

# INK

ISSUE 29 SPRING 2022

## *They will not be silenced*

Oregon high schoolers fight  
to voice their beliefs





# HONORING OUR TEAM MEMBERS



The Duck Store is proud to be a part of our team members' University of Oregon experience, championing their potential both now as students and into their futures. Join us in congratulating these and other student team members and board members at [UODuckStore.com/gradspotlight](https://UODuckStore.com/gradspotlight)



*The Duck Store graduates, clockwise from top:*

- Imani, board member since May 2021
- Annie, team member since Sept 2021
- Elvia, team member since Jun 2021
- Hayden, team member since Jan 2022
- Gilberto, team member since Jul 2021
- Olivia, team member since Sept 2021
- Anna, team member since Oct 2019
- Jillian, team member since Jun 2019
- Aidan, board member since May 2019

Be more.

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UODuckStore.com

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The Klamath River runs through parts of Oregon and California. Dams along the river are harming the fish populations including salmon and steelhead. Read more on page 12.

cover photographed by FERN DONOVAN  
back cover photographed by ISAAC WASSERMAN

# editor's LETTER

I was 15 when I visited Oregon for the first time, and what was supposed to be a family vacation changed the course of my life. I am a California girl through and through, but it was on the banks of the Deschutes River that I fell for Oregon's charm and its indescribable beauty. It was love at first river float. With each day I spent exploring, I became fascinated with the culture, people and scenery as they were so different from what I was used to. It became clear that I wanted to live here. I didn't know where I'd end up or when I'd get there, but I knew I needed to move here.

Three years later, in 2018, I was accepted to the University of Oregon as a journalism major. With tears in my eyes and excitement in my heart, I packed my belongings in the back of my Subaru and said goodbye to the only home I had ever known. Truth be told, I could do without all of Oregon's rain, but after four years I have found in every falling leaf, changing season and hike through the forest more reasons to adore this place.

I will finish my time in Oregon, and at UO, as editor-in-chief of Flux. Since coming into this role I have been so excited to fill the pages of our magazine with stories that capture the essence of my home in the Northwest and its people.

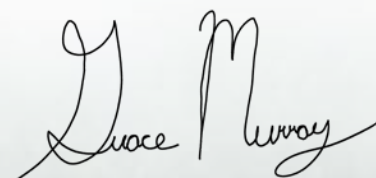
While I might never live up to being a full-fledged Oregonian, the issues of the Pacific Northwest have become personal to me. I watch my neighbors fight for their rights, advocate for the issues they are passionate about, and protect one another. In each Flux story, you will see the passion and care I have come to admire.

Our reporters found stories that are impacting every corner of our state and beyond. Chloe Bryant and Isaac Wasserman drove a couple of hours beyond the southern Oregon border to a very small town in California. There they spent several days chronicling the lives of the Hupa and Yurok tribes. Dams that line the Klamath River have prevented the tribes from accessing fish for decades; and after many years of advocating by the tribes and others the dams may soon be removed.

Up north in Newberg, Oregon, a debate surrounding the use of LGBTQ and Black Lives Matter signs in classrooms has divided the community. Olivia Bennett and Fern Donovan spent time with high schoolers in the district and followed them in their campaigns to get political signs back into classrooms.

In the wake of the Taliban's seizure of Afghanistan over 30 refugees resettled in Eugene. Sarah-Mae McCullough and Amalia Birch had the opportunity to tell the stories of three brave Afghan women who have resettled and are rebuilding their lives.

That's just a sample of what's in this year's edition. There's plenty more thanks to the work of our wonderful team of reporters and designers. I am especially thankful to my fellow editors Makenzie Elliott, Isabel Lemus Kristensen and Gigi Rutsky for working alongside me to bring this magazine to life. With each page you will uncover stories of adversity, courage, love, perseverance and kindness — and they're all happening right here in our own backyard. My hope is that the 2022 edition of Flux will give you a taste of what's going on in the Pacific Northwest and some of the many reasons why this place will have a piece of my heart forever.



Grace Murray  
*Editor-in-Chief*

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"Eugene, Oregon, I'll remember you for the rest of my life  
I won't forget how good you were to me  
No and I won't be forgettin' all the kindness that you show  
To a homesick country girl a long, long way from Tennessee"  
*Dolly Parton, from her song "Eugene, Oregon"*

## AUTHENTIC ITALIAN PIZZA *IN EUGENE*

Hey Neighbor! Pizza House, in the university district of Eugene, is known for its savory thin-crust pizza. How does HNPH make the pizza so mouth-watering? Not because of an oven you can pick up at a Sears or Home Depot. Its oven came from 5,760 miles away. The story begins in Reggello, Italy, where the owners of HNPH had the oven imported all the way to Eugene. According to Calen Willis, owner of HNPH, the Tuscan-style tall dome oven was chosen because "it made the most sense to source from the region that is synonymous with outstanding culinary traditions." We caught Willis carrying blocks of wood used to heat up the coal bed and run a flame over the dome of the oven. Willis mentions that "any oven is only as good as the person that is tending it." With big-hearted employees managing the oven and making pizza pies, you can find a very special taste at Hey Neighbor.

— Keyry Hernandez

## AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

While you're in the neighborhood, check out some of the other restaurants on 19<sup>th</sup> Street. Eugene's prized ice cream shop, Prince Puckler's, has been serving up scoops to the community since 1975. With over 40 flavors, it has ice cream for everyone — even President Barack Obama who picked up a scoop of mint chip on his trip to Eugene in 2008. Across the street, check out Beppe & Gianni's Trattoria for some Italian cuisine. The smell of fresh pasta and garlic bread greet you as you step into the converted house. If it's sunny out, opt to dine on the patio. The string lights and ambient music bring Tuscany to Eugene. One block to the west is Studio One Cafe, a perfect option for breakfast or brunch. All of the menu items include references to old films, offering a pinch of nostalgia with every bite.

## MAKE YOUR OWN PIZZA

Mix a cup of flour, yeast, sugar and salt in a bowl. Optional: garlic powder and dried basil.

Add olive oil and warm water. Stir with a wooden spoon.

Add another cup of flour and more if needed. Stir until the dough forms into an elastic ball.

After spreading flour on your hands, transfer the round ball into an oiled bowl. Wrap the bowl in plastic wrap and leave it on the counter.

Preheat the oven to 425 F while allowing the dough to rise for 30 minutes.

Use your hands to deflate the dough and move it to a lightly floured surface. Knead more than five times.

Work the dough into a 12-inch circle.

Move dough to a parchment-paper-lined pizza pan. Form your crust by pinching the edges or folding them over.

Drizzle a tablespoon of olive oil over the pizza and completely brush over the pizza.

Poke holes throughout the middle of the pizza with a fork before putting it in the oven.

Add pizza sauce plus your favorite toppings. Then bake at 425 F for 15 minutes.

Eat your heart out!

## TAKE A HIKE

Skinner Butte may seem like a must-see adventure, but there are many other spots you don't want to miss.



In Lebanon, **McDowell Creek Falls** County Park is home to waterfalls that are truly spectacular. An easy hike takes you through lush greenery. The route is just over a mile and a half, making this hike a great option for anyone.

Right off the Pacific Coast Highway in Florence is **Hobbit Trailhead**. This trail makes you feel like a real hobbit from "Lord of the Rings." After a 10-minute eerie, windy and beautiful walk around big green trees, you'll start to catch a glimpse of the coast. This hike feels truly magical.



LOOKING FOR LOCAL BEER ON TAP?

Deschutes Brewery IN BEND,  
sells over **5** barrels of beer EACH YEAR  
**225,000**



"I watched that big Oregon prairie moon above me put all the stars around it to shame."

Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

## Becoming Portland's Funniest Comedian

by SAMANTHA LOZANO

Humid air rose to the top floor of Helium, one of Portland's top comedy clubs, as groups of spectators made their way to tightly cramped tables. On this night last summer, Helium was hosting the finals of the Portland Funniest Competition — and 10 comedians eagerly waited to compete. One of the finalists, Kelly Ryan, stepped out. Ryan adjusted her tight leather jacket and pulled her pink hair out of her face. She had five minutes to make a winning impression.

"I know when I got up here, you guys were like ... she is smoking," Ryan started her set, the crowd giggling. "Okay, trust me, it's hard being this good looking, I swear." Ryan tossed her hair back. "I can't even go into a Fred Meyer without someone being like 'Do you work here?' It's very difficult." The crowd roared. Her skit went on for another five minutes — and so did the laughter. This set would open up a door of opportunities.

Thirty minutes later, the judges had their winner — Kelly Ryan. And it wasn't just a win for Ryan but for many women pursuing comedy.

According to one survey, only 11.3% of comedians are women. But since winning, Ryan not only has booked shows from Portland to Los Angeles, but also has raised her portfolio to support her fellow female comedians. "Whenever someone reaches out to me, I will always recommend certain women in comedy that I know are good. I try to help whenever I can," Ryan said.

She has become a support system to other women trying to do what she does. Ryan has befriended several women hoping to make it on the comedy circuit. Emily Browning, an LA native, said Ryan didn't need the Portland Funniest Competition to be taken seriously among her peers. "Kelly has always had the first-place sticker on her chest," Browning said. "I'm glad she's got that sticker. It helps her fit in the professional field." Ryan and Browning perform together at times, and try to attend each other's shows. "We consult on how assertive we should be, how aggressive we should be in the industry. Female comics got each other's backs," Browning said.

Ryan's mix of confidence and outspokenness is a force to be reckoned with, her sister Ali said. "Kelly's motto is, 'If everybody likes you, then you're not doing anything to change anything,' which I agree with," Ali said.

Kelly draws in a wide range of comedy lovers, the people she wants to surround herself with. "My demographic is pretty random. Old lesbians are definitely on my team, and they're fun to have," she said. "Basically, anyone that wants to have a good time is my demographic."



## 10 things to add to your EUGENE BUCKET LIST

- Camp on the EMU lawn on a sunny day
- Stay for last call at Rennie's Landing
- Try a treat from Sweet Life Patisserie
- Hike Spencer Butte
- Dutch Bros twice in one day
- Float the Willamette River
- High five the Duck
- Visit Tsunami Books
- See a concert at the Cuthbert Amphitheater
- Support local vendors at the Saturday market

Want to hear more of what students are listening to on campus? Check out the FLUX staff playlist by scanning the QR code.



**FLUXradio**

## THE HOLLYWOOD THEATRE

In Portland's Hollywood District, the Hollywood Theatre has been a point of interest since 1926.

"The theater wasn't named after the neighborhood, the neighborhood was named after the theater," said Virginia Durost, the director of facilities for the Hollywood Theatre.

For years, this iconic building has been undergoing renovations for functional and aesthetic purposes. COVID-19 interrupted part of the process, but most of the renovations are set to be completed by the end of June. Durost said keeping the old-timey, classic feel of the theater is important. The Hollywood Theatre is the last standing "grand movie theater" in Portland.

During the renovations, the team has uncovered

parts of the building, from safes underneath to claw detailing. Durost said that the style of the Hollywood Theatre and the use of terracotta tiling made the design of the walls beautiful and unique. She's excited to restore the theater back in this way, and she's proud that it has remained a historical part of Portland.

