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klipsun

1999
december

raves

flying fish

kosovo

contributors

Erika Ahlstrom is a senior in the journalism department with a concentration in the liberal arts of religion. Her post-graduation goals include becoming quad-lingual and moving to Italy.



Aaron Grey, a senior, is completing a degree in journalism/public relations with a minor in Internet resource creation and management. This is his third contribution to *Klipsun*. After graduating in summer 2000, he plans to work in advertising or website development.



R. Andy Faubion, a senior from Kapowsin, Wash., raises mules and horses on his family's farm. He is a firefighter with the Marietta Fire Department in Whatcom County, and Graham Fire and Rescue in Pierce County.



Erin Becker will graduate in March 2000, with a journalism degree and psychology minor. She is the current editor-in-chief of *The Western Front* and plans to pursue a career in public relations.



Jackie Mercurio, journalism major, loves to travel and hopes her career will one day take her around the world. Though this is Mercurio's first *Klipsun* article, her work has previously been published in *The Western Front*.



Aaron Snel, a senior from Everett, is a public relations major with a minor in psychology. A sports fanatic, he especially enjoys college football and basketball and likes to play racquetball. His favorite TV show is "Win Ben Stein's Money."



Kayley Mendenhall is a senior majoring in environmental studies and journalism. She has been published in *The Western Front* and *The Planet*, but is a first-time writer for *Klipsun*. After graduating in March, she plans to expand her knowledge of environmental issues.



Scott LaMont is a journalism major who has previously contributed to *The Western Front* and Bellevue Community College's *The Advocate*. This is his first experience writing for *Klipsun*. He is fascinated with film, art, theatre and all things wacky.



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When Fi

"Hey look honey! It's the fish guys I was telling you about!" a man says to his wife. "See, fish really can fly!"

The fish have been flying for more than 125 years at the Pike Place Fish Co. — the company has only been world famous for 10.

"We used to sell fish. Now we sell our attitude," says Richard "Dickie" Yokoyama, fish-catcher extraordinaire and manager of Pike Place Fish Co.

One hundred people clad in fleeces and raincoats crowd around the world-famous flying-fish benches, examining the variety of fish, clams, oysters, crabs, shrimp, scallops and lobster neatly displayed on beds of cubed ice and green plastic parsley.

In addition to Dickie, seven fish guys fill out today's staff. Three are behind the slightly elevated main counter; they catch, weigh, wrap and ring up fish.

Michael Pearson, 26, needed a job that paid well. He began throwing fish one year ago. Pearson, with his long brown dreadlocks, is a dominant fixture behind the counter.

A second guy shouts prices out to the crowd in a thick Boston accent. Andy Frigulietti, 25, has worked at the market for seven months.

"There's never a dull moment. There's always something to keep us laughing and interested," he says as he weighs a two-pound bag of shrimp.

Three guys stand in front of the counter and fish benches, ready to greet the crowd and throw fish.

Keith "Bear" Bish is a 12-year Pike Place Fish Co. veteran and the rowdiest of the bunch. The gruff 40-year-old says he simply works because of his wife, three kids and the mortgage payment. A focal point in front of the benches, he reels visitors in.

"Yo! Miss Alabama! Get back here and buy a fish!" Bear yells. Unfortunately, the woman doesn't stop.

The eighth man, Justin Hall, 26, sits in front of a computer tucked behind the fish counter and next to the freezer. A bug lamp glows above his head, and a half-smoked cigarette hangs from his lips as he quickly types the delivery orders.

"I talk on the phone, type up shipping orders and try to get done so I can get up there," he says as he nods his head toward the counter.

Each of the men wear bright orange fishing pants; most of them display the company's logo, "Caution — Low flying Fish," on their hooded, gray sweatshirts. Their breath is visible in the chilly market air as they call out orders and talk with customers.

This particular area of the market seems to have its own weather system. Each breath of the muggy air causes visitors' noses to flinch reflexively against the acrid smell of raw fish. The benches, filled with ice and cold fish, make the October air feel even cooler. The floor surrounding the benches is covered with water, half-melted ice and fish slime. Take a few steps beyond the fish counter, though, and the smells of freshly cut flowers, coffee and baked goods linger.

"Medium king fillet!" Bear yells out as he hefts a salmon toward the main counter.

"MEDIUM KING FILLET!" the fish guys yell in unison.

Boxes hang from the market's ceiling above the fish benches with signs warning onlookers of the low-flying fish. Signs advertise free downtown hotel deliveries, airport deliveries and airline-approved, 48-hour

Catch the flavor of the Pike Place Fish Co. with writer **Erin Becker**. Photos by Erin Fredrichs.

shFly





Top to bottom: Justin Hall preps for incoming fish; Andy Frigulietti samples the salmon; Vern Henley takes a break from tossing fish.

icepacks that are leak-proof and odorless — of course, satisfaction is guaranteed. A handmade paper fish hangs among the boxes. It looks as if it was once a fourth-grade art project with faded blue watercolor paint and red glitter. The black print on the yellow "Caution — Low flying Fish" sign is worn off the bottom right corner.

"Mussels!"

"Who's got mussels here?"

"I got mussels!"

"Half king fillet!"

"HALF KING FILLET!"

Cameras flash as another salmon is flung with amazing speed and precision to one of the men behind the counter. He catches it with white butcher paper and everyone cheers. It's just a guy catching a fish — so what makes the Pike Place Fish Co. a must-see for visitors and locals alike?

"I think it's exciting! The flying fish's got to be about the most exciting entertainment for free," says Jim St. Leger from Phoenix.

"It's a good tourist attraction. It's good for Seattle — it gives it flavor," says Bob Lucas, visiting from Portland, Ore. "We always come," his wife Kay adds.

"My parents are in from Arizona and this was on the list It's such a neat thing. These guys have such great personalities," says Seattle resident Jackie Falkowski.

"To see these guys working and having fun is so delightful ... that's what life is all about — fun."

— Glynis Topping

"Five rainbows!"

"FIVE RAINBOWS ... and one ... and two ... and three ... and four ... and five!"

Another successful catch; another satisfied customer walks away with dinner.

Thirty-five years ago, buying fish for dinner at Pike Place was not the experience it is today. At that time, the company operated with very few employees.

Successive owners have focused on building relationships among employees and with customers.

"When I started, about 20 years ago, we had 10 people. Now we've got 20 employees, between part-timers and full-timers," Dickie said.

He flashes a wide Cheshire grin. "Ten years ago we decided we'd be world famous!"

That's when the flying fish started flying farther. The fish guys moved the benches out a few feet from the main counter, where they had been for years. The men had to throw the fish a bit farther, and they started having fun with it.

"We pushed the benches out and then the fish throwing got popular," Dickie said.

"We started yelling about 10 years ago. That's when people thought it was funny. That's when the, 'Caution Low flying Fish,' started," said fish guy Jaison Scott, 27.

With the advent of low-flying fish, humor and crowd interaction, The Pike Place Fish Co. generated copious local and national publicity.

"The first thing we did was a Rainier Beer commercial



Teasing customers enlivens Keith "Bear" Bish's day.

then the Levi's commercial came out ... 'Free Willie' came out ... there's always cameras down here from around the world," Dickie said.

Dickie leans against a railing behind the fish benches, pointing to his co-workers as he explains his role as manager and their roles as employees.

"My job is to make sure everything runs smoothly. I gotta make sure their lives stay out there," he says, gesturing toward the outside of the market.

"When they come here, their attitude comes from here," Dickie says, as he points to his chest with both hands. "It's the hardest thing to teach people — to be responsible so that they make it happen."

The guys at Pike Place Fish Co. do make it happen, with the casual, humorous attitude they use with customers.

"Ladies! You should never put plastic on your head!" Bear yells to two women who struggle to pull clear, plastic rain ponchos over their heads and shoulders. "Hey! Ladies ... you haven't bought any fish yet!" The women giggle and walk back toward the fish benches.

"It's a shopping experience — a bit of interaction makes it more fun," says Jim Dawson, visiting from London. "That's what it's all about ... street selling."

"Life is so intense To see these guys working and having fun is so delightful ... that's what life is all about — fun," says Glynis Topping, visiting from Whistler, British Columbia.

A few people surround a white plastic bin filled with crayfish. Above the bin, a two-foot-long monkfish rests on a bed of ice. This slimy, spiky, brown fish with bulging eyes has a 10-inch mouth that is propped open with a wooden stick. Just as a mother and her children poke at the crayfish, Bear stands behind the bench and pulls on a string rigged to the monkfish. The two children scream as the large fish lunges toward them and the crowd laughs.

"Two crabs!

"TWO CRABS ... and one ... and two!"

The fish guys emphasize the importance of a positive attitude and agree that interacting with each other makes their jobs more fun.

"It's the people — that's a capital P-E-O-P-L-E!"

Scott says, accentuating each letter with his fist as an invisible pointer.

"I really like the people I work with and my boss ... it's like a family," Hall, a 13-year vet says.

"Fun is generated by spending time with each customer — not just trying to get them in and out — trying to make a good moment in their day and continue to create customers."

"They are my family, my brothers. When you're not here, you kinda miss them," Pearson says.

"Everyone feels like they own (the company). We've got a lot of pride."

"This is a good bunch of guys — a real tight crew and I enjoy working with them," says David Everett, 27, who just completed his first month of work as a fish guy. "The employees make it especially fun — and that's the most important thing."

The guys agree that meeting new people each day adds excitement to their work.

"It's the same, but everything changes. We get to be crazy and have fun," Hall says as he stares at the computer screen in front of him and punches dirty keys on the keyboard. "And I like to eat fish."

"There's never a dull moment — not in the market," Dickie says, ducking as a fish flies overhead. "That's what keeps me here and young."

"Half king fillet!"

"HALF KING FILLET!"

The fish slips through the butcher paper in Hall's hands and lands on the counter behind him.

"I quit!" he says as he hangs his head in shame.

"We love you; you can't quit!" one of the guys yells.

"One more!"

Hall's second attempt is successful.

The guys often pull visitors into the line of fire. Most of the time, the fish sail by with a marginal clearance. Women with big hair: be aware.

Dickie says, "Yep!" they have hit people more than once.

So what happens to the fish if it hits the floor?

Scott leans forward as he glances from left to right and then whispers conspiratorially: "We use the three-second rule."

Beyond the three-second rule, the governing attitude at Pike Place Fish Co. is to just have fun. When the fish guys have fun, so do the customers. Although some simply come to buy dinner, most visitors walk away thinking they've seen a good show.





Apoc-Elise NOW

Erika Ahlstrom illustrates how two young Bellingham artists craft a futuristic tale. Photos by G. Trevor Phillips.

The year is approximately 2025. Due to ludicrous overpopulation, the world's resources are drying up at an alarming rate. In a fleeting attempt to save mankind, the government — now a single, world-controlling entity — commissions Steiger, a technological genius, to create a terra-forming device. The device will be used to breakdown and reconstruct the atmosphere of a distant planet and transform it into a livable galactic habitat. The goal is to relocate the majority of the human population and relieve Earth of her human burden.

In the midnight darkness, unbeknownst to the tense guards, a group of guerillas breaks into the government laboratory in which the terra-forming device resides. In its attempt to steal the device, the group inadvertently sets it off, and the mechanism immediately begins to destroy Earth's atmosphere. Steiger and his daughter, Elise, escape to the safety of an underground cave, but the evil guerillas, headed by their relentless leader Clark, are hot on their trail. This sparse group of humans escapes the doom of earthly humanity, but the future looms ominously for Steiger and Elise, the targets of Clark's sinister pursuit and secret intentions.

