful as she was, neurotic frenzies were common. Teachers and friends translated her bizarre behaviors as “quirks,” but anyone who had the chance to witness mealtime at our house knew otherwise. It was rare that she’d eat what was on her plate, especially if she had not seen it prepared, but even more rare that she’d actually sit down. As she grew, her obsessions grew. We took her to see several psychotherapists, all who came to the same conclusion: Amelia had a severe case of obsessive-compulsive disorder that was only going to get worse.

For the next several years, doctors experimented with a host of psychoactive drugs to null all of the shit you would expect to plague a life where the world is a war-zone and the perpetrators are germs and crooked picture frames.

She stayed on these drugs for twelve years, passively accepting the mind-numbing effects that robbed her of her personality in turn for feeling a little less stressed. The diagnosis put a name on her affliction, but it did little to tell us how we could help her.

When I heard, “No but I really feeel them, they are REALLY crawling on me,” it was as if whatever squirming bacteria she was talking about existed in my world too. But it didn’t, so I played along,

I questioned my own sanity for enabling her delusions and often, I felt like I was going crazy too.

allowing her to drench me in sanitizer and learning what’s okay to touch in a public restroom—absolutely nothing. I questioned my own sanity for enabling her delusions and often, I felt like I was going crazy too.

The veil of drugs she was under made these battles especially tough. Zombies are no good at arguments. I was desperate to protect my sister, and to navigate our experiences together as it seemed we should, but as we grew, the rift between us did too. It annoyed me that my parents spent so much time making absurd accommodations. At the same time, I had a certain understanding that Amelia was suffering more than the rest of us. Even worse, the same sister who once allowed me to prepare blind taste tests of gnarly concoctions who’d laugh with me until we sounded like old men—the sister who loved me—would no longer hug me. I could no longer braid the silken lengths of her hair or crawl into bed with her when I’d have a nightmare like I used to. I was dirty. We all were.

The world was a scary place for Amelia and day-to-day living was encumbered by hopeless attempts to avoid touching everything from money, unless it has been ironed, befitting it to go in the “clean” compartment of her wallet, to door knobs, to the hands of her friends. We lived for the rare days when her anxiety would subside, and she’d laugh so hard she’d fall to the ground, letting the germs overcome her. Those days always gave me hope. They were reminders that the demons in her head could be contained, that somewhere inside her she had the will to find happiness despite her struggle.

Sophomore year of high school Amelia underwent surgery from a horror movie—doctors used Black & Decker drills and saws to take her right hip socket apart and reconstruct it using 6-inch screws to cure a bad case of hip dysplasia made worse by ten years of competitive dancing. She had been dancing since the age of three,

allowing music and energy to move through her, forcing out fears and fueling moments of inner peace. Her enthusiasm for dance was the other thing that gave me hope—somehow her disorder left her alone when she danced so she could pursue her passion unbridled. Then she was told she would probably never dance again.

After the surgery, it was easy for Amelia to stay home a lot, to waste her precious years in the confines of her room amid the stuff only her own sanitized hands touched. It was depressing to see this kind of imprisonment for the sake of ease, so I became the social one. My form of escape and atonement was visible in the vast amounts of time I spent at friends’ houses and participating in extracurricular activities. Amelia’s resentment and sadness showed in the ways she tried to numb herself—with countless hours of TV as a child, and then copious amounts of marijuana as a teen.

The guilt I had for being the “healthy” twin led me to overcompensate for the normalcy felt Amelia lacked. I tried to be her protector, her advocate, and her voice. I didn’t realize I was robbing her of the chance to do those things on her own. With each step I took to be “the strong one,” she sunk deeper into an existence defined by our tiptoeing around her compulsions and catering to her various illnesses. I meandered in and out of understanding her world. Every day was a struggle to avoid “butt germs” and “contamination.” Our attempts to convince her that her fears were manifestations of a disorder simply alienated her more. What I should have been focused on was helping her feel strong enough to ignore them. But it was my anger that held me back. I naively believed that I would be better equipped to keep the anxiety under control if I were the one who had obsessive-compulsive disorder.

In 2008, Amelia decided she hated the way she felt. She was sick of letting harmful figments of her imagination beat her down. So she stopped taking medication. Sales of hand sanitizer skyrocketed globally, but that’s beside the point.

Despite warnings by her doctors, she started dancing again. To reclaim her brain, she developed a strategy that helped focus her compulsions into more positive energy. She used them to live better. She taught herself that it was more logical to be afraid of harmful chemicals like phthalates and parabens than germs the average person’s immune system can handle. Amelia switched to only organic beauty and cleansing products and started making her own natural sanitizer that moisturized her skin instead of making it bleed. These strategies empowered her and left her feeling less vulnerable to the demons in her head. Amelia’s relationships with people and the world around her began to improve. The cycle began to change course.

It wasn’t until she stopped taking her medication that I finally realized how futile my struggle to help her really was. There was absolutely nothing I could do or say that would change the chemical composition in her brain. To Amelia, it was all too real. Somewhere along the way I shed my role as advocate and protector and I allowed her to wage her own war.

With every ounce of might in her five-foot frame she began to work through her fears without help. At twenty-two, when she touches a door knob—for even a second—she still feels millions of tiny creatures burrowing into her skin, but now it’s different. Along her journey she’s acquired tools that quell the voices in her head and keep the frenzies to a minimum. Recently, I came across two bags of laundry—one labeled “clean,” the other “totally clean.” Laughing, I asked, “what’s the difference?” The “clean” bag was actually reserved for “dirty days,” days where she practices ignoring the germs. Those days aren’t easy, but she takes pride in knowing she can do it. Now, I’m happy to assist with opening doors, pumping gas, and flushing toilets. And in exchange I get a hug at the end of the day. I’m thankful to hand sanitizer, toilet-seat protectors, and the fact that no one notices she always wears a jacket in case she needs something clean to sit on. Somehow these things help close the rift between clean and dirty, and between us. Amelia’s prescribed and self-medicating zombie-alter ego no longer exists, making room for more frequent fits of laughter and a renewed sense of herself, disorder aside. ♀

The City of Eugene, *Ethos*, and Ninkasi
present the 2010 Spirit of Summer
banner contest winner:

Matt Wiggins

The City of Eugene, Ninkasi Brewery, and *Ethos* collaborated on a banner contest to promote local public art and bring awareness to the Summer in the City event series. Matt is an art and design student at Lane Community College originally from Idaho. The inspiration for his untitled entry comes from the exuberant summers he has experienced in the city and all the amazing people who have made his life so colorful since making Eugene his home.

SPRIT OF SUMMER



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