— Jane Glazer

### Jams on 13<sup>TH</sup>

One sunny day, the FLUX team asked University of Oregon students walking along 13<sup>TH</sup> Avenue what they were listening to. Here's what they said:

"FRIENDS" BY MAC MILLER  
- SKYLER HOLLOWAY

"THE TIME" BY THE BLACK EYED PEAS  
- CASSIDY ESCOBAR

"SIX PIECES FOR PIANO OP. 118," BY JOHANNES BRAHMS  
- ALANA FAIRMAN

"KILL V. MAIM" BY GRIMES  
- CLAIRE COLLINS



Yurok Tribe members Thomas Willson, left, and Son-Son Robbins speed down the Klamath River in Weitchpec, California.

# Stewards *of the* River

Dams have threatened the ecosystem of the Klamath River for decades. Will the Indigenous tribes' efforts save the river — and their culture?

written by CHLOE BRYANT  
photographed by ISAAC WASSERMAN  
illustrated by SEOYEON PARK



# “W

here the hell is Weitchpec?”

It’s a common question asked of the Yurok Tribe members in Weitchpec, California. So common, it’s now a running joke. Residents have created a “Where the hell is Weitchpec?” Facebook group, and walking around the community you’ll find bumper stickers affixed to cars with “Where the hell is Weitchpec?”

Weitchpec, population 112, sits at the confluence of the Klamath and Trinity rivers in northwest California, about 130 miles from the Oregon border. The community resides at the southeast end of the Yurok Reservation, home to the Yurok people, the largest tribe in California with over 5,000 members.

Not far from the rivers’ junction, on a large, rocky embankment down Weitchpec Village Road, childhood friends Thomas Willson and Son-Son Robbins prepare a boat to go fishing. On a chilly morning in February, they are hopeful to catch winter steelhead.

For many, growing up on the Yurok Reservation means learning to fish at a young age. Willson’s father taught him to fish as a boy. He recalls fishing by himself at just 7 years old. By 12, Willson was helping his father on guided fishing tours as a bait boy. At 16, he could run fishing tours by himself.

“It all started with our love of fishing,” Willson says. “I love fishing, and I love teaching people how to fish. And it makes me happy when I put people onto fish, too.”

Now 30, Willson has his own guide service on the Klamath, called Fish Hawk Guide Service. When he’s not running tours, Willson is fishing on the Klamath with his buddies.

Before Willson and Robbins head down the river, they check a net near the bank set the day before. Something silver flashes in the net: a winter steelhead. After Willson kills and guts the catch, his cousin, Jamie Holt, takes the fish home. Tonight, it will be her dinner.

“It’s what we do. It’s how we survive,” Willson says of why fishing on the Klamath is important to him. “It’s what we lived off before stores — we lived off the fish and the deer. Everything goes around the river. Water is life. Everything takes water to live.”

As a fishing people, the Yurok Tribe has heavily depended on fish in the Klamath River for food. It is a way of life the Yurok hope to pass on to future generations, and have been fighting desperately to save.

Beginning in 1903, the construction of dams on the Klamath transformed life for the Yurok, and not for the better. While the dams were constructed to generate hydroelectric power for the comfort of residents in parts of Northern California and Southern Oregon, the dams drastically altered the Yurok’s livelihood.

The dams endangered fish populations, blocking more than 420 miles of historic habitat for salmon and steelhead. Four of the dams owned by PacifiCorp lacked adequate fish ladders and in some cases had none. Ladders allow fish to pass through the dams and access

*The Iron Gate dam sits in the middle of the Klamath River in California. Spillover dams like these hurt the health of the river. Only the warm top layer of water gets cycled down the river, which creates perfect conditions for toxic bacteria to thrive.*





habitats blocked by dam obstruction. As fish struggle to navigate the river, their populations have fallen drastically.

Water levels have also decreased thanks to dammed water flows (along with recent and intense droughts). Low water levels affect traditional Yurok practices, like basket weaving and river ceremonies. To perform ceremonies that need high water levels, the Yurok must now request additional water flows from the dams.

Removing the dams on the Klamath River has been a goal of the Yurok since their construction and could be a first step in saving the river's fish and the Yurok's way of life. Only now, after decades of campaigning for the dams' removal, are tribes on the Klamath optimistic the dams may finally come down.

In February, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) released a final draft of its Environmental Impact Statement on plans to remove the dams. It worked with the tribes, commercial fishermen, ranchers and others while drafting the statement. FERC, which is in charge of approving dam construction and decommissioning, could make a final decision to remove the dams in the coming months. If so, the removal of four dams could happen as early as 2023. However, locals in Weitchpec and along the Klamath River worry the removal won't guarantee a return of the river's fish — or their way of life.

*Jamie Holt, 44, wraps the steelhead in a brown paper bag and places it in the trunk of her Chevy. She calls her dog, a pitbull mix named TaaPuuk, to hop in the car before she makes a short drive to her little green house just up the hill. When she gets home,*

she will prepare the fish to be cooked and eaten.

Outside her home, Holt filets the fish into identically-sized pieces. The meat is slightly discolored in some places, bruised from the fish's struggle in the net. Today, the weather is too wet to cook the fish in the traditional Yurok way. If the weather were nicer, Holt would cook the steelhead on redwood pikes.

"Think of it like a giant kebab," Holt says. "You just leave it over your nice hot coals and spin it around as needed to cook it up."

Instead, she cooks the fish in avocado oil in a hot skillet, seasoned with salt, lemon pepper, garlic and onion powder.

Dinners like this, with fish caught directly from the Klamath, are becoming less common, though. Toxic algae blooms and fish diseases have become more prolific since the construction of the dams, causing fish die-offs, or fish kills.

Consider what took place last May: 97% of juvenile salmon recorded by the Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program were infected with the parasite *C. shasta* and were either dead or dying. In two weeks, 70% of the same juvenile fish had died.

This year marks 20 years since the Klamath River's largest fish kill. On September 19, 2002, the Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program received the first reports of dead fish washing up along the banks of the Lower Klamath River. By September 27, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that over 34,000 fish, mostly adult Chinook salmon returning to spawn, had died. It was the largest fish kill in western United States history.

At the time, Holt was working at the Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program — a fishery committed to "understanding, managing, conserving, and restoring fish populations," according to the

## THE TENUOUS LIFE OF A SALMON

**1** Juvenile salmon grow up in rivers and lakes. When they become adults, they migrate to the ocean. They return to their spawning grounds when they are ready to reproduce.



**2** Dams on the Klamath River reduce water levels and increase water temperatures. These conditions are perfect for toxic algae and fish diseases to thrive.

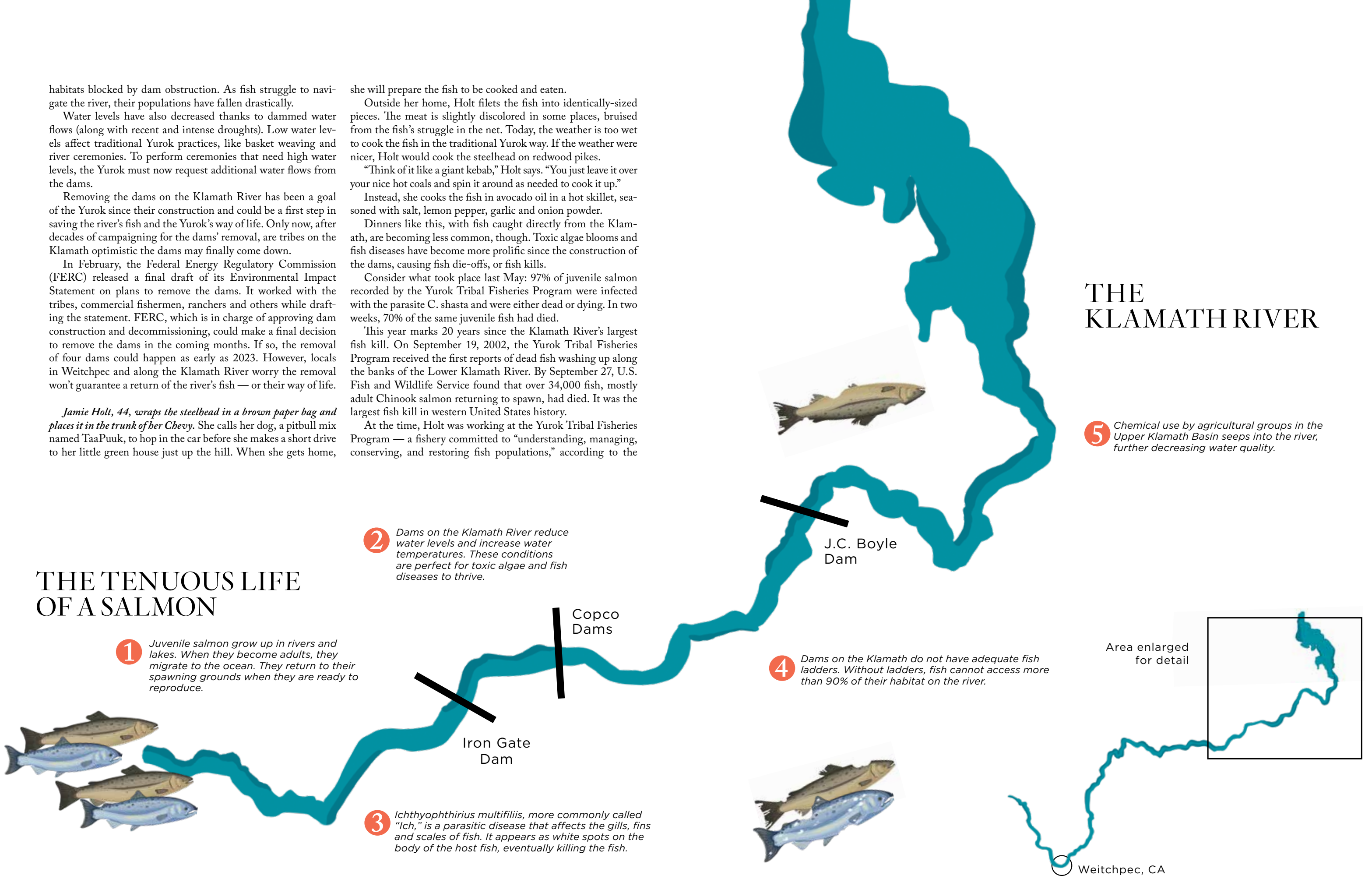
**3** *Ichthyophthirius multifiliis*, more commonly called "Ich," is a parasitic disease that affects the gills, fins and scales of fish. It appears as white spots on the body of the host fish, eventually killing the fish.

**4** Dams on the Klamath do not have adequate fish ladders. Without ladders, fish cannot access more than 90% of their habitat on the river.



**5** Chemical use by agricultural groups in the Upper Klamath Basin seeps into the river, further decreasing water quality.

## THE KLAMATH RIVER



Yurok Tribe website. She recalls preparing for one of the Yurok Tribe's traditional ceremonies, *woo-neek-we-ley-goo* (or Jump Dance), when she first heard about the dying fish.