The plot unravels, winding around the twists and turns of the characters' near escapes and adverse fates, as Casey Lynn and Jess Moore spin the story of their first self-produced comic book, *Apoc-Elise*.

Typically, a comic crew is made up of 15 to 20 members. *Apoc-Elise's* two-person crew has its hands full juggling multiple duties. The duo writes, draws, inks, letters, scripts, produces and will eventually publish and distribute it.

Lynn leans back comfortably on a frayed, well-worn couch as she talks about what making a comic entails. Wisps of dark hair escape from her ponytail and frame her pale face. Her bright brown eyes and wide smile emit an intensity and maturity beyond her 18 years.

"The first comic man I drew was ... " Lynn begins to say.

"A generic butt-chinned hero," Moore, 20, interjects with a snicker.

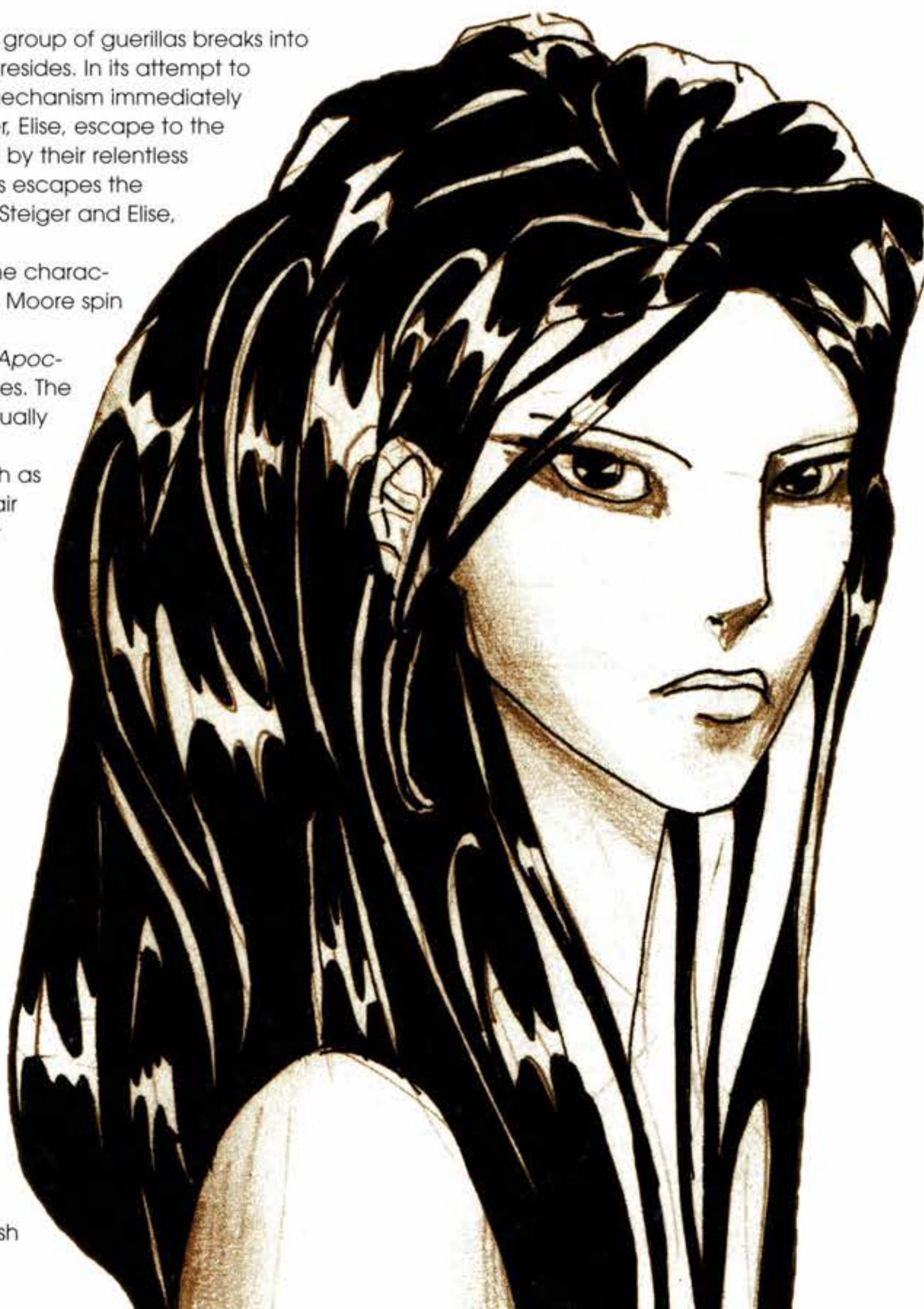
The idea that first spawned *Apoc-Elise* arose when Lynn painted Moore a picture of Sephiroth, the video-game villain from Sony PlayStation's "Final Fantasy VII."

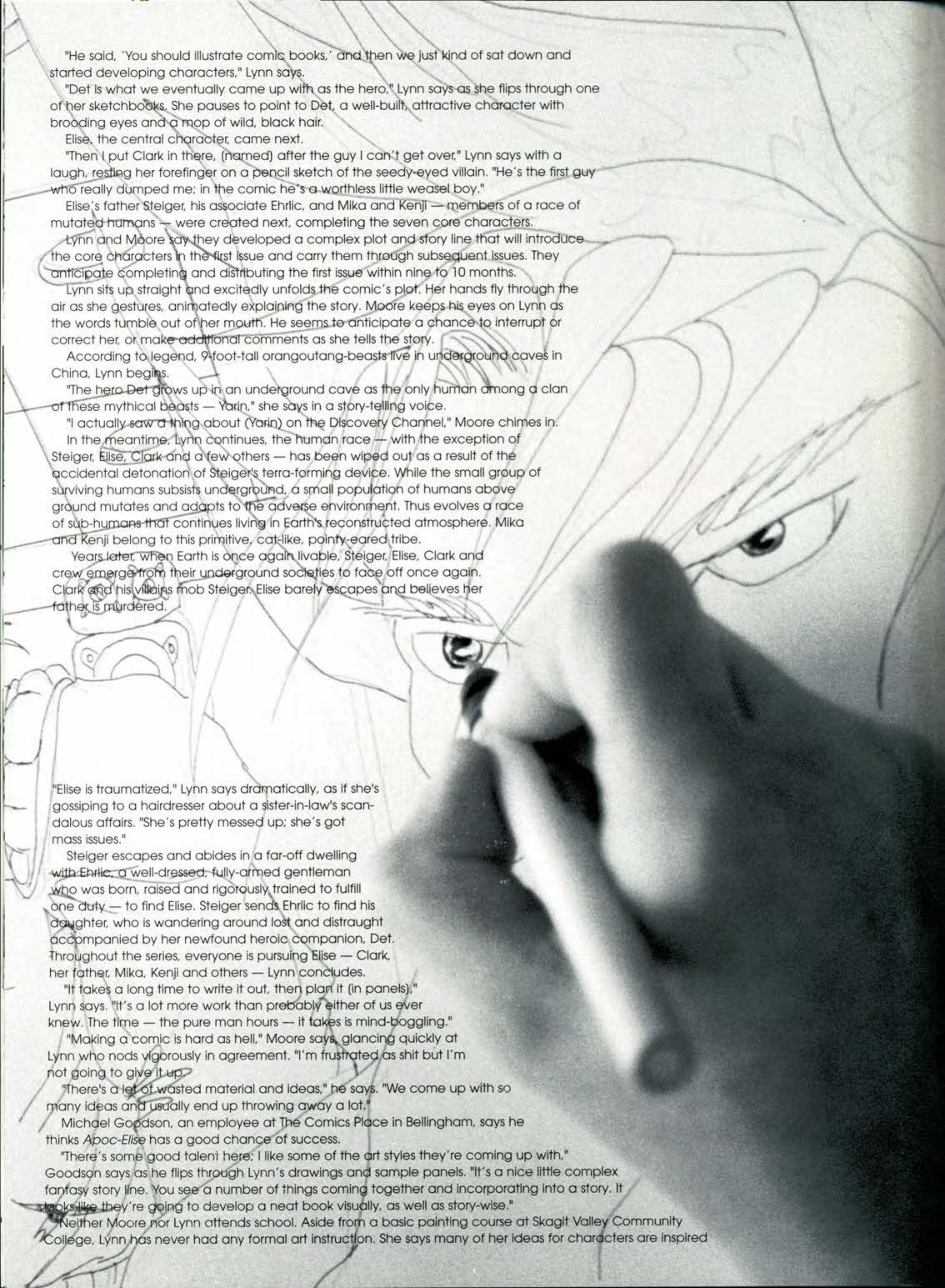
"I don't know; it looked like a cartoon," Moore muses, sitting opposite Lynn on the edge of a shabby brown couch. The furniture is comfortably crammed in the small Bellingham apartment. Video controllers and games spill over the top of the TV.

Moore leans slightly forward with his elbows on his knees, hands hanging lazily together. He cracks his knuckles nearly every five minutes as he peers out from beneath an awning of limp, draping blond hair. He speaks slowly and deliberately with a sarcastic, dry tone.

"She came back to me later and said, 'Well, I want to do a comic book,' so ... " he trails off as his eyes wander around the apartment living room. They rest on the opposite wall, which is plastered with posters and drawings surrounding a life-size, airbrushed poster of Shaggy and Scooby-Doo.

Moore and Lynn bicker like brother and sister as they rehash the still-recent history of the development of *Apoc-Elise*.





"He said, 'You should illustrate comic books,' and then we just kind of sat down and started developing characters," Lynn says.

"Det is what we eventually came up with as the hero," Lynn says as she flips through one of her sketchbooks. She pauses to point to Det, a well-built, attractive character with brooding eyes and a mop of wild, black hair.

Elise, the central character, came next.

"Then I put Clark in there, (named) after the guy I can't get over," Lynn says with a laugh, resting her forefinger on a pencil sketch of the seedy-eyed villain. "He's the first guy who really dumped me; in the comic he's a worthless little weasel boy."

Elise's father Steiger, his associate Ehrlic, and Mika and Kenji — members of a race of mutated humans — were created next, completing the seven core characters.

Lynn and Moore say they developed a complex plot and story line that will introduce the core characters in the first issue and carry them through subsequent issues. They anticipate completing and distributing the first issue within nine to 10 months.

Lynn sits up straight and excitedly unfolds the comic's plot. Her hands fly through the air as she gestures, animatedly explaining the story. Moore keeps his eyes on Lynn as the words tumble out of her mouth. He seems to anticipate a chance to interrupt or correct her, or make additional comments as she tells the story.

According to legend, 9-foot-tall orangoutang-beasts live in underground caves in China, Lynn begins.

"The hero Det grows up in an underground cave as the only human among a clan of these mythical beasts — Yarin," she says in a story-telling voice.

"I actually saw a thing about (Yarin) on the Discovery Channel," Moore chimes in.

In the meantime, Lynn continues, the human race — with the exception of Steiger, Elise, Clark and a few others — has been wiped out as a result of the accidental detonation of Steiger's terra-forming device. While the small group of surviving humans subsists underground, a small population of humans above ground mutates and adapts to the adverse environment. Thus evolves a race of sub-humans that continues living in Earth's reconstructed atmosphere. Mika and Kenji belong to this primitive, cat-like, pointy-eared tribe.