"Some of the kids that were down at the river swimming found some dead salmon and they didn't understand why they were able to catch salmon by hand," Holt says. "I got there and went down with the kids and looked and was like, 'No, this isn't right.'"

The Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program discovered many of the dead salmon were located at Blue Creek, a tributary in the lower Klamath River. Low flows and high temperatures, caused by the dams and a drought, forced the salmon into Blue Creek's cool water. Large quantities of fish in a smaller space spread disease among the fish, causing the fish kill.

"As a science department within the fisheries, and as Yurok people, I think it really spurred us toward learning what happened," Holt says. "Why did this happen? How do we make it so it doesn't happen again?"

Tribes on the Klamath River felt freshly motivated to see the dams removed after the 2002 fish kill and increased their involvement in Klamath River dam removal campaigns.

Craig Tucker, 51, served as a spokesperson for the Karuk Tribe in its "Bring the Salmon Home" campaign. Its goal: Remove dams on the Klamath.

Tucker worked closely with tribes on the Klamath to organize protests against owners of the Klamath River dams. At the time, PacifiCorp, the electric power company that managed the dams, was owned by Scottish Power. Tucker and a group of Indigenous activists flew to Glasgow, Scotland, and crashed a Scottish Power shareholders meeting, demanding the removal of dams on the Klamath River.

"Native people, they'll do anything to save their fish," Tucker says. "They'll fly to foreign countries and engage in acts of civil disobedience, if that's what it takes. I think that level of passion on their part cannot be matched by anyone else."

Wendy Ferris-George, 48, an enrolled member in the Hupa Tribe and a descendent of the Karuk, Chameriko and Yurok people, has been a part of the dam removal campaign since 2002. She was among those who traveled to Glasgow.

Today, Ferris-George is on the Klamath River Renewal Corporation's (KRRC) Board of Directors. The KRRC is a non-profit organization advocating for dam removal on the Klamath. If dam removal is approved by FERC, the KRRC will take charge of removing the dams and restoring the Klamath River. Ferris-George was elected by the Karuk Tribal Council to serve on the board as a representative of the tribe.

The KRRC has worked closely with FERC to ensure compliance with local, state and federal laws,

which can be tedious and time-consuming. It has also worked with individuals in the Klamath Basin — such as the tribes, commercial fishermen and ranchers — to ensure their needs are being met by the KRRC's work.

"The KRRC board is the best group of people I've ever worked with in my life as far as being dedicated," Ferris-George says. "It's literally the largest project in the world."

This summer, FERC will make its final decision on whether to approve Klamath dam removal. If the project is approved, four dams — J.C. Boyle, Copco No. 1, Copco No. 2 and Iron Gate — will be removed. It would be the largest dam removal project in U.S. history. The previous largest removal took place in the Elwha River in Washington in 2014. While the Elwha is still recovering, summer steelhead, once thought to be extinct in the river, have returned.

*The dam removal doesn't guarantee* revival of the Klamath River's health, but tribes on the Klamath are hopeful the river could see rebounds of its own native fish populations.

"Mother Nature has a way of healing itself, and if given time and the proper ability, which is, you know, no dams, I can't help but think that it will start to heal itself," says Holt, who has now worked at the Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program for 20 years. "As it starts to heal itself, it just becomes hopefully a more hospitable home for these babies and adults that have been hanging on through these inhospitable times."

As stewards of the river, the Yurok feel it is their responsibility to care for the Klamath. In return, the river will provide nourishment. Climate change will continue to threaten fish populations after the dams are removed, but the Yurok believe an undammed river is a step in the right direction to restoring the Klamath River's vitality and the Yurok's way of life.

"As Yurok people, we were put here to take care of this little place on Earth," Holt says. "The salmon that live in this river, this little place on Earth — it is our responsibility. We are the stewards of this land."

While many have never even heard of Weitchpec, it is where the salmon have returned to spawn for thousands of years, and a place the Yurok call home.

On a bank of the Klamath River, Willson talks about teaching his 4-year-old son, Thomas Willson III, how to fish — just as Willson's father taught him. On a recent fishing trip, Willson and his son caught a lamprey. When Willson let Thomas hold the fish, the boy grew overfond. As it came time to kill the fish, Thomas clutched it close and refused to let go.

Willson chuckles at the memory. "A long time ago, I heard stories of when you could catch as many fish as you wanted, to where your arms would be so tired from fighting fish," Willson says. "In our lifetime, we'll see a change when the dams come down, and in my son's lifetime, we're going to see a lot of fish." ♦



**ABOVE:** Jamie Holt, Yurok Tribe fisheries technician, prepares a filet of steelhead at her home in Weitchpec, California. She will cook it on a redwood stick.

**LEFT:** Yurok Tribe member Thomas Willson guts a steelhead that he caught from a net on the Klamath River.

*“We have been basically fighting a losing battle with developers, farmers and loggers for the last 40 years to maintain habitat in the rivers for salmon,” says commercial fisherman David Bitts, who stands on his boat, Elmarue, in Eureka, California.*



## fishing open waters

David Bitts bought Elmarue in 1985. The boat is an old salmon troller, but it gets the job done. Bitts, 73, is a commercial salmon fisherman based in the Woodley Island Marina in Eureka, California. However, decreasing salmon populations in the Klamath River have forced Bitts to travel far from home to catch enough salmon. “In the worst of times, we might not get to fish above San Francisco much,” Bitts says.

To prevent overfishing of endangered salmon, California Fish and Game Commission only allows a maximum percentage of Klamath River salmon to be caught. This means commercial fishermen must travel farther from the mouth of the Klamath to avoid catching its salmon.

Bitts says he wants to continue fishing for as long as possible, but he’s not sure how much longer that will be. He hopes that dam removal will increase salmon populations in the Klamath.

“There’s three major hopes that will come about as a result of dam removal: We’ll have a big improvement in water quality, we’ll knock the worm back with the scouring effect of gravel and sand in the wintertime, and we’ll enable the fish to return to, I think, several hundred miles of spawning and rearing habitat,” says Bitts. “The combination of those three things can only be good for fishermen.”

— *Chloe Bryant*

# Art and SOUL

Three Eugene artists prove that medium doesn't matter. It's the message that counts.

written by **BRIANNA MURSCHER** photographed by **HIMALI GLOR**

In recent years, social justice protests and movements promoting racial, gender and identity equality have intensified on a national level — and in Eugene, Oregon, a city known for supporting progressive causes. The movements in Eugene have manifested in boisterous ways and in more low-key ways such as visual art. Artists creatively spread awareness to the public about issues surrounding them.

Around Eugene, it seems like a mural or a pop of color exists on every building, each one directed toward a cause. The city has dozens of artists who demonstrate their dedication to social justice through creative expressions. Tahoe Mack, Lisa Yu and Eleanor Soleil are local artists, and the social justice issues that hold importance to them include environmentalism, Asian American women's identity and transgender well-being. They use their knowledge, experience, motivation and especially

their talent to connect with their audiences. Their stories have the ability to inspire, influence and encourage people to support social justice movements.

## ***Earth Art***

In 2018, Tahoe Mack became a local sensation in her hometown of Las Vegas by sculpting a life-size, steel Columbian mammoth. With the help of the community, Mack raised environmental awareness while using recycled materials to build the 23-foot by 40-foot by 8-foot mammoth. Now, as a University of Oregon student, Mack, 21, has made a name for herself in her latest locale by sculpting an 6.75-foot by 11.4-foot mild steel shadowy aster. *Big Flower* resides in the university's art studio. Mack says, "I am a huge environmentalist nerd." Her work as an artist portrays this passion.

Tahoe Mack combines her passion for art and environmental advocacy to create pieces such as Big Flower.





"Art is a way to find a sense of purpose and community, and a way to make sense of things," Lisa Yu says. "It's a devotion."

**FLUX:** *What is the meaning behind Big Flower?*

**Tahoe Mack:** This piece is a reminder of spring during the winter in Eugene, when the trees lose their leaves and the flowers go dormant. It was a reminder of whimsy that I hoped would pull people in to experience their surroundings. Work in public space can be uplifting and positive.

**F:** *Where did you find inspiration for this piece?*

**TM:** I was thinking about trees as a pedestal. I was thinking of the flower as a beacon of hope. It's inspired by flowers that grow all around campus. I was originally going to make four different types of flowers, but the shadowy aster, a purple flower, was just such an interesting flower. Shadowy asters look kind of like weeds, but when you look closer, they are little flowers. They were blooming all through the winter.

**F:** *What does environmentalism mean to you?*

**TM:** I love using found objects that you can re-purpose. It's like giving them another life. I like the idea of highlighting nature in human-made spaces. We tend to say that people aren't one with nature, and it's false. It's important to remind ourselves that we are a part of nature just as much as any other animal.

### **Identity Perceptions**

In May 2021, Lisa Yu, 55, developed an art piece focused on women of Asian descent, and she drew it on a 9 ½-inch by 12-inch folder. Three prominent Asian American women appear in the foreground of the drawing. Yu created a blog post to accompany the sketch. The post includes her thoughts and feelings about ethnic identity perceptions. She relates her experience as a part of the BIPOC (or Black, Indigenous and people of color) community in this piece. Many of Yu's art works are rooted in social justice causes.

**FLUX:** *What were your thoughts while creating this piece?*

**Lisa Yu:** This was about a year ago, and we just had the anniversary of the Atlanta shootings. These were hate-crime killings of Asian Americans. I got a couple of nice communications from people of positivity and warmth. I didn't even know why at first, and then I realized it was because of those killings. So, it led me to think about how I felt about it. The blog post was a reaction of the moment.

**F:** *What do the women in the artwork symbolize?*

**LY:** I chose Tammy Duckworth (U.S. senator from Illinois), Joanna Gaines (author and television host) and Naomi Osaka (professional tennis player) because they all have one Asian parent, they are in very different fields, and they are active in each field. I also have one Asian parent. I want to get it across that everybody is distinct from everybody else.

**F:** *What does this piece mean to you?*

**LY:** What's happened in the last couple of years has adjusted the way I felt about being Asian American. It's worth it to use my voice to say what my experience and what my thoughts are. I'm coming to a place with visual art where I want to combine it with writing to get more out there with what I want to say.



Lisa Yu takes a personal approach with this piece to communicate the experience of being an Asian American woman.

## Visions of Life

The death of Sophie Xeon, a widely recognized pop musician, on January 30, 2021, left Eleanor Soleil, 22, grief-stricken. Like Sophie, perhaps best known for the album “Oil of Every Pearl’s Un – Insides,” Soleil identifies as a trans, non-binary woman and supports the strength and well-being of transgender people. The idea of creating the work “Cold Water (Sophie)” to memorialize the musician came to Soleil the night after Sophie’s death. In the comfort of Soleil’s vibrant bedroom and studio, the hyper impressionist portrait of Sophie sits on a rotating frame. Soleil has always been imaginative and says their art conveys it.

**FLUX:** *What was your thought process for your painting?*

**Eleanor Soleil:** It came to me in a vision the night after she died. I saw her in front of me. I knew I had to paint what I saw. It changed my entire perception of life and death, and what it means to create art. Just like Sophie, I need to put all of myself into my art. That was a source of enormous motivation and patience. A year later, I finished it on the anniversary of her death.

**F:** *What was your inspiration?*

**ES:** When I was painting her, I was listening to her music. I have gotten bits and pieces from everything she made. One of her albums in particular, “Oil of Every Pearl’s Un – Insides,” I would always put on when I was painting her. All of her is in all of her music.

**F:** *Who is your selected audience?*

**ES:** I am making art for people who need the strength to reject any social construct. I want to create paintings to empower trans people and anyone else who fits that description. I think my art really does have the capacity to heal people, and it has restorative power. ♡

*To learn more about these artists, go to [www.fluxoregon.com](http://www.fluxoregon.com).*

*For Eleanor Soleil, the pop musician Sophie served as a source of inspiration and empowerment for their own artistic journey.*





# *NO WINE TO waste*

You may prefer your wine dry or fruity. But what about smoky?  
Oregon winemakers are seeking to avoid that option while  
saving their billion-dollar industry from the effects of wildfires.

written by **JANE GLAZER** and **ANNA WARD**  
photographed by **JILLIAN REGAN** and **WINTER WAGNER**

The sky filled with dark thickets of smoke transforming the horizon into a deep red color, and the smell of ash became potent as Matt Berson drove from Portland to Aurora, Oregon, in September of 2020. Berson, a winemaker and the owner of Portland Wine Company, was on his way to check out a vineyard where he buys grapes. Each harvest season, Berson purchases several tons of grapes for his next vintage. A routine habit was starting to feel like a “scene from hell,” he said.

The Riverside and Beachie Creek fires caused devastating damage during the summer of 2020, affecting vineyards all over Oregon and creating concern for Berson and other winemakers. Grapes were burned, coated with smoke and dried out.

It was one thing to see the work of his planting compatriots compromised. It was another to see that the latest harvest wasn't like anything he had previously dealt with. The Oregon wine industry community was one reason Berson wanted to become a winemaker; he described it as “a mutual back-scratching type thing,” where farmers and sellers are closely knit.

“I thought about the fact that I had no idea how to make wine out of grapes that were grown in hell,” Berson said. “I started just making a lot of phone calls and doing a lot of research and calling and calling.”

Berson is one of many Oregon winemakers who have not let the changing climate completely ruin their work. Instead, these winemakers have had to get creative. From formulating new versions of white wine to stripping smoke flavors through filtration processes, the wine industry is adapting.

Extreme heat and dryness isn't uncommon for the wine industry. And while he was aware of smoke effects on grapes, Berson had never experienced it firsthand. Upon entering the smoky scene in the vineyard, Berson realized this once distant problem was now affecting his reality.

He had a lot to learn about dealing with smoky grapes. While the grapes had survived the fires — they weren't burned to ash — the smoke in the air had damaged the integrity of the grapes. Their colorful outer layers were soaked in the smoke, leaving an intense smoky flavor, or “smoke taint.”



Climate change affects the levels of acids and sugars in the grapes. During the aging process winemakers will taste composite blends, which are made up of grapes from different vineyards and winemaking processes.



While hot summers weren't too uncommon in Oregon, they became more consistent in the late 2010s. By 2020, hot summers were becoming detrimental. Berson and other winemakers have had to find new ways to salvage these smoked-out grapes, specifically when making red wine.

White wine is made by pressing the grapes and then fermenting the juice. The skin of the grape isn't in the fermenter, meaning white wine is often unaffected from “smoke taint.” But when making red wine, the whole grapes — skin included — are placed into the fermentation barrel. Without the skin, red wine would not have its distinctive hue. When grape harvest is impacted by wildfires, the skin is the source of the smoky flavor; if a red grape is smoke-tainted, that flavor is now in the barrel.

“This is what makes it so challenging; there can still be smoke taint even if it doesn't show up in fermentation after something's been bottled,” said Mary Orlin, a wine journalist familiar with the impact fires have had on California vineyards. “So winemakers either decide not to make anything, or they might sell the juice off to wine conglomerates who bottle under various labels.”

Smoke taint can confuse winemakers when making bottling decisions. It can show up at any point in the grape-to-bottle process, and sometimes the taint doesn't show up until after the wine is bottled. Winemakers often must decide that their grapes are likely smoke-tainted, even if they can't tell yet.

*Oregon winemakers are experimenting* with different ways to mitigate smoke taint in red wines and adapt to these new circumstances.

Twenty miles southeast of Portland Wine Company, in Sherwood, is Alloro Winery and Vineyard. Like Berson, the Alloro staff had to deal with a vineyard of grapes that had been damaged from the smoke. Andrew Ward, the cellar master at Alloro, remembers the thick layer of smoke that covered the area surrounding the vineyard and feeling unsure of how it would affect the 2020 vintage.

“There was a lot of doubts and questions around what this meant and what to do,” Ward said.

Alloro immediately pressed some of its grapes that would normally be used for red wine rather than waiting for them to ferment. The vineyard also created a

Matt Berson, the winemaker and owner of Portland Wine Company, holds a glass of his 2021 Rosé of Pinot Noir.



white pinot noir as a way to salvage the tainted red grapes without integrating a smoky flavor.

Berson, however, still has about 1,000 gallons of red wine in two barrels sitting in Portland Wine Company's storage room from the smoky 2020 harvest. He's not sure what he'll do with it, but he's determined not to waste it. Experimenting has always been a part of the wine-making process, and salvaging this smoky harvest in a new way is another opportunity to do just that.

Portland Wine Company is looking into carbon and other treatments to strip the wine of its smoky flavor. The carbon treatment is a process similar to making decaffeinated coffee or alcohol-free beer.

In a little room adjacent to a cellar holding stacks of barrels, Berson has a lab filled with tools to experiment with the wine. This process has allowed him to discover more about what is in his wine and different ways to shift the flavor to adapt to the new reality of smoke taint.

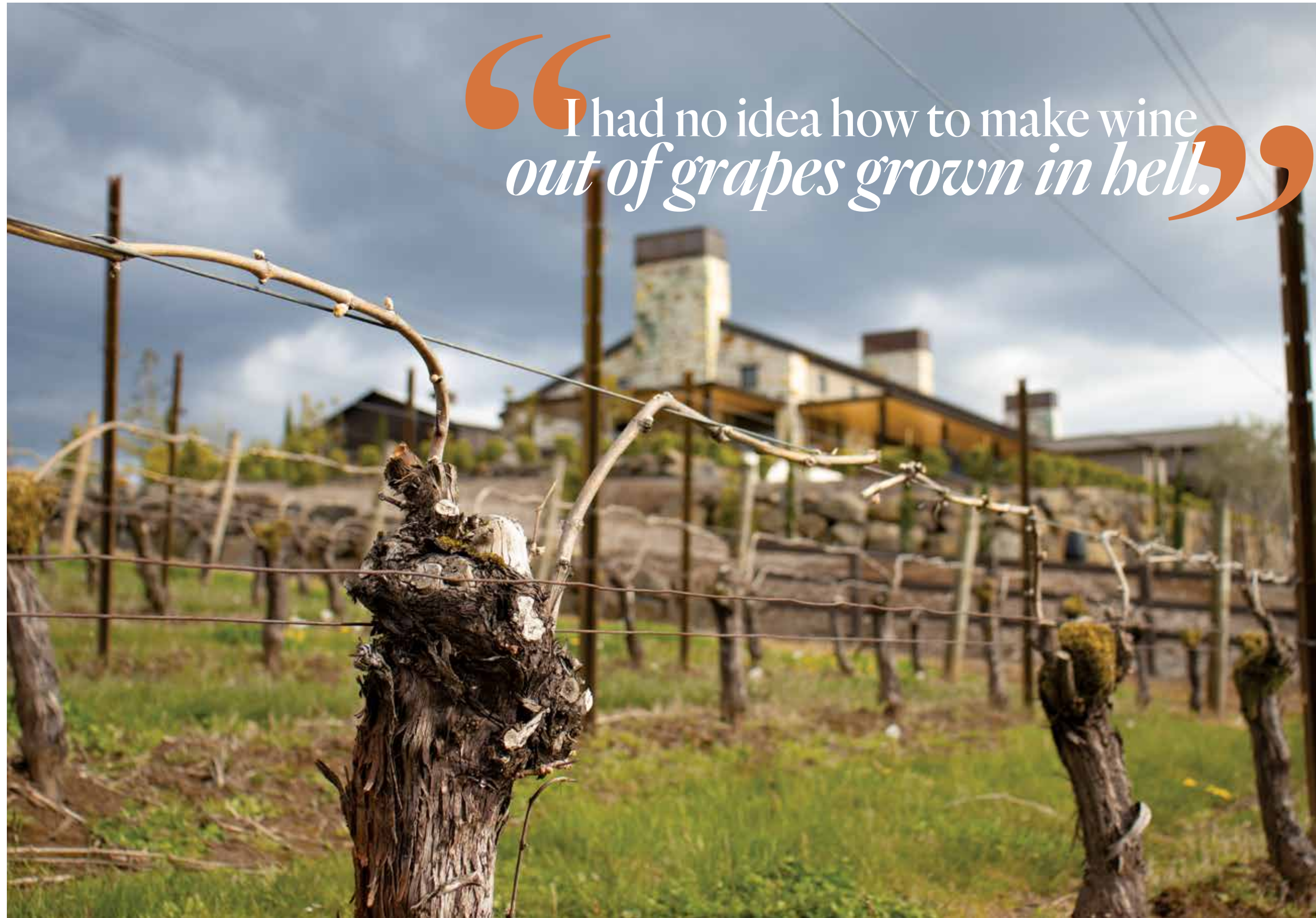
"I definitely am learning things that I didn't think I'd have to and didn't necessarily want to," Berson said.

Wine climatology is the practice of studying climate structure and suitability for all things wine. Greg Jones, a wine climatologist, says that climate change will continue to affect the wine industry. This research pertains to the environment and proactive ways to save the grapes from extreme heat and dryness. While researchers are trying to rid grapes of smoke taint, they are also searching for ways to better test for it before the wine is bottled.

"There are two or three compounds that are pretty important as precursors to the [smoky] taste that will happen in the wine," Jones said. "Research is trying to figure out, do we have the ability to measure these precursors in the vineyard before the fruit is even harvested? We're not quite there yet, but there's a lot of really good work going on to try to figure that out."

Jones said that this research has been going on over the past 20 years or so, primarily in Australia where fires have been a consistent threat. As fire circumstances have worsened in the U.S., there is more funding to perform this research and find solutions. Most of the research is taking place at Washington State University, Oregon State University and the University of California-Davis through sensory scientists and wine chemists.

Research is also focused on salvaging grapes that have smoke taint. The Oregon Wine Symposium, an educational event for winemakers, recently allowed



“I had no idea how to make wine  
*out of grapes grown in hell.*”

*Grapevines begin to bud in spring at Alloro Winery, which grows all of its own grapes.*

As wine ages in a barrel, it evaporates, requiring consistent refilling. Assistant winemaker Jessica Martinez tops off red wine barrels at Portland Wine Company.



winemakers to taste wine that had gone through a charcoal filtration process to strip smoke flavor.