Years later, when Earth is once again livable, Steiger, Elise, Clark and crew emerge from their underground societies to face off once again. Clark and his villains mob Steiger. Elise barely escapes and believes her father is murdered.

"Elise is traumatized," Lynn says dramatically, as if she's gossiping to a hairdresser about a sister-in-law's scandalous affairs. "She's pretty messed up; she's got mass issues."

Steiger escapes and abides in a far-off dwelling with Ehrlic, a well-dressed, fully-armed gentleman who was born, raised and rigorously trained to fulfill one duty — to find Elise. Steiger sends Ehrlic to find his daughter, who is wandering around lost and distraught accompanied by her newfound heroic companion, Det. Throughout the series, everyone is pursuing Elise — Clark, her father, Mika, Kenji and others — Lynn concludes.

"It takes a long time to write it out, then plan it (in panels)," Lynn says. "It's a lot more work than probably either of us ever knew. The time — the pure man hours — it takes is mind-boggling."

"Making a comic is hard as hell," Moore says, glancing quickly at Lynn who nods vigorously in agreement. "I'm frustrated as shit but I'm not going to give it up."

"There's a lot of wasted material and ideas," he says. "We come up with so many ideas and usually end up throwing away a lot."

Michael Goodson, an employee at The Comics Place in Bellingham, says he thinks *Apoc-Elise* has a good chance of success.

"There's some good talent here; I like some of the art styles they're coming up with," Goodson says as he flips through Lynn's drawings and sample panels. "It's a nice little complex fantasy story line. You see a number of things coming together and incorporating into a story. It looks like they're going to develop a neat book visually, as well as story-wise."

Neither Moore nor Lynn attends school. Aside from a basic painting course at Skagit Valley Community College, Lynn has never had any formal art instruction. She says many of her ideas for characters are inspired



by people watching.

"You can watch people and connect their body language with what they're saying. For instance, illustrations have more impact if they have personality in their movement," she says. "You know, you wouldn't want to have a hero that slouched. You have to keep in mind, every character has a past and motives and initiative. It's all personal (to the character)."

Moore says his story ideas for the comic compensate for his lack of artistic ability and contribution.

"I can't draw to save my life," he says dryly. "She can draw; she just doesn't have any good ideas."

"What?" Lynn asks with an indignant laugh. "Well, he does know how to visually tell stories."

A plethora of pens, ink, paint and paper are essential for comic illustration, Lynn says. With the recent addition of an airbrush and air compressor to the mess of her basic provisions, Lynn says she has spent approximately \$800 on necessary art supplies.

Lynn and Moore, both recently unemployed, say they seem to be having a hard time keeping cash in their pockets.

"This comic is sucking my money away," Lynn laments in a playful tone.

In response to her complaint, Moore slaps a stack of more than 10 plastic-covered, special edition comics on the coffee table. He shuffles through the pile of *Spawn*, *Dragon Ball Z* and *Neon Cyber* comics. Some of the books cost more than \$20.

"Those are references," Lynn says in defense of her costly collection.

Moore carefully picks up a collector's edition of *Dragon Ball Z*, a prominent influence for *Apoc-Elise*.

"I'm super into Japanese animation; it's probably where I get my motivation," he says.

Perusing through the slew of comic books, Moore and Lynn consider who they would have the characters of *Apoc-Elise* encounter, if they could have them meet characters from another comic.

"You know who I think it'd be really cool to have them meet?" Moore says thoughtfully. "Sailor Moon. Just for the sheer hell of it. You know, it'd be one of those odd combinations like, Archie meets the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles."

Lynn says she and Moore make good, but not great, partners. She says the biggest problem she's noticed is a lack of serious commitment from Moore.

"I'll sit around and draw all day long; I'm really 24-hours-a-day about this," she says.

"I just don't think Jess is as into it as I am," Lynn says in a momentarily apologetic tone — she seems sorry to be dissatisfied with the partnership.


Moore doesn't seem to hold Lynn's unwavering passion and determination for the comic. He frequently reminds Lynn of the immense amount of time and work the two have ahead of them. Although he is quick to compliment and encourage Lynn's drawings, Moore rarely voices his assurance or determination regarding the finished product.

When speaking about the comic Moore uses the word "if." Lynn says "when."

"This is what I want to do with my life; I'll do whatever it takes to complete this and do others," Lynn says vehemently, with wide-eyed sincerity. "It's just fun. It's the coolest thing I've ever done, by far. I'm proud of it."

Jeff Jones, an employee at Cosmic Comics, says getting a comic book picked up by the mainstream is difficult, but not impossible.

"The concept ... bits of things put all together make an interesting story," Jones says about *Apoc-Elise*, talking loudly over the noisy jumble of arcade sound effects, wriggling joy sticks and thumbs slapping buttons. "I don't think they'll be making a living at it in the next couple of years, but in terms of self-producing, they're absolutely at the stage of being able to do that."

"They've got the beginning of what could be a multi-year-long story," Jones continues. "If they work at it, get a few lucky breaks, I think they've got a shot." 



dignity and despair

between

The devastation of ethnic cleansing draws Bellingham volunteers to Kosovo camps. **Aaron Snel** captures the tragic stories as told by two young men.

Imagine your day starting with a loud crash as five machine-gun-toting men break into your home yelling that everyone has one minute to leave or be killed. Imagine your terror and confusion as you rub the sleep from your eyes to see your mother, father, brothers and sisters being herded out of your comfortable home, prodded and whipped like animals.

Then imagine when your family gets outside into the cold, foggy morning air, your youngest brother is torn away from your mother's arms and shot, point-blank, in the back of the head as the rest of your family is brutally forced out of your town, leaving everything behind.

This story, and hundreds of similar accounts, were the harsh reality for thousands of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo who were raped, beaten, tortured and forced from their homes at the hands of the Yugoslavian Army during the past year.

The atrocities experienced by ethnic Albanians produced some of the most horrific accounts of murder and destruction in recent memory.

Most people heard of these atrocities on television, the radio or in the newspaper, but a group of four men from the Abundant Life Christian Church in Bellingham had the opportunity to travel to Albania for a month-long volunteer mission. They saw for themselves the terrible things being reported by the American media.

Matt Hartle, 25, didn't give it much thought when asked by his pastor, Ted Hanson, in late February of 1999 if he would be interested in a humanitarian trip to a massive Albanian refugee camp.

The atrocities experienced by ethnic Albanians produced some of the most horrific accounts of murder and destruction in recent memory.

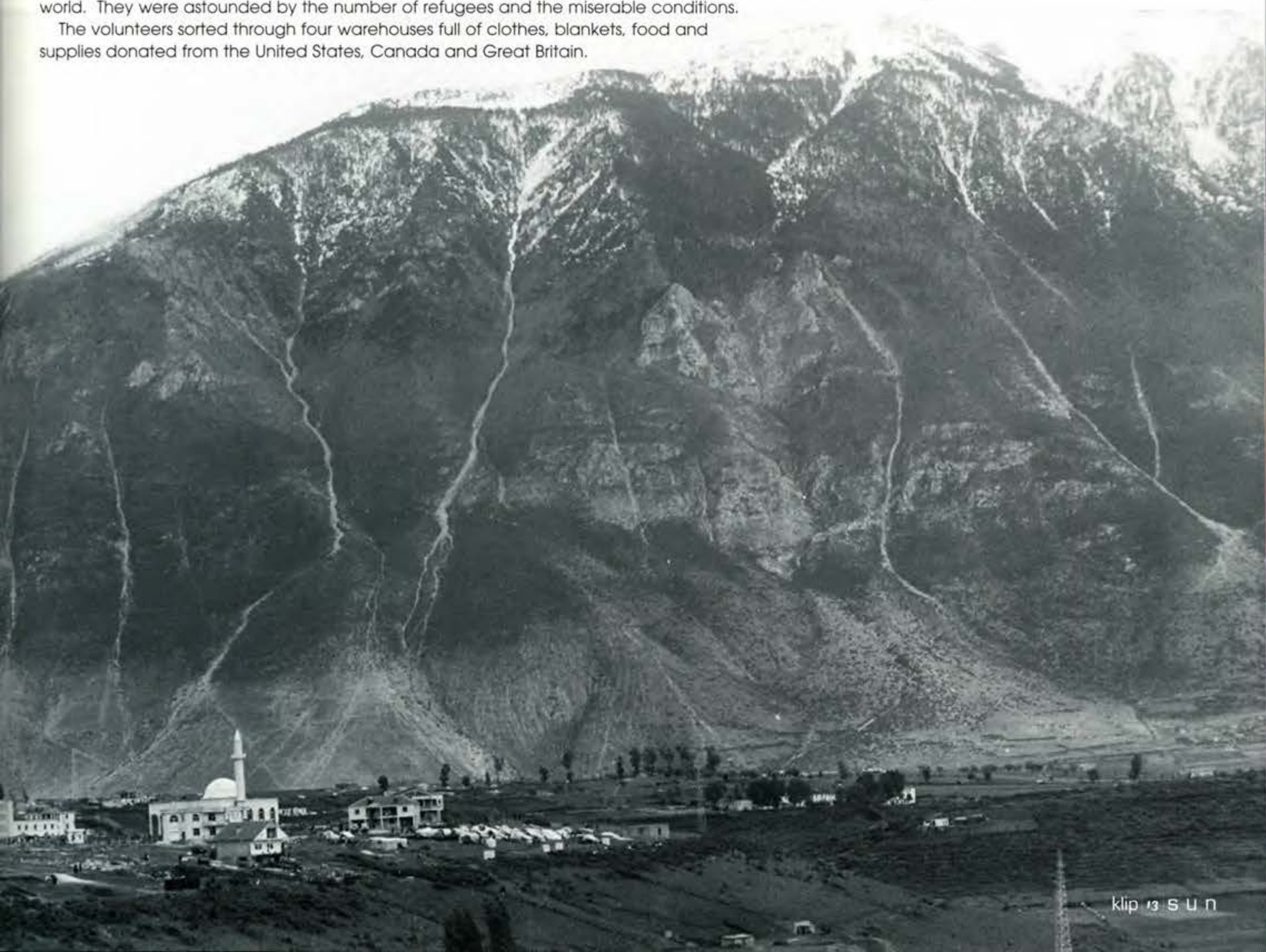
"Kosovo just seemed unreal and so far away," Hartle said as he rubbed the stubble on his rugged-looking face with his knuckles. "I had no desire to go until I had a feeling that God wanted me to do this. Twelve days later, I was on a plane on my first trip out of the country."

Henry Schmidt, a senior member of the church, led the volunteer group to the Albanian town of Lehze, which is about 100 miles across a small mountain range from the Kosovar border.

The camps, spread in disorganized patterns across 35 acres, were temporary home to 10,000 to 15,000 displaced ethnic Albanians.

The first time the volunteers entered the gates to a refugee camp, they said they felt like they were entering into another world. They were astounded by the number of refugees and the miserable conditions.

The volunteers sorted through four warehouses full of clothes, blankets, food and supplies donated from the United States, Canada and Great Britain.





photos of Kosovar border refugee camps courtesy of Salah Abdul Wahid



The warehouses were huge, but they looked like condemned buildings with holes in the roof and things falling apart inside," Hartle said. "The warehouses were wet and really musty, but the amazing thing was that they were stocked full of supplies that were constantly coming in off of boats at the sea port."

After the items were sorted, the group helped British camp director George Ridley distribute the items to needy Kosovars who lined up every day to receive a small item or two, such as a bar of soap, a loaf of bread or a stuffed animal for themselves and their families.

Even though the refugees had already been through so much pain and suffering and usually came to the camp with only the clothes they had on, Hartle said they were extremely generous and friendly.

"They were always concerned if we were alright, even though they were the ones who had been through hell."

— Matt Hartle

"Every morning we would be serving coffee and bread to the people, and they would always want us to come and sit with them and share some coffee and talk with us," Hartle said. "They were always concerned if we were alright, even though they were the ones who had been through hell."

Some of the stories Hartle heard from the refugees in the camp were so horrible that he has had a hard time sharing them with anyone since his return. He said he felt the suffering around him was so overwhelming at some points he cried and could not look anyone in the face.

"When you see old women being hauled around in wheelbarrows because they are too weak and tired to walk, and you hear terrible stories of babies being hacked up and thrown into stew pots, it gets to you, and you reevaluate your whole outlook on the world we live in," Hartle said, his brown eyes downcast and his voice quivering.

Stories of murder, beatings and rape were commonplace as Hartle and the other volunteers talked with some of the English-speaking refugees.

Bellingham resident T.J. Sanderson, 19, said his experience in

Albania was the most exciting and the most depressing time of his life. He formed strong friendships with some of the refugees at the camp and often talked with them about their ordeals.

"I met one incredible guy, who was the same age I was, who didn't have any fingers on his right hand, which was bandaged pretty heavily," Sanderson said intensely. "After talking for awhile, I asked him how he lost his fingers, and he told me that soldiers cut them off with a pocketknife after they found out that his dream was to be a journalist and a writer."

Sanderson said stories of families split apart and loved ones taken away and never heard from again were common at the camp. Walking around the camp, he was struck by the astonished looks and grief-stricken faces of the majority of the refugees.

"The thing that I couldn't get over was that these were normal people like you would see walking down the street in Bellingham," Sanderson said. "They had their own homes and cars and stereos, but now they were sitting in the dirt with their clothes strewn out all around them with blank stares on their faces."

Sanderson met many educated Kosovars who spoke fluent English. He said it was an eye-opener to see well-educated, middle-class people begging for used clothes, loaves of bread and soap. He said he would see fathers and grandfathers who were used to working every day and taking care of their families sitting around the warehouses with nothing to do but wait for the volunteers to feed them.

"When we would pass out supplies to the people every day, it was hard because you would see some people in hysterics trying to get things for their families," Sanderson said. "These were people like you and me — students, parents, men and women who had jobs at banks and restaurants. I just kept thinking that this could be me."

Even though people, clothes, books and furniture were scattered throughout the camp, Hartle said the area didn't seem unsanitary.

"After talking for awhile, I asked him how he lost his fingers, and he told me that soldiers cut them off with a pocketknife after they found out that his dream was to be a journalist and a writer."

— T.J. Sanderson



"There was no running water for the refugees, and there was a lot of junk all over the place. The warehouses were filthy, but the camp didn't seem that dirty," Hartle said. "I think that was because the people were so resourceful. They would organize themselves and do what was necessary to take care of their families."

Many of the refugees used makeshift tents and tarps for cover.

Hartle said the volunteers at the camp were treated well, and he felt comfortable at the camp. The group stayed in a small school building with electricity and running water. They slept in comfortable beds every night and ate good meals every day.

Hartle said when he first got to the refugee camp he was thankful that he had a safe and clean place to stay, but the longer he was there, the more guilty he felt about living in comfort while thousands of homeless people slept outside on the dirt.

"I kept running through my mind how lucky I was to have all the things I do," Hartle said. "We knew we were going home to houses, jobs, TV and fast food, but what did these people have to go home to? A burned home? No job? I still think about how the people I met over there are doing now. I hope they get to be happy for a change."

The volunteers felt safe at the refugee camp, but going outside the camp to downtown Lezhe presented some interesting and potentially dangerous situations, Hartle said. Corrupt Albanian police officers stopped the group on several occasions to try to solicit bribes from them. The police would say they were speeding or "driving funny," so the group would be forced to give them money before they could leave.


"One night we were at a bar in town and one of the Albanian customers got upset over his bill. I guess he thought it was too much money, and he pulled out a gun and fired about six shots into the ceiling," Hartle said. "It was scary, but it was also funny because everyone hit the ground while he was shooting, but after he was done everyone just got up like nothing had happened. The police didn't seem to care about keeping order."

Experiences at the refugee camp meant something different to each of the volunteers. Hartle said he felt his efforts fell short of making any real difference.

"One day I was just walking out amongst the refugees and here they are laying on the floor sprawled out, dirty and smelly because they don't get showers, and I couldn't look at them," Hartle said. "I couldn't make any eye contact with them, and I burst into tears because I knew I couldn't help them. We might have gone over there and put food in their stomachs and gave them some rags to wear, but none of them went to bed knowing if they were going to be safe and OK tomorrow."

Sanderson said the volunteer experience changed his life.

"I came back from Albania with a newfound sense of compassion and caring," Sanderson said. "I can honestly say that I take a lot less things for granted now. The trip made me a better person. Before I went, I couldn't even imagine 20 guys running into my house and forcing me to leave everything, but after looking into the faces of real people who went through it, it makes me all the more grateful for what I have." 🖐



Music controlling every sensual part of the human spirit and reeling the mind back to

rawe nee



life's basic beats, **Scott LaMont** captures a rave's true secrets.

r g e y r g y

The time is now; we are here.
Dancing, sweating, spirits alive.
Music is everywhere, entering the
body, pounding the ears and spine; it's
so unbelievably loud. The beat makes the
sober drunk with pleasure. DJs spinning beats
and creating the vibe. Everyone in their space, their
bubble, their world, feeling the energy of a rave.

The West Seattle Bridge is a lonely place on a Saturday night.
Passing by the hoard of street lamps and towering billboards that
bellow advertisements for cheap beer and the Supersonics, it's difficult to
believe this is the path to a rave. The all-night underground dance party phenomenon
has been around for nearly a decade, but scarcely discussed in the mainstream.

Veering off the Delridge exit and into the heart of Seattle's industrial district the towering
litter of smokestacks seem to scream: "You must have taken a wrong turn little Dorothy,
Kansas is back yonder in a place called Pioneer Square, for that is where the conventional
clubs and bars are."

Ahh, but this is vastly different from the alcohol-fueled meat-markets of downtown; a rave
is a party like no other, where happiness, music and drug use flow into the same cup of
counter-culture vino.

When finally arriving at NAF Studios, the location of this weekend's rave, "1492," the line
to enter is extremely daunting and absolutely ridiculous in length. It stands a quarter mile
long and 10 people wide, a reminder of childhood excursions to Disneyland when the sign
outside Space Mountain stated: "From this point — three hours."

At least the rave usually lasts from 9 p.m. until around 6 a.m., or roughly eight hours and
55 minutes longer than Star Tours.

"This is bullshit!" someone screams in the distance. Others attempt to pass the time by
chatting wildly in anticipation or dancing solemnly with the music, enticingly audible from
inside, teasing this massive horde of ravers.

Finally, after being frisked by a police officer of the appropriate sex, the entrance to the rave world opens.

"Look at all of this!" Branden, a 22-year-old raver says, ecstatic that he is finally inside. A wave of people surround him, permanent smiles etched on their faces. Many are resting on a long, sloped concrete area near the gate.

"This is all about the youth. It's all about being young, enjoying life and enjoying music," Branden says.

A plethora of youngsters crowd the area, some hugging, others soothing their friends who are too high to dance. Branden continues to comment on the scene.

"Our parents had the Grateful Dead, the Beatles and Woodstock; this is ours and we need to grasp it," he says, moving ever closer to the dance floor. His love for the music is apparent not only by the euphoric movements his hands make, but by the tone of his voice. "Electronic music, there's nothing like it, the way it grabs your soul and makes you move."

The techno music presented at raves is a faceless, wordless orgasm of beat. It invades the ears, mind and body of the raver with a myriad of fast-paced sounds. It taps into the hidden spirit of dance: body movement guided by the talent of a central DJ on stage mixing and creating beat with his vinyl-fueled turntables.

Some flail their arms wildly. Others calculate every move to flow in unison to the beat, while others use glowsticks to create traces of light patterns that are pleasing to the eye.

Jason is joined tonight by his friend Courtnee, 19, who rests by his side, away from the dancing for the moment.

"Who's spinning down there?" Courtnee asks. "Is that DJ Micro? He's really good; it's catching me off guard."

Although they have been going to raves for many years, this is the first one they have attended in a long time. Jason says that while this one is fun, there has been no other experience like his first rave.

"I just started dancing on my own, moving however I wanted to and just let the music take me. I didn't care what people were thinking about me or anything else. That's what this is all about, just doing what you want to do and not worrying," Jason says.

"That music just takes control of me," Jason says, leaning back and staring into the captivating wonder of the star-lit sky. "It's pure bliss."

Suddenly, Jason and Courtnee hear DJ Micro spinning one of their favorite tunes and rise to their feet. As they head back into the main room, Jason flips on the numbers of his electric shirt and moves toward the beat.

"electronic music, there's nothing like it, the way it grabs your soul"

Many drugs are available here, including Ecstasy, LSD or even simple marijuana, should the mind need anything intoxicating. Sure, the police searched everyone back at the line, but somehow the availability of drugs is never absent at a rave.

There isn't a set age at these events. Participants range from junior high and high school kids to college students, and one or two aging hipsters pepper the crowd. All are brought together to have fun and escape the dreary commonplace of their "normal" lives. For this is a place where many different people can find their niche: they find happiness, understanding and practice good ol' P.L.U.R. — an acronym used at raves to promote Peace, Love, Unity and Respect in daily life.

"I ever really got along with people at school, and I didn't dance much," explains Jason, 22. His neon-blue shirt displays numbers one through 99 on an electronic panel counting up and down in sequence.

"When I went to my first party I felt totally free," Jason says, continuing his thought. "Here, it's not based on race or religion or what you are wearing. It's not like a high school dance where people won't dance because they're worried about what cliques will make fun of them. You know, that kind of bullshit."

Jason pauses for a sip of water, an endlessly supplied element at raves, that is, if one has \$2 to spare for a 12-ounce bottle.

Raves tend not to be easy on the pocketbook. The ticket alone is around \$20, and experimenting with mind-altering drugs, such as Ecstasy, could run another \$20 to 25.

"Granted, at raves, yes, there are a lot of drugs. There's no getting around that," Jason explains. "The media blows that way out of proportion though. It's just straight-up bullshit; they just need to accept it."

Entering the heart of the rave — the main dance floor — is like penetrating a force field of raw energy. One minute, the cool night air whisks a slight chill across the skin. The next minute, the intense heat and humidity of thousands of tightly packed youngsters dancing wildly forces the body to retaliate with a barrage of sweat.

The DJ stands at the head of the room, guarded from this dancing mob by only a few plywood boards. Behind him, a screen shows a mixture of psychedelic images to please the raver who has dropped the extra cash for a hit of Ecstasy.