Jones said this process removes the smoke taste, but it often strips other rich flavors special to each type of wine, making the wine less interesting and unique. Alloro was concerned about stripping other flavors, so it didn't attempt this process. Instead, it decided to create the white pinot noir.

"During this symposium session, we were able to taste a few wines, and it was pretty clear that the pre-treated and post-treated wine was quite different," Jones said. "And so that was a really good sign that there are some possibilities."

Jones said that the post-treated wine may not be desirable enough to sell on its own, but it is good to blend with other wines — a salvageable solution.

"It gets you at least to the place where you don't have to pour product down," Jones said. "I think we're a pretty adaptable industry. We will find ways to be both proactive and reactive to help it out."

Jones, Berson and Ward consistently described the wine industry as a resilient, creative community. Adapting to

these circumstances, while maybe not convenient, is doable for many of these companies.

The behind-the-scenes stress of smoked-out-grapes doesn't always overpower Berson's work. When it does, adapting to the climate to continue this craft is worth the stress and uncertainty.

This spring, Portland Wine Company hosted its annual riesling party. Berson said he looked forward to these events, as he has grown close with many of the regulars. His customers are more than just customers — they're members of his wine community with whom he has genuine connections. These moments bring comfort to Berson and his team despite all the changes they have been through.

Berson remembered that smoky September day when he realized his next batch of wine would be different from what he was used to. For his next vintage, he'll be a little more prepared. He thought that all signs pointed to the likelihood for a smoky vintage repeat. "I do wish that I did more mitigation during the fermentation," Berson said. "And next time around, I'll definitely be more of a believer." ♦

*To learn more about the winemakers, go to [www.fluxoregon.com](http://www.fluxoregon.com).*

## CHRISTMAS TREE STRUGGLE

Farms that grow Christmas trees, which are one of Oregon's biggest exports, have also seen the effects of the hotter, drier climate on their business. Bob Schutte, owner of Northern Lights Christmas Tree Farm in Pleasant Hill, said that in past years he hoped to harvest 80 to 90% of the Noble Firs his farm grows. Now, harvesting 60 to 70% is considered a success. Mike Turner, owner of Kessler's Christmas Tree Farm also located in Pleasant Hill, said that his farm has lost 75% of what he planted this past year. The seedlings are suffering from the heat. Last summer, Schutte said that 90% of his new planting died.

"It was a real zinger," Schutte said, referencing the intense heat and dryness his farm faced in April 2021. "You don't know how bad the situation is at the time. Everything about Christmas trees is, you don't have a rapid feedback system."

Unlike grapes, not much can be done with heat-damaged trees. Irrigation can help hydrate the plants during the heat, but not all farms in Oregon have them. Schutte has relied heavily on his irrigation rights to allow his trees to survive. Kessler's doesn't have an irrigation system and must hope for the best for its trees. Christmas trees take eight years to become fully grown and marketable; they are the most fragile in their first few years of growth. The heat is stunting seedling growth making it so they do not grow to their full size. Schutte and Turner both said that the climate circumstances are out of their control, and as a result they must try their best with keeping the trees hydrated and healthy, especially in the beginning stages.



Bob Schutte in one of his Christmas tree fields at Northern Lights Christmas Tree Farm in Pleasant Hill, Oregon.



Three Afghan women saw their lives upended when the Taliban seized their country last year. Now, thousands of miles from home, they set out to reclaim their dreams.

written by SARAH-MAE MCCULLOUGH photographed by AMALIA BIRCH

illustrated by MEAGAN RIORDAN

# *Between* **Two Worlds**

**O**n moving day, Zulaikha pauses for a moment just outside her host family's living room. The Eugene, Oregon, house where she's lived for the past month is filled with colorful reminders of its owners' foreign travel and international guests. A blue and white teapot from Ukraine sits on a shelf underneath a colorfully painted plate from the Soviet Union. Across the room, a silk embroidery from China depicting cherry blossoms hangs on the wall.

Zulaikha, who came to Eugene after fleeing the Taliban in Afghanistan, didn't bring many tangible reminders of her home country. But she and Zahra and Maryam — the two other Afghan women staying in the house — have filled it with more elusive pieces of their culture. There's been a dinner of Kabuli Pulao, conversations split between English and their native language, and their left-over habit of never wearing shoes inside.

On this January day, before the three women move into their own place, Zulaikha, dressed in dark jeans and a flannel shirt and sporting short brown hair and round glasses, sets her hand on the wall just outside of the living room. She wrinkles her face in a feigned sob. "I'm going to miss here, I don't want to leave here," she says.

Despite being sad to leave the home of Janet Anderson and Evelyn Anderton, their hosts since arriving in Eugene, Zulaikha, Zahra and Maryam are excited to move into their new place. The rental is closer to the University of Oregon campus, where they are studying English on scholarship. After completing their English coursework, Zulaikha, Zahra and Maryam plan to continue the educations and careers they'd started in Afghanistan, in journalism, law and medicine, respectively.

"I have plans to stay in Eugene with Zahra," Zulaikha had said a day earlier. "Because I love here. I don't want to leave Eugene."

Along with over 76,000 other Afghan refugees, Zulaikha, Zahra and Maryam came to the U.S. last fall fol-



*Despite not knowing each other for long, the three Afghan women bonded over their shared journey.*

lowing the American withdrawal of Afghanistan and the Taliban's subsequent seizure of the country. After five months of waiting on a military base, they became three of about 33 refugees to resettle in Eugene.

While most Afghan refugees who relocated to Eugene are single men or with their families, Zulaikha, Zahra and Maryam came on their own. In a new city without family or old friends, they are up against homesickness, the financial stress of going back to school, and the bureaucratic challenges of immigration. They're working hard to adjust to life in Eugene and, in many ways, start over again.

### **Journey to Eugene**

About three hours from Green Bay, Wisconsin, Fort McCoy spans 60,000 acres. Forty acres of the U.S. military base are used for live-fire or maneuver training. Elsewhere are sprawling rows of white barracks. For about six months this fall and winter, they became temporary homes for Afghan refugees.

Fort McCoy is one of seven military bases that hosted Afghan refugees. At one point, the bases were home to 13,000 Afghan refugees as individuals and families waited for immigration paperwork, employment authorizations and health screenings to be processed. The U.S. government then coordinated with refugee resettlement agencies throughout the country to assign refugees more permanent locations to live in.

For five months, Zulaikha's daily life at Fort McCoy consisted largely of working at the base's medical center as an interpreter. She had enjoyed working as an inter-

preter for the U.S. Armed Forces in Afghanistan, but life was different on the base.

Zulaikha didn't eat or sleep much at Fort McCoy, she said. Up to 320 women stayed in barracks with about 20 in one room, coming and going at all hours of day and night.

"I hate Fort McCoy, it was so boring," she said. "Every day, the same meal, the same people, the same place."

When a friend from the base told her about a scholarship the University of Oregon's Academic English Institute was offering for refugees, she thought, "Let's try it. It would be better than doing nothing." When she was accepted and started planning her journey to Eugene, she "was so happy. I just wanted to get out of there."

While waiting for the women's arrival in Oregon, Anderson and Anderton — who had agreed to host the women — bought three friendship bracelets from a shop on the Oregon coast. Then once Zulaikha, Zahra and Maryam had arrived and settled in, Anderson and Anderton took the women on walks around the neighborhood, taught them how to use the local bus system and brought them to the coast where they saw the Pacific Ocean for the first time.

Zulaikha started to love Oregon's scenery and friendly people.

"Wherever you go, people behave like you're family, and I like it," she said. "Anywhere — my teachers, the neighbors, the shopkeepers. They are so friendly."

### **The community activates**

The teapot in Anderson and Anderton's living room is a souvenir from one of the first cultural exchanges they did in Ukraine. The program, Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament, brought U.S. residents to the Soviet Union and vice versa, with the goal of showing people's humanity in both countries.

The couple would bring back wooden toys and display them at the Lane County Fair. Anderton remembers one

fairgoer who, after learning where the toys were from, asked: "They have toys in the Soviet Union?"

"That's how inhuman we thought they were," Anderton recalled.

International exchanges — both traveling and hosting — became ways for the pair to learn from different cultures. They've traveled throughout the Middle East and Asia and hosted international UO students and travelers from an exchange program for people with disabilities.

"It's a way to break down barriers, to have Americans realize that people are people no matter where they are," Anderson said.

After COVID-19 hit, it was just the two of them in their Eugene home with three extra bedrooms. Then, last fall, they reached out to Emily Heilbrun — a facilitator for a local volunteer group that supports refugees and asylum seekers, and an old friend of Anderton's — to ask if there was anything they could do to help Afghan refugees coming to Eugene. A plan to host one refugee then grew into two, then three, Anderton said.

The Refugee Resettlement Coalition, Heilbrun's group, works closely with Catholic Community Services of Lane County, an agency that helps refugees resettle. CCS staff provide immigration legal services and support for asylum seekers. RRC trains advocates (like Anderson and Anderton) who connect with refugees and support them when they transition into their new home.

CCS committed to helping 33 Afghan refugees resettle in Eugene, a figure based partially on the \$18 million



*Janet Anderson, left, and Evelyn Anderton hosted the three Afghan women when they first arrived in Eugene. Hosting international students, Anderson said, is a way "to have Americans realize that people are people no matter where they are [from]."*

*Editor's note: This story features three women who left Afghanistan after the Taliban's seizure. Their last names are not included to protect their safety.*

the state of Oregon put aside for Afghans coming to the U.S. As the first refugee arrived in Eugene in October, community members stepped up to help, Heilbrun said.

“We definitely had more people coming and saying, ‘What can I do?’ People coming forward with some housing options and donations,” Heilbrun said. “Thankfully, we couldn’t do this without so many people being willing.”

Some volunteers help refugees find housing through host families, rental units or hotels using public assistance. Lack of housing is one of the biggest barriers for refugees coming from Afghanistan, Heilbrun said, and one of the reasons CCS has accepted mostly individuals and not families.

One volunteer, a social worker named Nancy Murakami, originally signed up to be an advocate. But as her training started, she and the CCS staff recognized that she could use her specialization in trauma and refugee mental health to bolster the behavioral health support available for refugees. She developed mental health support groups where arriving Afghans could connect with each other.

Murakami said that while many advocates aren’t trained mental health professionals, they still provide effective psychosocial support. Murakami said advocates communicate: “you matter. I’m new to you, but you matter, and you’re in my community, and I want to welcome you.”

### **Daily life in a different culture**

On a Sunday evening in February, Zulaikha was steaming a pot full of rice and chicken on Anderson and Anderton’s electric stove. She was preparing Kabuli Pulao, an Afghan dish with rice, meat, spices and raisins — although Zulaikha was using cranberries, not commonly found in Afghanistan, as there weren’t enough raisins in the house.

The day before, Anderson and Anderton had playfully reminded Zulaikha and Zahra how they’d been promised the traditional dish.

“How about tomorrow?” Anderson asked.