Lasers haunt the air with red and green squiggle patterns, which translate to language every so often to spell out the name of the DJ currently spinning. Inverted, garbled scenes from the movies "Tron" and "Star Wars" repeat over and over against the sheer backdrop.

One raver collapses by the speaker, overcome by the Ecstasy-driven sensations throughout his body and the physical exertion of constant dancing. His eyes are rolled back, and his head bobs to the intense vibrations emanating from the speaker. Instead of laughing at his drugged state, those nearby rush to his aid to see if he is OK.

The kindness does not stop with this action; a helpful duo raise the kid to his wary feet, lean him onto the speaker and begin to massage his head and shoulders. Too high to speak, he slowly turns around, embraces the two nurturing strangers and resumes the massage position.

The array of dress is another strange visual here on the dance floor. While some dress in just a plain shirt and pants, others take on styles all their own.

Some assume the look of little children, with bright, multi-colored plastic bracelets and necklaces. Teletubbies backpacks, filled with a range of candy, toys and bubbles, are widely seen. Pacifiers are used to relieve the teeth-grinding side effect of drug-induced anxiety.

Others wear neon-colored vests, silk shirts and dust masks filled with menthol jelly, such as Vicks VapoRub, making the Ecstasy high more intense when breathed deeply. Some have described the high as a five-hour orgy of the senses.

Not everyone here is having the greatest time, however.

"This scene has changed over the years; it is definitely different now," Tammy said, a raver dressed in a canary-colored fleece sweatshirt, adorned with colored beads on her arms and neck. A pacifier dangles from a multi-colored necklace around her neck.

Many experienced ravers complain that the scene has gone too mainstream. They prefer the days of the early '90s where events and locations were secretive and more underground. Now, as raves become more "trendy," some complain that they are losing some of their appeal. Tickets to some of the larger raves can even be purchased through Ticketmaster.

"Some of the people here have this thing with not enjoying the true meaning of the party," Tammy went on to say in a dismal tone. "But I still love it, the music is what brings me here."

She explains that she recently lost a friend who was jumped and stabbed after a party and died of his injuries. Another person, sitting next to her, adds that he stopped going to raves for two years after a friend was stabbed with a needle and contracted HIV.

ing like it, the way it grabs
sou l a nd mak es you m o v e." there's
nothing like it, the way it grabs

Tragedy ranges from heat stroke for dancers who don't drink enough water to Ecstasy and other drug overdoses. Only a few incidents have been widely reported, usually when they involved freak accidents.

On Aug. 30, the rave scene was hit with a shock-wave of media attention after five people were killed when their vehicle fell 1,200 feet off a cliff the morning after "JuJuBeats," a rave in the San Gabriel Mountain ski resort of Southern California.

A Los Angeles Times article stated that toxicology reports from the victims found traces of Ecstasy and LSD.

"As far as I know, there are no verifiable long-term consequences (from taking Ecstasy)," said Dr. William Robertson, Medical Director of the Washington Poison Center, in a telephone conversation. "The short-term effects are: if you take too much, you'll have a heart arrhythmia and die."

Other short-term side effects of Ecstasy include loss of appetite, increased blood pressure and heart rate, and sleep problems, according to the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.

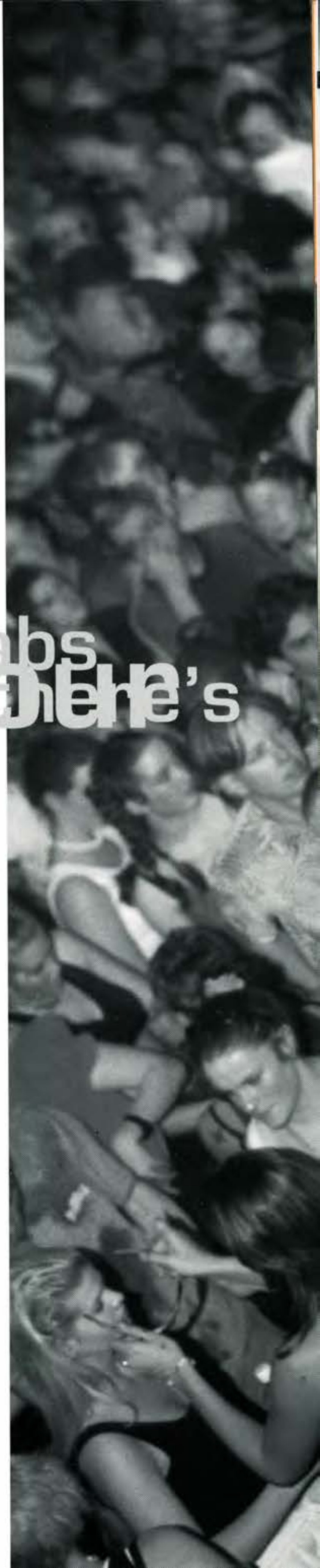
Robertson said he is most concerned with the other drugs that Ecstasy can be cut with.

"God knows what you'll find in it," Robertson said. "They don't know what they get from their friendly pusher."

Methamphetamines, such as speed, can be found in Ecstasy, Robertson said.

Risk is involved in most counter-culture activities today. Tragedy and threat of danger aside, these ravers promise to keep coming back for more.

Coming back to a place where complete strangers embrace arms and even lips. Where a 13-year-old and a guy in his 30s can feel accepted in the same group. Transvestites to the right and lesbians making out on the left; everyone in the process of grooving to the beat. No signs of homophobia or racism here; the labels are dropped; this community feels as one. All made possible during a night at a rave.



Adbusters

The Media Foundation uses advertising techniques to shock consumers. **Aaron Grey** profiles the group's maverick founder and his mission to promote social change.

Jamming

A man sits down to relax and watch television. Potato chips at his side, he reaches for the remote for some idle entertainment. Click, click. The room transforms from a dull haze into bright flickering of sudden flashes. His thumb fixes on the volume control. The noise pierces the room, occasionally broken up by the sound of the bag of chips ruffling. A blank stare envelops his face. A voice breaks in as the camera slowly pans around the room: "The living room is the factory. The product being manufactured is you. Snap out of it America." The camera reaches its destination, focusing on the back of the man's neck where a bar code is tattooed.

Most of us have never seen a commercial quite like this. However, the creators at the Media Foundation are struggling to make it a reality. This group of eight full-time and 15 part-time workers, two writers and approximately 30 volunteers produces alternative advertising for student and environmental groups, runs spoof-ad contests, produces "uncommercials" for television, promotes worldwide events, publishes a quarterly magazine — *Adbusters* — and maintains a web site.

The non-profit group survives on donations and grants from individuals, revenue from *Adbusters*' circulation, and T-shirt and calendar sales.

Referred to as "culture jammers," individuals who attempt to alter the messages of our corporate-controlled, media-consumer-industrial complex, members of the Media Foundation remain at the forefront of the culture jamming movement.

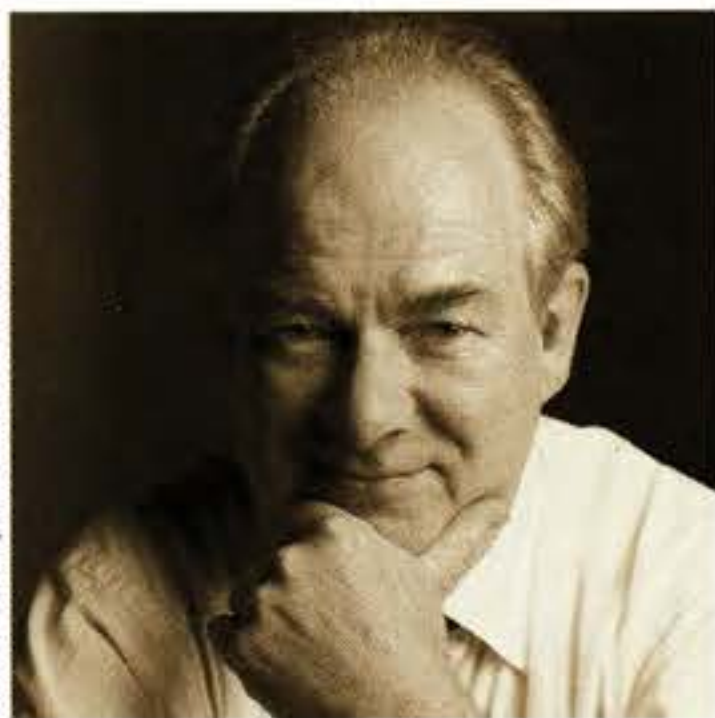
In a residential area on the north side of Vancouver, British Columbia, just before the mass of metal skyscrapers, droves of automobiles and the concrete jungle, is the Media Foundation's headquarters. A sign modestly spells out its location. Behind the manicured trees, past another sign and down the wooden steps is the office.

Just inside the door, 30 to 40 neatly stacked boxes of new calendars line the wall. One calendar is prominently displayed, featuring a small, blond-haired, blue-eyed boy dressed in a McDonald's bib and french fry hat — an obvious satire of the restaurant chain.

Computer key strokes and mouse clicks echo throughout the room. In the background, the phone remains busy. Not a suit or tie can be seen. The employees bounce questions back and forth while working on the upcoming *Adbusters* issue. A sense of pride and joyful determination sets the tone.

This attitude is most prevalent in the Media Foundation's founder, Kalle Lasn. In

Kalle Lasn, Media Foundation founder





**SHE'S
GOT
YOUR
EYES**



Controversial TV spots

1989, Lasn began the Media Foundation after spending years in the advertising business.

"I was a young guy just out of the university, and I was so glad to be a part of (advertising) For awhile it felt OK, but then after a few years I must admit I got quite disillusioned with these people They didn't really seem to give a damn whether they were advertising soap, Coca-Cola, detergents or cigarettes. It was all the same to them," Lasn said.

By starting the Media Foundation, Lasn has formed his own advertising agency. However, instead of promoting products, it promotes ideas.

"We create campaigns, use media resources and (then) other groups take on the concepts and make them their own through a grass roots level," said Tom Liacas, campaign manager for the Media Foundation.

"Coming up with 30-second or 60-second messages ... I find, is one of the most satisfying, creative and wonderful things that one can do, and I revel in it myself," Lasn said.

The Media Foundation has produced more than 20 spots during the past eight years, but Lasn admits that he has had very little success getting them on the air.

Many of the Media Foundation's efforts go into making its uncommercials. These punchy, hard-hitting satirical messages are aimed at the masses in an effort to trigger what Lasn calls "a paradigm shift in public consciousness." The Media Foundation has produced more than 20 spots during the past eight years, but Lasn admits that he has had very little success getting them on the air.

"We don't want to take any advertising that is inimical to our legitimate business interests," said Richard Gitter, vice president of advertising standards at NBC, in an article in the Wall Street Journal, Nov. 19, 1997.

The advertising in question was The Media Foundation's "American Excess" spot created for *Buy Nothing Day*.

Buy Nothing Day, described in *Adbusters* as an anti-consumerist Mardi Gras, is a worldwide holiday where fellow culture jammers get together to perform street theater, hand out leaflets and distribute press releases. The holiday falls on the day after Thanksgiving, the busiest shopping day of the year.

The 30-second uncommercial featured an animated pig superimposed on a map of North America. Staring back from the screen, the pig jostles around and burps a few times. The voice-over begins: "The average North American consumes five times more than a Mexican, 10 times more than a Chinese person and 30 times more than a person from India. We are the most voracious consumers in the world — a world that could die because of the way we North Americans live. Give it a rest. November 26 is *Buy Nothing Day*."

"So when I phone up CBS or NBC or ABC network and say, 'Hey I've got \$15,000 and I want to buy some air-time,' they look at my spots and say, 'Uh-Oh, here's an anti-car spot. Uh-Oh, here's a *Buy Nothing Day* spot. I don't think our other sponsors are going to like this. Sorry, we're not going to sell you any air-time,'" Lasn said.

The Media Foundation has enjoyed some success. One network has stepped forward to sell them time.

"The CNN network, two years ago ... phoned us and said, 'Hey, we have no problem, we'll sell you some air-time.' And since then we have been airing — not all the spots, they're still rejecting many of our campaigns," Lasn said.

The heart of the Media Foundation's culture jamming is its quarterly magazine *Adbusters*. With a worldwide circulation of 50,000, *Adbusters* brings many issues to the forefront through articles and commentary, and takes aim at Madison Avenue through parody ads.

One parody of Calvin Klein's *Obsession* features a young male model dressed in "Calvin Kline" briefs worriedly taking a peek at his manhood — the headline: *Obsession*. Another ad features a partial photo of a child's face with one eye shaped like a television — the headline: *She's Got Your Eyes*.

Only *Utne Reader* has published a Media Foundation's parody.

In 1997, the Media Foundation contacted *Harper's Magazine* in an attempt to bring its ad parodies to another audience. The parody was a spoof of Camel cigarettes featuring the cartoon character "Joe Chemo". It featured a sickly looking Joe in a hospital bed hooked up to an IV. He's sadly looking down at the dark sunglasses in his hands. In the bottom right corner is the pseudo-warning: "The Surgeon General warns that smoking is a frequent cause of wasted potential and fatal regret."

"We were just about to buy one full page for our "Joe Chemo" parody, and they had been negotiating saying that we could get a non-profit rate — that we were able to afford — of about \$5,000 for a full page. But, then suddenly when we were about to buy that space, then they said, 'Sorry, sorry, we've changed our minds and you'll have to pay the full rate as the tobacco companies.' And the price suddenly went up to \$15,000. At that stage, we just couldn't afford it," Lasn admitted.

When the Media Foundation isn't busy working on uncommercials or proofing the next issue of *Adbusters*,

chances are they're busily promoting *Buy Nothing Day* or *TV Turnoff Week*. The Media Foundation highly publicizes these two events in an effort to mobilize other culture jammers.

"Interest has grown over the years. (*Buy Nothing Day*) is big in Europe, especially Netherlands and Germany We've even had inquiries from Philippines and Greece," Liacas said.

Perhaps the biggest piece of jamming to occur on *Buy Nothing Day* was during its 7th annual celebration in 1998. The event was planned by the Media Foundation and the California-based Ruckus society — a group whose mandate is to provide "technical training in nonviolent forms of civil disobedience to groups promoting social justice." The outcome played out 100 feet above the floor of the Mall of America in Minneapolis, Minn.

Ruckus members Marin Goldstein and Han Shan hung a 600-square-foot banner featuring the caption, "Shop 'til we drop?" and a cartoon of Earth falling through a shopping bag while hundreds of shoppers looked on in amazement. An entire day passed before mall personnel were able to climb up and take it down.

"There couldn't be a more appropriate location to challenge our society's runaway consumerism," Goldstein said in the article, "Happy Buy Nothing Day From the Mall of America," featured in the Spring 1999 issue of *Adbusters*.

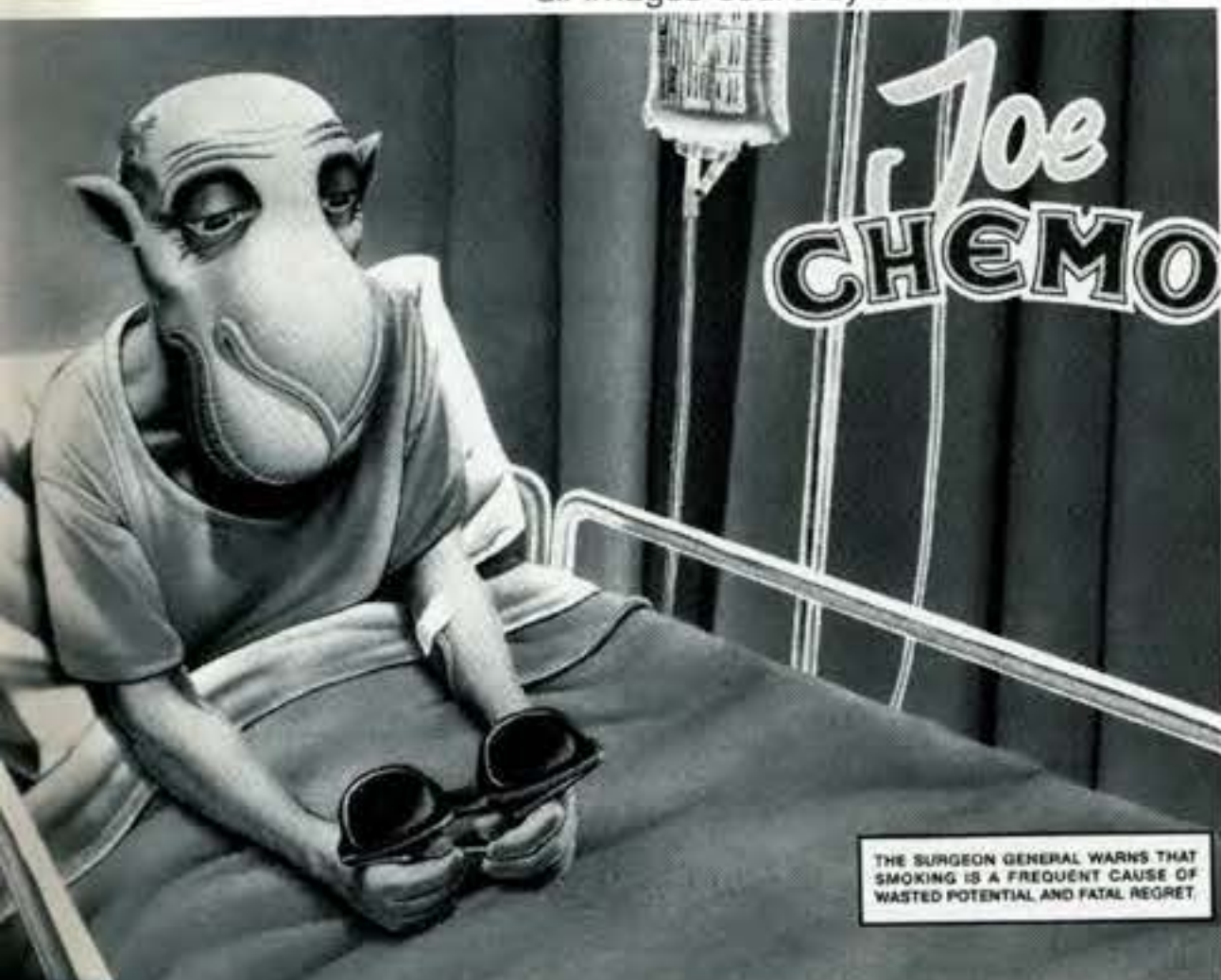
"It wasn't picked up by that many people in the media. I don't know exactly why," Lasn said. "I thought it was an incredible little piece of jamming — unfolding that huge banner right inside the Mall of America."

The next big event in culture-jamming is *TV Turnoff Week*. Every April 22 through 28, people are asked to turn off their TVs in support. On April 22, 1999, the Media Foundation was successful in getting an uncommercial to air on CNN twice.

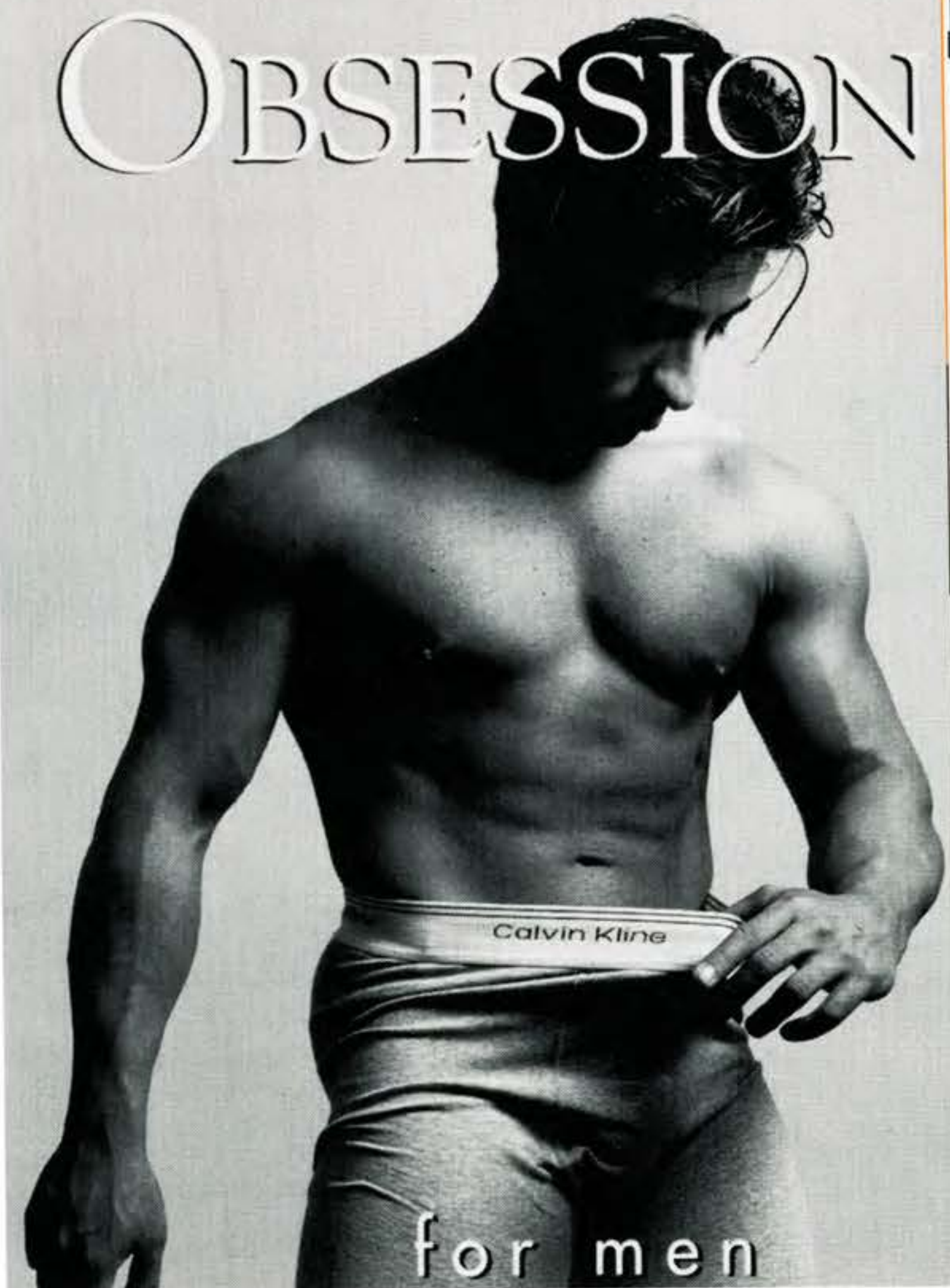
At the grassroots level of *TV Turnoff Week* is the U.S. advocacy group TV Free America. The group estimated it convinced 7 million Americans to tune out this year for the week-long event.