“Sure, I don’t have any problem. But Zahra should help me, because I don’t know how to cook,” Zulaikha said, prompting laughter from Zahra and the couple.

“Yeah, when I was at home, I cooked Pulao,” Zahra agreed. But the night of the dinner, Maryam and Zahra were running errands while Zulaikha started dinner.

When the two others came home, Maryam, who cooked dinner every night for her family in Afghanistan, made a shocked expression and then covered her face with her hands as she laughed. She’s cooked the dish before, but Zulaikha hadn’t, “so I laugh,” she explained.

She pulled the dish from Zulaikha, examining it closely, adding spices and transferring it into a pan to put in the oven.

“It’s not delicious; this one is not Kabuli Pulao,” she said later, explaining that the traditional dish has different vegetables, more spices and lamb rather than chicken.

In a household with three Afghan women and two Americans, there had been food-related adjustments on all sides. Anderson and Anderton learned their guests didn’t eat many vegetables but loved fruits. The three Afghan women started adapting to American food which, they say, has more vegetarian options and is faster to prepare.

New foods are just one reminder that Zulaikha, Zahra and Maryam aren’t in their home country. In Afghanistan, they said, people pray after eating, don’t wear shoes in the house and don’t keep dogs inside. There are also different attitudes toward women leaving the home and playing sports.

Even before the Taliban’s seizure of Afghanistan, Zulaikha and Zahra said women would be looked at critically if they had jobs outside of the home or wore pants or short dresses.

“I was okay with that. I don’t take it seriously. I just wear what I want,” Zulaikha said. “I just want myself to be happy.”

In the women’s living room, three bikes donated by a local volunteer had been leaned against the wall, although Maryam was the only one who knows how to use them. It’s not a common activity for women in Afghanistan.

“I don’t have a sister, I just have six brothers. In Afghanistan, girls don’t ride the bike and the car; she has to stay at home or go to college on the bus,” Maryam said. “My brother help me; I know everything, with men.”

Zulaikha said women in Afghanistan are expected to wear scarves while playing sports, which can be a deterrent, especially in hot weather. Swimming is also frowned on. In Eugene, the three women have visited the YMCA to work out, play basketball and go in the pool, although Zahra is the only one who can swim a bit. On their last

visit, Zulaikha mostly clung to the side of the wall, she said, or splashed Zahra and Maryam until someone told them to “stop acting like kids.”

While the women have enjoyed many parts of Eugene, navigating cultural differences can be difficult. Murakami, who leads the mental health support groups, said, “Just everything that is important about one’s culture that we live and breathe, and it guides who we are, what we think about, suddenly is not something that they can rely on.”

In a new environment, the women’s school and work schedules, while tiring, have given them a sense of normalcy. Their classes run most of the day Monday through Thursday. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Zahra and Maryam work eight-hour shifts at the Graduate Hotel, cleaning rooms.

In Afghanistan, their lives were similarly busy, with days that often started at 5 or 6 a.m. and were filled with work, school and helping their families around the house. Usually they didn’t end their days until late in the evening.

“Every time I’m at work and learning, it’s normal,” Maryam said. “I like work, and I like lessons. It helps me not think about bad things in my life.”

### **Starting over**

In the field of refugee mental health in the U.S., the guiding framework is called the triple trauma paradigm, Murakami said. Clinicians often approach the challenges and traumas facing refugees as three groups: pre-flight, the journey and post-flight.

“Post-flight” refers to the obstacles in the country of resettlement, like cultural and linguistic differences, lack of resources and the inability to work in a profession someone is trained in.

“That’s not the vision that most people have of the United States,” Murakami said, “and not the hope for most people who are leaving a bad situation hoping to go to a place that’s better.”

Reaching an immigration status that ensures refugees can remain in the U.S. is also a challenge. Refugees who worked for the U.S. government or aided the U.S. Armed Forces can apply for Special Immigration Visas that provide permanent residency. Others are humanitarian parolees who entered the country without a visa and must still apply for asylum and go through the immigration process.

Murakami said a major disadvantage for parolees is they can’t petition to have family join them in the U.S. “Their family members are still there, and they don’t know when they’re going to be reunited with them, and that is just tearing people apart,” she said.

For Zulaikha, Zahra and Maryam, one of the biggest obstacles is having to start over with their education and finding the money to do so.

After earning a bachelor’s degree Maryam worked as a midwife in Afghanistan, but her qualifications don’t transfer to the U.S. She’s searching for scholarships, so she can eventually study to become a nurse. Zulaikha and Zahra are in similar situations, as they aim to study journalism and law.

Murakami said many refugees also struggle to navigate parts of life that used to be effortless, such as driving or scheduling appointments, because of linguistic, cultural or systematic differences in a new country.

Some challenges are easy for Zulaikha, Zahra and Maryam to brush off — like the first time they took a Eugene bus by themselves. They accidentally went to McKenzie Bridge, an hour east of Eugene. They came home cheerfully telling Anderson and Anderton, “We saw the mountains today.” Other times the challenges have been more serious, like when Zahra ran into issues



*Janet Anderson and Zahra share a moment together after the Afghan women moved into their new home.*

## THE JOURNEY THAT CHANGED A LIFE

written by Zulaikha

The pain of losing a house is impossible to describe. The house in Afghanistan where we used to feel the warmth of a complete family and care of friends, where we had our own jobs and lived a happy life with our loved ones.

I used to wake up seeing a bright smile on the lips of my mother and hearing the morning greetings from my father and siblings; my loved ones who were making my life full of joy and happiness.

But my happiness did not last long and I lost everything: the warmth and love of my family, my job, friends and the opportunity to continue my studies.

When I was leaving Afghanistan, I had nothing and no one by my side. I was sad and alone. I saw my country falling into the hands of wild people who had no idea how to live in a city and what is education. The people who were not accepting that men and women have equal rights in a society.

The new chapter of my life started when I arrived in the United States, my new home where I have gotten the chance to meet new and kind people. They were sharing their happiness with me in order to decrease the pain that I have in my heart.

They helped me mentally, emotionally and financially, and I am really grateful for what they did and are still doing for me. These people gave me the strength and motivated me to start life from the bottom once again and create a new identity.

I will show the world the power that girls and women hold. I will prove that we are strong enough to fight back in order to achieve what we have lost once.

with her Social Security paperwork or had to figure out how to wire money back home.

Even seemingly small tasks can be challenging in a new culture and environment. "To take that same adult who was a fully independent, functional, successful adult in their home community context, and comes to a place where they don't even know how to get on a bus, or they don't even know how to check out at a supermarket," she said. "That's just a really distressing and difficult experience for many people."

### Changing connections

On a Friday afternoon in March, Maryam, with a long, dark ponytail and rose-colored headband that matches her shirt, sits with Zulaikha and Zahra in the living room of their new home. They talk about their different family situations.

Maryam's family, who mostly lives in California, is upset that she's a single woman living on her own. They want her to either marry or join them.

"I say, 'I need a tall man, a handsome man, and brown skin' and they find me..." she trails off and makes a displeased face.

"You shouldn't marry a guy, you should live by your own," Zulaikha advises. "You're independent."

"No! That's not good!" Maryam exclaims. "Who can help me change the furniture?" she asks, laughing.

When she visits her family in California, her parents ask her to stay with them. She can't find scholarship opportunities in California, though, and her family members, many of whom don't speak fluent English, haven't been able to help.

"Every time I go, they tell me, 'You need husband? We find it. You need money? We find it. You need clothes? We buy for you,'" she says. "I think all of life is not money. Education is important."

Zulaikha's family supports her living situation, but she isn't able to see them. They've been hiding in their Afghanistan home as the Taliban is looking for some family members who also worked with the U.S. military. She misses them — especially her dad.

Growing up, her father encouraged her to make her own decisions.

"I'm same as my dad," Zulaikha says. "He's independent and he doesn't like women to be dependent on any man. He always told me, 'Now you're young and you know what is good and what is bad. You have to do whatever you want. But don't worry, whatever you do, I'm going to support you.' And that's why I love him so much."



In the backyard of their new home, the three Afghan women reflect on their bond. "I just met them here," Zulaikha said. "But here, we get very close to each other, and right now we are like sisters."

The separation from friends and family is a significant post-flight challenge, Murakami had said. It often means starting over in a new social environment without much support.

Zulaikha says she misses "my job, my university, especially my friends." She calls her family in Afghanistan every night and her best friend from the military, who's now in Virginia, a few times a week.

A lack of community and the safety net it provides often stresses refugees in the U.S., Murakami said. There's a sense of security in knowing that, when life gets difficult, your neighbors will help you out. "Not having trust in those around you, because you don't yet have a relationship with them, I think is really scary," she said.

She said advocates like Anderson and Anderton play a prominent role in helping new community members plant their social roots.

For Zulaikha, friends and social support have been one of the most helpful factors when resettling in Eugene — especially her host couple.

"I never want to lose them," she says. Anderson and Anderton are one reason she plans to stay in Eugene with Zahra even after finishing her English courses at the UO. Her goals include, first, retaking a course she got a B in after arriving halfway through the term.

Then she hopes to find a scholarship or donations she can use to study journalism. "I want to be the most famous journalist in the U.S.," she says.

On the living room couch, Maryam teases Zulaikha about how the Kabuli Pulao dinner turned out and an incident the day before when Zulaikha kissed Maryam before telling her, "You remind me of my father."

"I usually kiss my father," Zulaikha explains, laughing. "I miss him too much."

A little earlier, Zulaikha had recounted how, despite missing friends and family from home, she had immediately felt welcomed by Anderson and Anderton when she arrived in Eugene, and bonded quickly with Zahra and Maryam, too.

Although she'd seen Zahra briefly at Fort McCoy, Zulaikha didn't really know either of the women before arriving in Eugene. "I just met them here," she says. "But here, we get very close to each other, and right now we are like sisters." ♦



Amid the chaos of packing, Zulaikha takes a moment to play with Cricket, Anderson and Anderton's miniature Goldendoodle.

# A recipe FOR CHANGE

About one in 10 Oregonians faces food insecurity. For students, that number is even more daunting. Fortunately, a committed mix of community members are working toward a solution.

written by **MAKENZIE ELLIOTT** photographed by **ISABEL LEMUS KRISTENSEN**

illustrated by **SOPHIE BARLOW**

It's 8:02 a.m. on a Tuesday outside of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Eugene, Oregon, as I wait for Mary Leighton to arrive. My instructions were clear: Meet at 8 a.m. near the back alley door of the church; look for the dirty white Toyota Matrix in the parking lot (that's how I'd know Leighton was there to let me in); call to be let in — don't ring the bell just in case the choir is taping music.

A few minutes later, Leighton, the coordinator for the Interfaith Food Hub, a program that offers packaged meals to community members in need, emerges around the corner. She motions me over to her car. "Come help," she yells and then loads me up with a box of eggs to take inside.

Her tardiness was on-brand. As Leighton unlocks the back door, she launches into an anecdote about her struggle to manage time.

As soon as we enter the church's kitchen, she puts me to work. Leighton hands me a purple and blue floral apron. I trade the notebook and pen in my hands for rubber gloves — but not before washing my hands, of course.