"With the North American movement growing steadily, and international interest taking off, *TV Turnoff 2000* is set to join *Buy Nothing Day* as the world's next great culture jamming festival," Liacas said in his article, "TV Turnoff '99," published in the July/August issue of *Adbusters*.

all images courtesy of Media Foundation



OBSESSION



Despite this optimism, the Media Foundation faces stiff competition from every facet of the consumer culture — from television networks, magazine editors, consumer advertising — and criticism from other culture jammers.

"Though *Adbusters* is capable of lacerating wit, its attacks on nicotine, alcohol, and fast-food joints can be repetitive and obvious The magazine is crossing a fine line between information-age civil disobedience and puritanical finger waving," said Naomi Klein in the *Village Voice*, May 6, 1997.

Many critics claim *Adbusters'* evangelical hyping of culture jamming has reduced it to a fad. Carrie McLaren, the editor for *Stay-Free!*, a New York zine that also does parody ads, was annoyed by the *Adbusters* line of anti-consumer products. She felt it's ironic that *Adbusters* sells calendars and T-shirts to coincide with The Media Foundation's annual *Buy Nothing Day*.

"It's become an advertisement for anti-advertising," McLaren said in the *Village Voice*, May 6, 1997.

Despite the criticism, the Media Foundation continues on: Issues are printed, parody ads are proofed and new television uncommercials are conceived.

"I think that we are ready for a new kind of social activism. And I personally believe it's going to be about corporate power," Lasn said. "And it's going to be about people realizing that the big battle right now isn't about race. It isn't about gender. It isn't about nature. It is about culture. Who controls the culture?"



p i z z a



envy

The lowdown on pizza delivery: **Jackie Mercurio** uncovers the naked truth behind Pizza Time's Byron Heflen. Photos by Anthony Dimitre.

Some hear about people who order a pizza and answer the door naked, but what about naked people delivering the pizza?

Well, Pizza Time's Byron Heflen has some stories to tell.

Heflen, 24, has heard it all, seen it all and done it all. With long black hair tied in a rubber band, he sports a black leather jacket and wears an emerald-green cotton shirt, which brings out the green tone in his eyes. A thick silver chain hides under his shirt and a matching bracelet slides back and forth between his wrist and his forearm as he grips his chin to think.

He smiles without embarrassment, recalling one delivery to a bachelorette party where they requested he deliver in the buff.

Heflen replays the story, his voice fluctuating between feminine and masculine tones. He begins imitating a girl opening a door, "'Are you the stripper?' No, I'm the pizza guy. You asked me to come naked."

Shrugging his shoulders, he boldly states that delivering nude is no big deal.

A girl once called Pizza Time and accused him of just wanting to see naked people. She said she wanted to see him in his birthday suit.

"She was like, 'You should get naked, then I will.'"

And he did.

"It was hard getting pants off and shoes back on in the car. And it was winter. It was cold then," he says beaming a guilty grin as he details the rest of the story.

Heflen spent the first three weeks of last fall and the first week of this fall quarter handing out "call naked" flyers encouraging this behavior. A few students took it further than calling naked, and Heflen has no complaints.

Heflen fondly remembers a few girls from Fairhaven who called and wanted a free pizza for answering the door naked.

"I got there and the girls strutted out in high heels, sunglasses



"I honked, and they came out with socks on their cocks and combat boots"

— Byron Heflen

and pink, fluffy robes. People were in the road watching, and the girls just ripped off their clothes. I gave them a free pizza just for having the guts to do it," he says.

Guys call in too, but Heflen says he doesn't want to spend his own cash on a pizza for "au naturel" men.

"These guys told me to honk when I got there, and if their outfits weren't good enough they would pay for their pizza. I honked, and they came out with socks on their cocks and combat boots," he says with a look of amusement covering his face. "This was before dark," he adds.

It takes a great deal to shock Heflen, but those guys did, so he gave them a free pizza.

Heflen complains that some girls only offer to answer topless, but they still want the 100 percent discount.

"I tell them half-off is only good for half-off. That's only fair," Heflen says, outlining the rules to his game.

His eyes light up as he begins telling about an unusual guy who swallowed a baby boa. Just the tail was left in his mouth.

"You could see it move up and down his throat; that's wrong," Heflen says. "I'd pay to see something like that at a freak show. I figured, why not? I'll pay for his pizza," he adds, with the amazement still alive in his eyes.

Some of Heflen's co-workers are sketchy about his tall tales. Glen Bristow, his supervisor, says he doesn't think Heflen's stories are based on facts.

"I know people that talk about a phenomenon called Byron disease," Bristow says chuckling, adding that the disease involves expanding experiences into fantastic tales.

"If I saw a naked girl tonight, he would say he saw four, or the ones he saw would be better," Bristow says.

However, Bristow doesn't complain about Heflen's company. "He's the best party favor you could ever hope to have."

Even when Heflen's nights are void of entertainment, he says he likes to work the weekends because he gets good tips, about \$80 on Friday nights.

The biggest tip he remembers is \$36 for a \$33 bill. The oddest tip he remembers is a flowered bra and panties, which he saved in his room among his collection of bra bows.

Suddenly, Heflen's face lights up as he remembers another story.

"Oh, and there's these girls at Taylor Street. No tip, but a line for me at the door," he brags. All of the girls in the house lined up at the door and took turns kissing him on the cheek.

When Heflen isn't racing between houses with pizzas in his white Nissan 240SX, he enjoys sword fighting and rocking out to heavy industrial music. He also tries to go swing dancing one night per week.

Heflen says delivering pizza can be quite entertaining. He sees "gorgeous" women exposing some skin, people with interesting talents, and gets free smooches here and there. However, people have also had good laughs at his expense.

Once, a dog ate a pizza Heflen was supposed to deliver. Some people have ordered pizzas to nonexistent houses, and he's had his wallet stolen when delivering to a party.

So, if the pizza delivery seems to be taking awhile, just think of the possibilities.



Living

OFF



"I know it looks like a jungle out here, but in reality there is a lot of organization to it ..."

— Chris Soler



generator

the Grid

Worn solar panels jut skyward from what vaguely resembles the roof of a dwelling. Weeds grow thick atop what looks like a mound of earth and uncovered edges of plastic tarps protrude from the corners of the windows and doors. An automobile in the driveway and a wisp of smoke wafting from the chimney are the only other signs of life.

This is the residence of Chris Soler and Selu Loubert. In 1985, Soler began building this underground house powered by solar panels and hydroelectricity. It nears completion daily.

Soler, 41, has a thin build and a thick brown beard that begins underneath the stocking cap he wears high on his head. He grew up on a dairy farm in the Skagit Valley, in a self-reliant family that grew their own fruits and vegetables. While a student at Skagit Valley Community College, he read about how quickly humans are using up natural resources such as fossil fuels. He chose an alternative lifestyle; Soler says the way he lives now only expands on his original premise.

The back wall of the house, consisting of burlap stretched over a rebar frame and filled with concrete, butts against a dirt berm. To complete this technique, often used in India, concrete is added as the cement dries. When finished, the house looks like a giant Hostess Twinkie.

Soler explains that the construction of the house moderates the temperature. It stays near 56 degrees when the wood stove — the main source of heat — is not in use. Heated wires under the kitchen floor supplement the stove when power is sufficient.

"Essentially, you have a huge mass of dirt around you, so that if it's freezing outside all that dirt is warmer from whenever you had that wood stove going, or the sun shining through the windows. In the summertime it is much cooler than the outside for the same reason — the dirt is holding the lower temperature," Soler says.

The six solar panels sitting on the roof turn the sun's heat into energy and store it in heavy-duty batteries. Camouflaged beside the entryway, Soler's 12 batteries store a week's worth of power when fully charged. During the sunny summer months, Soler and Loubert function like a conventional household, using their TV, radio, computer, refrigerator, washer, dryer and other electrical appliances.

In the wintertime they must live more conservatively. Soler recently completed a hydroelectric generator that uses the water runoff from a nearby hill. The steadier flow in winter and spring produces a usable amount of electricity. This, in conjunction with his new wind generator, leads Soler to expect more electricity this winter than any before.

"The main benefit to living this way (is) that you're not impacting the earth as much," Soler says. "Economically, it's less expensive."

Soler does not own a motor vehicle. He commutes to his job as a surveyor's assistant via his bicycle or the benevolence of car owners. He saves more than three-fourths of his \$10,000 income. Without utility costs, loans or mortgages, bills from the power company, water district, or cable operator, Soler only pays taxes.

Loubert owns the car in the driveway. An accountant during the tax season, she also runs an online Native American bookstore out of their home. Experienced in alternative living before she met Soler, Loubert once built an underground house in Idaho.

Soler and Loubert understand that their goals demand constant work.

"I've chosen to put a lot of what's called 'sweat equity' into things I do," Soler says. "I work hard to make something happen, but then, rather than paying money to have somebody else do it or making continuous payments, once I've got it in, it's done."

Food production also occupies much of their time.

"This was a bad year for the foods that need the sun's warmth to thrive," Soler says, pointing to a still dark-green pumpkin.

The gardens that nearly surround the house appear disorderly. Squash vines wind their way through rhubarb plants; salad greens dot the landscape among cornstalks and potatoes.

"I know it looks like a jungle out here, but in reality there is a lot of organization to it Picking and choosing which plants grow ... Different areas take different efforts," Soler says, bending over a stray squash plant.


Soler and Loubert raised chickens and ducks until coyotes and cougars interfered. They want to make completely varmint-proof pens before attempting to raise fowl again.

Beans and rice, bought once or twice a year, along with a stockpile of bread and other baked goods, provide most of their protein.

Soler and Loubert still find time to teach three classes at Western's Northwest Freedom University, an alternative learning institution. They teach a self-reliant living course and a plant-gathering course together. Soler also teaches a class about alternative energy design.

They demonstrate how they maintain a self-reliant lifestyle by inviting students to their home.