She assigns me the task of sanitizing the surfaces, and she begins to pull cartons of eggs out of the large stainless steel fridge. For a moment, Leighton's soft humming and the buzz of a fan are the only noises in the kitchen.

Around 9 a.m., the other volunteers start rolling in. Niles, a former fraternity chef, gets to work seasoning the chicken. Tom and Janice begin boiling the eggs for the egg salad, and Mary Ann, the designated cookie maker, steps in to guide me through the process.

They tell me that earlier Niles had gone searching for a better chocolate chip cookie recipe than the premade dough normally used, and he finally settled on this new sour cream concoction. The made-from-scratch recipe means more preparation time, but the taste, he's promised, will be worth it.

This Tuesday volunteer group began in April 2020 when First Christian Church's weekly sit-down breakfast for unhoused community members shut down due to COVID-19 safety concerns. The meals prepared today will be put into containers and boxes, labeled and dropped off at organizations around Eugene that serve populations in need.

At age 75, Leighton has been involved in community work since she was a child, telling me volunteering became a permanent part of



# “We have failed so far as a community to provide for the most vulnerable members.”

her life. She’s seen the need over the past two years working with the Interfaith Food Hub.

“We have failed so far as a community to provide for the most vulnerable members,” Leighton says. “So in the absence of prudent public policy, to make sure nobody goes hungry in the land of the rich, people volunteering food help will always be essential.”

According to a January 2022 Oregon State University report, one in 10 Oregonians is food insecure, meaning they don’t have consistent access to nutritious food. Food insecurity in Oregon has improved over the past 20 years, Mark Edwards, the OSU professor who authored the report, told me. Oregon’s food insecurity rate for 2018-2020 was 9.1%, the lowest rate measured in 25 years. However, certain groups remain vulnerable, including single mothers, people of color, renters and college students.

As a 20-year-old college student, I’m no stranger to increasing tuition prices and housing costs. I know the financial pain of \$100 textbooks.

But I have never had to intentionally skip a meal or ask myself *how am I going to eat?* The unfortunate reality, though, afflicts a third of my peers.

At the University of Oregon, 36% of all students experience food insecurity during their college career, according to research from the UO’s Food Security Task Force. Around the country, that number is even higher. A 2019 Hope Center #RealCollege survey found about 39% of college students experienced food insecurity in the past 30 days. Community college students showed to be even more

vulnerable. The Hope Center’s survey found that 63% of student respondents at Oregon community colleges identified as food insecure, housing insecure or homeless.

“I think sometimes we have this ideal view of what colleges look like,” Edwards said. “Everybody’s got a meal plan, everybody’s walking from one ivy-covered, brick building to the next. And yet the student body today is not like that; it’s dramatically more diverse.”

**W**hile I had seen food assistance programs advertised on campus, I did not grasp the severity of food insecurity among my peers. It wasn’t until I met with Ella Meloy that I began to see the problem.

Meloy, 21, works at the UO’s Student Sustainability Center focusing on promoting food security on campus. Her job includes helping to manage the UO’s Food Pantry, which offers food to high school and college students in the area.

I met Meloy, a third-year political science major at the UO, through a mutual friend who suggested I interview her for a class assignment. Along with her role at the SSC, she previously served as president of UO College Democrats and vice president of the Associated Students of the UO Senate. Most of her work with each organization focused on providing basic needs to the Eugene community.

One Tuesday afternoon, I joined Meloy outside of the Erb Memorial Union during the Produce Drop, an event hosted by the SSC where students can pick up fresh produce. A line of about 10 students wound its way through tables full of lettuce, bananas and apples.

Meloy, who earlier in the day had gone to a local food bank to pick up the produce, offered me a rundown of how the event works. Students scan a barcode, fill out a survey and then take the produce they want for free. When picking out the food, Meloy told me she tries to keep in mind what students like the best.

Pointing to a table full of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) resources, Meloy explained that

college students are more vulnerable when it comes to facing food insecurity. Many don’t know how to access programs like SNAP to help.

“It’s hard to navigate the government website especially if you’ve never had to do that on your own before,” she told me.

I wanted to know more. So I reached out to other members of the community who are fighting food insecurity. Eventually, I met Connie Browning, the Student Food Pantry Coordinator at Grace Lutheran Church, who gave me a tour of the pantry tucked away on 17th street.

A room inside Grace Lutheran Church was stocked with fresh produce, frozen meat and other non-perishables. In a typical week, over 100 students will visit the pantry during the two days it’s open, Browning said.

At the front desk, Izzy Hazard sat with a smile as she checked students in — often remembering each person’s name from previous weeks.

Hazard, who started volunteering in December 2020, said she was surprised by how many students utilize the pantry, but she told me she was grateful the resource was available.

“There shouldn’t really be a barrier when you’re a student to food,” Hazard said, “because you can’t study, you can’t learn, you can’t enjoy college if you’re hungry.”

**T**he barriers to food in college is something Eric Dale knows well. Dale, a senior studying computer science at Portland State University, tells me he has struggled to access food while at PSU. During his first four years of college, he worked multiple full-time jobs to avoid taking out additional student loans. Tuition and housing ate up most of his funds, he said, leaving little to spend on groceries.

“I was only paying \$600 a month for my apartment, but I made about \$600 a month,” Dale, 24, said. “If I went shopping and tried to get food anywhere, it was difficult.”

PSU’s food pantry gave Dale regular access to nutritional food — and energized him for a lecture and other schoolwork.

“College students are busy. I’m thinking about six different projects and eight homework assignments and where am I going and who am I seeing next,” he told me. “It’s very easy to be like, wow, there is 0% chance I’m going to have time to eat in between these things.”

Dray Aguirre also understands the important role food plays for a student. Aguirre attends Central Oregon Community College where he is studying nursing.

After a turbulent childhood, Aguirre, 32, moved to Central Oregon from California in 2013 to “start over,” he said. He lived with his mother, who resided in the area, for a while, but in 2017 he moved into a trailer on a friend’s property. The trailer has little electricity and no restroom.



University of Oregon students Ella Meloy, left, and Lindsey Nguyen organize the Produce Drop hosted by the Student Sustainability Center on Tuesdays.

After holding a few different jobs, including one making soap on a goat farm — “a highlight of my life,” he told me — Aguirre enrolled at COCC. “I went to school to change things. I wanted to change my perspective. I wanted to change my life,” Aguirre said. “But there have been so many barriers, there have been so many things standing in the way for me for my personal success — because I don’t have a shower, I don’t have a restroom, I don’t have a kitchen to cook — and this lifestyle is rough.”

To qualify for SNAP benefits, a person must have less than \$2,001 in combined checking and saving accounts. At times, Aguirre said he held jobs that paid above that eligibility requirement, meaning he didn’t have access to some of the federal resources to combat food and housing insecurity. He said he now has to rely on microwave meals because he doesn’t have access to a stove.

“It’s not healthy, but it’s keeping me going, keeping me in survival mode,” he said.

Initially, Aguirre did not tell anyone about his situation because of the stigma around housing and food insecurity. But as he got involved in various clubs on campus, he became more vocal about his situation. Eventually, he traveled

## Ways to help

### Volunteer

Volunteer with Interfaith Food Hub. Prepare bagged meals for community members struggling with food scarcity. Contact Verna Tjemsland, the Food Hub scheduler at [tjemsland@gmail.com](mailto:tjemsland@gmail.com).

### Donate

Drop off non-perishable food items at the Student Food Pantry at Grace Lutheran Church, University of Oregon’s Student Sustainability Center or at Food For Lane County’s 2345 West Broadway location during its designated hours.



to Oregon's capitol, Salem, with members of his school and then to Washington D.C. with members of Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon to lobby for more funding for students struggling to access basic needs.

"Students shouldn't have to be hungry, and they shouldn't have to worry about food or where to live when they're trying to enhance their life, when they're trying to be successful," Aguirre said. "Navigating that is a job on its own, and it can be distracting and discouraging on their academics."

Chris Baker, a former student-mother who personally struggled to access food while attending school, understands the struggle of non-traditional students. Baker is the legislative strategist for Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon. While student food pantries are useful resources for college campuses, Baker emphasized the importance of legislative action.

"There's no point in having a food pantry on your campus if you're handing out rice and beans and a student is houseless and is living in their car and can't cook that food," Baker said.

Instead, Baker said universities should focus on a holistic approach to basic needs. Things like affordable meal plans, housing, healthcare and childcare should all play into a university's plan for addressing food insecurity.

The state of Oregon has taken other steps to address access to basic needs on college campuses. In 2021, Oregon passed a bill requiring colleges and universities to hire a "benefits navigator" position to help students access aid programs.

Aguirre said he would like to see a program on college campuses that helps students in need find resources from the beginning of their college career. "People are listening in this time, and I want to just make sure it's being known

and try to help navigate whatever it is to get things done," Aguirre said. "I'm about action. Politics is all about talking too much."

**W**hether someone is fighting to change legislation or offering a friendly smile to those arriving at the student food pantry, it is clear every role in this fight matters. After months of researching, I didn't find the end-all-be-all solution to food insecurity, but I did discover the importance of the people working hard to solve it.

Back at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, the clock hits noon. The aroma of over 300 baked cookies fills the air, and Mary Leighton is packing containers with chicken and egg salad that will be used to make over 700 sandwiches later in the week.

One by one, the volunteers shed their aprons, grab a cookie from the staff-allotted pile and head out the back door with a quick "goodbye" and "see you next week." Leighton does a final walk-through of the kitchen before hitting the lights, and I carry a box of food outside.

Together, we fill her Matrix with tubs of hard-boiled eggs, salads and, of course, cookies. I watch as she closes her car door and heads out to her next destination, First Christian Church, where the next shift of volunteers will assemble and deliver meals.

"Doing this work is just a way to invest my time and energy in making the world a better place in the most simplest way," Leighton says. "It's a thing I needed to have in my life."

A few weeks later, I received something I needed: The recipes for Nile's oatmeal and chocolate chip cookies. They came via email.

"I do add ginger to the oatmeal cookies," Nile shared. "And obviously add more chips to the sour cream ones." 🍪



Mary Leighton, the coordinator for the Interfaith Food Hub, spends her Tuesdays preparing packaged meals that go to community members in Eugene.

# Remember This Hung Liu at Trillium

February 5 - August 28, 2022



Hung LIU (LIU Hung 刘虹, Chinese-born American, 1948-2021). *Loveland*, 2010 Mixed-media triptych, 41 x 81 1/2 inches Gift of Artist Hung Liu and Trillium Graphics/David Salgado

In this exhibition, renowned contemporary Chinese-born American artist Hung Liu explores subjects ranging from still life imagery, to portraiture and landscape in innovative mixed-media works that reflect upon history, memory, tradition, migration, and social justice.



## On Earth A Fragile Existence April 2 to September 18, 2022

*On Earth: A Fragile Existence* highlights works from the JSMA's collection that reflect a multi-layered understanding of humanity's role in our shared ecology with the non-human, or more-than-human, world. You'll be joined in the galleries by curators and special guests.