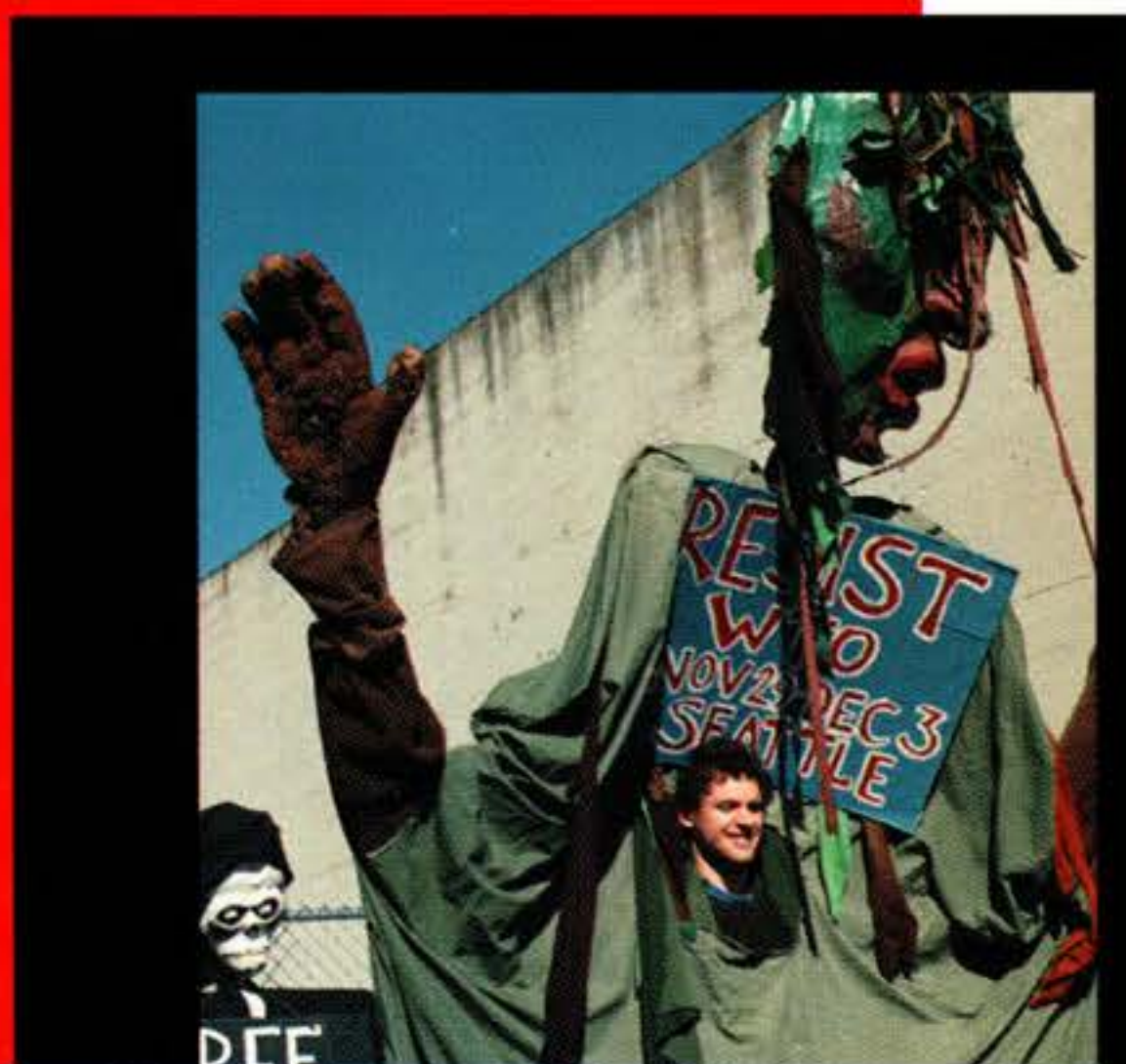
"What we do really depends on the students; we detail the house construction, makeup of the garden and sources of power. Then we kind of leave it up to the students to guide the direction of the class," Loubert says.

Although it could be the set of a post-apocalyptic movie, the underground house is reality. In a society where such a thing is thought of as an alternative lifestyle, Soler and Loubert live a life more in tune to the earth than many conventional households. Maybe their alternative is a solution. 



batteries

The recent WTO conference in Seattle aroused strong feelings in both its supporters and detractors. **Kayley Mendenhall** investigates its impact on Western students and their preparations for the event. Photos by Erin Fredrichs.



Behind the masks

Nestled between Boundary Bay Brewing Company and Rumors Cabaret, three 12-foot puppets come to life and demonstrate the art of non-violence.

Georgia Pacific's steam towers gleam only a few blocks away, creating puffs of smoke in an otherwise cloudless sky. Children are awed and slightly frightened by the giant puppets representing the major players in the World Trade Organization's conference in Seattle. People swarm to learn the art of non-violent protesting.

The Art and Revolution troupe, a group of traveling protestors sponsored by two non-profit environmental organizations — The Direct Action Network Against Corporate Globalization and Global Exchange — recently gathered at Bellingham's Farmers Market to spread its knowledge about the WTO and its passion for fighting it through street performance. The group is touring from Vancouver, British Columbia to Santa Cruz.

"Street theater, to me, is a very powerful organizing tool," said Julie Sparling-Youtt, a member of Art and Revolution. "We want to take theater out of the theaters and activism out of the boring, stuffy meeting rooms."

One skeleton-faced puppet is dressed in black with a machete in its hand. The evil-looking demon bears a sign that reads, "FREE (to exploit people and nature) TRADE." Another represents the WTO as a gigantic white male with a fork in one hand and a knife in the other, as he prepares to eat the earth held prisoner on his stomach.

A Western student is asked to play the part of a third puppet, a model of a tribal person. Sparling-Youtt explained the group always asks for volunteers from the audience to bring the performance to life.

"In every show we bring up participants," she said. "We are trying to break down that invisible wall — the idea that acting is only for experts and activism is only for experts."

"I'm an Earth Spirit," said Gabe Lukeris, Western dance major, as he struggled to balance the giant puppet strapped to a backpack frame and belted to his body. "I think I'm the good guy."

Lukeris admitted he isn't the most informed person regarding the WTO, but said that from what he has heard he would like to learn more. This attitude seems to extend to many Western students preparing for the conference in Seattle — whether behind conference desks as volunteers or behind police lines as protestors.

The WTO is comprised of trade ministers from more than 130 countries. It was created in 1995 as a successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which came about after World War II. The WTO deals with the global rules of trade between member nations and guarantees that trade flows freely, according to the WTO website.





Many oppose the WTO's actions, claiming it purposely revokes important laws that protect the environment and union workers. Others herald its efforts to remove barriers between foreign nations and promote trade. The WTO has been accused of widening the gap between rich and poor people and the developed and developing countries of the world. Major issues in the past have involved the Clean Air Act and the Endangered Species Act.

Art and Revolution members David Solnit and Leonie Wrasse spoke about the hazards imposed by shrimp nets on endangered sea turtles, killing thousands each year. The United States stopped buying shrimp from countries that used nets without turtle excluder devices — metal grids which guide sea turtles out of nets to safety — as it violates the ESA. The WTO decided the United States was violating free trade by excluding countries such as India that do not use these devices on its shrimp nets. The United States appealed this decision, but may face revising portions of the ESA or paying fines or trade sanctions to India and other countries.

The WTO stands by its decision, saying that while environmental concerns are a consideration, it is more important to treat all countries fairly. In other words, a country cannot be lenient with its own producers and strict with foreign suppliers of the same product, according to the website.

"There's a danger of asking all countries to have the exact standards for labor and for the environment that we do, because in effect, they can't afford it," said Tom Roehl, assistant professor of international business at Western. "What we want to do is move toward it."

The ESA is just one of many examples given throughout the performance and at a recent training session at Fairhaven Auditorium, where Western students and Bellingham residents learned how to protest non-violently. The training was meant to provide safety tips and mock presentations of situations that may occur in Seattle.

"You organize yourself in affinity groups — small groups of five to 20," said Ryan Orth, Western student and co-coordinator of the campus Environmental Center. "The groups are based on common principles. The idea is

that you are all going in the same direction, you all know where you're going, what your limits are — so one person in your group doesn't go buck wild and get arrested."

"Some people may just be dancing and holding signs," he said. "Other people might be chaining themselves to things."

Each affinity group will decide its limits before leaving for Seattle. The groups will enact possible scenarios and know what to expect when they reach the front lines of the WTO battle. Art and Revolution's training simulated the process of actively and passively resisting arrest and maintaining group solidarity once in jail. The group also discussed the emotions involved with getting arrested and how to watch out for each other."

Orth explained that actively resisting arrest includes sitting in a circle, linking arms with one another and forcing police officers to remove you. Passively resisting arrest requires going limp and letting officers pull you away from the scene.

While one group of students prepares to protest, another learns the implications of volunteering as workers at the conference.

"When I was at the meeting, they told us to wear flat-footed shoes so we could run if we have to," Julie Dockendorff said about a preliminary meeting for WTO conference volunteers. A Western marketing major, Dockendorff volunteered to distribute pamphlets at the WTO conference and possibly drive diplomats to and from the airport. As a student interested in international business, she feels the contacts made during this experience will be invaluable for her career.

"My marketing professor was, like, 'Get your business cards and resumes ready,'" Dockendorff said. "I'm going to hand them out to anyone and everyone who will take them."

On the other end of campus, a group of students and community members have started a club called "Students Against the WTO." The club meets at a college house on Oak Street where an inviting sign on the front door reads, "Resist the WTO HERE!" More than 20 would-be protestors fill the rectangular living room, sitting on the floor, on garage-sale couches and even seats taken from a minivan. The scraggly group munches on dried apples and debates the upcoming events in tones of hushed excitement. Conspiring to stop the business of the world's largest corporations seems an appropriate part of their Sunday afternoon.

They talk of defining their affinity groups and arranging more meetings. Their ultimate goal is to organize the community and raise awareness to bring as many people on the trip as possible. One group plans to shower Bellingham with informational stickers and posters while another plans an entire "Festival of Resistance" as a pre-protest event. Obstacles such as accessing the Washington State Trade and Convention Center and getting arrested are concerns for some, while others want to stick to preliminary planning and worry about details later.

One of the residents of the house, Lambert Rochfort, a junior

at Fairhaven, said he is preparing to get arrested at the WTO conference although he has never been arrested before.

"If you want to take a stand for something, getting arrested for civil disobedience is the strongest stand you can take," he said.

The penalty for civil disobedience ranges from a misdemeanor to a gross misdemeanor to a felony, depending on the type of action taken. Most commonly, protestors are charged with misdemeanors, the maximum penalty for which is 90 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Rochfort is against the WTO because it's a non-elected body that makes decisions affecting the health of people and the environment. These decisions are made by an appointed group of trade ministers, and every decision they have made is in favor of corporations, he said.

On the other hand, Dockendorff sees the WTO as an important peace-keeping body between trading nations.

"The way business works may be different in one country than the other," she said. "There does need to be an organization that helps keep the peace and make sure trade goes smoothly."

Roehl agrees that the WTO's purpose is to promote corporations, but he said it is important to look at factors other than labor and environmental concerns. Economic growth means more jobs in poor countries, and free trade increases the connections between countries worldwide.

"The protestors are talking about one part of the life of people," Roehl said. "People also care about their economic well-being. After World War I, tariff walls went up around the world. Countries couldn't grow, couldn't get connected. We didn't get to know each other through trade. We ended up in lots of fights. The WTO has connected countries in ways that allow us to have some benefits. We can buy goods from countries (that) we couldn't buy (from) before. People who are protesting are saying that those kinds of issues are less valuable."

The WTO's conference in Seattle has brought environmental groups, social justice groups, labor unions and groups of faith together.

"It's not a protest, actually every sector of society is organizing," said David Solnit, a member of Art and Revolution. He told the story of a farmer who is trying to get several tractors into downtown Seattle November 30.

Labor unions are organizing tens of thousands of members to congregate in the streets. The Longshoremen's union is considering sickouts that would shut down all the ports on the West Coast that day. More street performers will gather in protest than ever before, Solnit said.

"We are using images and art to break through some of the corporate media that tries to minimize us," he said. "This is one of the times we have to take it farther than just writing letters."

"If you want to take a stand for something, getting arrested for civil disobedience is the strongest stand you can take."

— Lambert Rochfort



Art and Revolution performers take protest to the street with the help of audience volunteers such as Gabe Lukeris, shown on page 28.





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