Weegee (Arthur Fellig) (American, b. Ukraine, 1899-1968), *Coney Island Beach*, 1938 or 1939, Gelatin silver print, 10 x 8 in., Gift of Ellen and Alan Newberg

# WHY ARE A BUNCH OF HIGH SCHOOLERS FIGHTING TO HAVE THEIR VOICES HEARD AND DEMANDING THEIR IDENTITIES BE RECOGNIZED IN THEIR SCHOOLS?

written by **OLIVIA BENNETT** photographed by **FERN DONOVAN**



*Midas Jenkins, Dandelion Johnstone, Hailey Batrick and Ellie Dobias (left to right) at Newberg High School. The students have campaigned to end a ban on political signage at their schools.*



Midas Jenkins walked through the parking lot at Pulp and Circumstance, a Newberg, Oregon, gift boutique, one day last winter when he saw a bumper sticker on a car. He did a double take in disbelief; he immediately recognized the black-and-white sticker he had made that featured a phrase he'd coined several weeks earlier: "I'm not political, I'm human." This was the first time he'd seen his creation in public.

Jenkins, a high school senior, first voiced the phrase during a school board meeting in September. The phrase came out of frustration over what had been going on with the schools in his town. Since the



*Midas Jenkins holds a sign used during student demonstrations against the ban of political symbols made by the Newberg school board.*

beginning of the school year, Newberg school board members had been advocating for the removal of political or quasi-political signs — such as pride flags and Black Lives Matter signs — from its classrooms.

Because of the board's actions, Jenkins, a transgender student, said that "his identity was being threatened." Through much of the fall semester, Jenkins and other students had led protests in hopes they could reverse the board's position. Seeing the sticker thrilled Jenkins. "People are buying those stickers for a reason," Jenkins said, "and it shows they care about the same things as me."

Jenkins is a student at Catalyst High School, a charter school affiliated with Newberg's main public high school. In his early years at Catalyst, when he was still struggling with gender conformities, Jenkins said the teachers supported him and made him comfortable within the school community. Now, because of the board's actions, he was scared that such support would be lost, and he wasn't the only one.

"The terrible things going on in my little town," said Jenkins, "is something that affects people outside of [Newberg]."

Over the past year, students in Newberg have campaigned — through protests, petitions and walk-outs — to overturn the ban on political signage. Their



*Newberg High School student Ellie Dobias promotes LGBTQ symbols in her daily attire, down to her socks.*

pushback mirrors similar actions by young people in other parts of the United States, such as Florida where students are among the most vocal opponents of the "Don't Say Gay" bill. While Florida and Newberg may be on different sides of the country, the students are fighting to be heard about issues they contend are instrumental to their growth. Hailey Battrick, a junior at Newberg High School and a member of the LGBTQ+ community, said the board's decision to eliminate signs in classrooms goes counter to growth: "Who in their right mind thinks, 'I want to create a better educational community, so I'm going to cut out this entire chunk of students and alienate them?'"

A little over 20 miles southwest of Portland a "Welcome to Newberg: A Great Place to Grow" sign greets visitors to town. Farms and wineries give the drive into Newberg a rural feel, with a mix of mom-and-pop shops and the occasional chain store. Besides its small-town feel, Newberg,

with a population of roughly 23,000 — around 4% of Portland's — varies in other ways from the big city. While Portland leans decidedly to the left, 52 percent of Newberg voters voted Republican in the 2020 election.

Prior to that election, in the summer of 2020, COVID-19 was still at its height and the Black Lives Matter movement was sweeping the nation. In Newberg, the seven-member school board approved an anti-racist resolution condemning white supremacy, bigotry, racism and hate speech in schools. All but one board member, Dave Brown, voted yes on the resolution. In a written statement after the vote, Brown, the board's chairman, said that "the 'anti-racism' movement reduces all issues to race and will lead to polarization, not progress."

When students started to return to the classrooms in March 2021, after being online for nearly a year, they found some teachers had put BLM and pride flags up in classrooms to show their support for students from these marginalized groups.

Elaine Koskela, the success coach at Catalyst, said that even before the anti-racist resolution, classrooms in her high school had little rainbow paw print stickers that said “You Are Welcome Here” or “Safe Zone.” She said the displays were a way to show students that teachers were “standing in solidarity with these students.”

But by April, some parents and other community members started to complain about the signs, such as one in Dundee Elementary School classroom that read: “Black Students, Black Dreams, Black Futures, Black Lives Matter.”

One parent who had reservations about the signs was Jacob Hamilton. A father of two Newberg students, Hamilton said he does not oppose politically oriented signs, but there should be context behind their placement. “If Black Lives Matter [signs are] in the schools, in a learning situation, it should be in a social studies or history class, so you can explain the context,” Hamilton said. “I don’t want just a random flag or anything like that presented individually in the classroom without context.”

That summer, prior to the new school year, the board proposed a new policy that would “remove all Black Lives Matter (aka BLM) signs, flags, and placards, apparel, buttons, and all other modes of dis-

play, and all instances of the symbol known as the Pride Flag from District facilities immediately.”

While the policy would not come up for a full board vote until September, it quickly sparked responses from a range of people.

District lawyers said that banning just pride and BLM flags would be unconstitutional. The proposed policy was changed to: “Any posters, signs, flags, banners, pictures or other digital or physical image that depicts support or opposition relating to a political, quasi-political, or controversial topic.”

As for students, text messages denouncing the policy flooded many of their phones. Dandelion Johnstone, a junior at Newberg High School, remembers their phone

started to “blow up” with messages about the policy. “I looked at my phone and I see this: ‘Hey, they are trying to get rid of these flags and Black Lives Matter signs,’” Johnstone said. “I was just like, What? That’s ridiculous. There is no way this could be real.”

Midas Jenkins was among those getting the texts. He knew he needed to do more than just read them.

Jenkins doesn’t have the typical educational background. After he attended first grade for two weeks, Jenkins’ family pulled him out of school. It would be another 10 years before he was back in a formal school setting; in 2018 he enrolled at Catalyst. Now, at age 21, he is getting ready to graduate.

Jenkins said he generally avoids public speaking, but he said he knew he needed to tell the board about why this policy was wrong. He emailed the board telling members that he wanted to speak during the public comment session on September 22, a week before the vote.

The public comment session took place over Zoom, attended by seven board members, the school superintendent and Newberg community members. With notes from his teachers and encouragement from peers, Jenkins Zoomed in from a friend’s house and got ready to make his speech. As the time came for him to speak,

he left his friends and walked into a room alone. It was one of the “scariest moments of my life,” he recalled.

In a two-minute speech he told the board why this policy was harmful to him and others like him. “When the new school board quickly decided to ban all BLM and LGBTQ symbols, I felt like you were telling me that there is no room for people like me,” Jenkins said, reading from his script. “That my life, because of my identity, is not valued.” But then, just as he was about to finish his prepared remarks, he went off-script and told the board, “I’m not political, I’m human.”

Though Jenkins said he was proud of himself for speaking up, he also felt like the majority of the board wasn’t listening to him. Jenkins said that what he and others realized

**WHO IN THEIR RIGHT MIND THINKS ‘I WANT TO CREATE A BETTER EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY SO I’M GOING TO CUT OUT THIS ENTIRE CHUNK OF STUDENTS AND ALIENATE THEM.’**



**LEFT:** Catalyst High School senior Carter Stolp shows off the sticker on his guitar case that reads: “Celebrate Diversity, Embrace Differences.” Stolp ran a voter drive to register students to vote in the recall election of two Newberg school board members.

**BELOW:** Catalyst success coach Elaine Koskela displays various pins and buttons showing support for marginalized communities on campus.



Newberg students Hailey Battrick and Ellie Dobias sit atop the Newberg High School sign.



was that these public comments “had a strong sense that it was for show” and that the board “never really responded or commented on anything.”

Once Jenkins finished his remarks, he walked out of the room and was greeted with open arms from his peers. Their joy was short-lived. The following week, on September 28, in a 4-3 vote, the board passed the policy.

Jenkins, who considers himself an “optimistic” person, said, “It’s not easy to make me angry.”

Dave Brown, 64, has been a resident of Newberg for 58 years. Since 2019, Brown has been a member of Newberg’s school board and became the board chair in 2021. “I worked at the high

school for 20 years, and my wife is in her 33rd year,” said Brown. “So, we have been around education for a long time.”

Brown, one of the four members who voted for the banning of signs in classrooms, has his reasons for opposing the signs. “Public schools were meant to be neutral,” said Brown. “By putting up these signs teachers are violating that.”

He said that allowing BLM and pride flags in classrooms means other signs, like a National Rifle Association (NRA) or Christian flag, would have to be allowed.

Brown said he wants to “help the students in any way we can,” and that the signs in the classroom and the debate around them are distracting students’ learning. When Brown first joined the school board, he said most of the topics of debate

were school-or education-orientated, like “lunch menus or start times.” Now, he contends, much of the debate is about “society things.” He wonders if the board will go back to discussing topics like “how do we make the English department better?” He adds, “We have to represent every kind of student in our school. That’s what kids need.”

Brown and the other three board member’s have support from some parents and community members. “I don’t believe one point of view should be taught in the schools,” said Jacob Hamilton. “I send my kids to school to learn the ABCs and 123s.”

On a sunny Friday in March, Hailey Battrick and Ellie Dobias sit on top of the Newberg High School entrance sign. They got out of school just minutes earlier. The two talk about their plans for the weekend and the high school’s upcoming play. While they know what their weekend plans are, they are unsure of the future, especially after everything that happened this past year.

Following the board vote in September, unrest continued in Newberg. In November, the board fired Dr. Joe Morelock, the school superintendent, without cause. (In May 2022 the Newberg school board hired Stephen Phillips as the new superintendent.) In December, Dandelion Johnstone helped orchestrate a school walkout during which Catalyst and Newberg students met on the Newberg High School football field to show their support for marginalized groups.

In the following weeks, some parents, teachers and students organized an election to recall two board members, including Dave Brown. Catalyst senior Carter Stolp ran a voter registration drive to inform and register students to vote in local elections, including the recall one. Even with all the students’ efforts, the recall didn’t go through. Battrick, 16, was shocked by the loss. “I still don’t quite understand how we lost the recall,” Battrick said. “I’m also really angry that I couldn’t vote in it, but that’s not something I can control.”

The students in Newberg have realized there are limits to what they can control. They can manage their classes and try to keep their grades up, but over the past two years they have faced a flurry of unexpected challenges. Dobias isn’t sure what will happen next. “The ban on the flags, Dr. Joe being fired and the recall, all of that is more distracting to our learning than seeing a rainbow flag in the hallway,” said Dobias.

Even with the events of the past two years, Midas Jenkins has stayed on top of his schooling and is ready to graduate in June. While Jenkins isn’t sure what his future entails, he is sure of one thing: He plans to stay in Newberg to keep fighting the sign ban. He wants to give future generations what he was given: an identity. As he said, “I don’t want all the things that really saved me to be taken away.”



# 4 ways to save *money*

(while chasing that degree)

written by **KEYRY HERNANDEZ** illustrated by **SEOYEON PARK**

If you've gone grocery shopping recently, you may have noticed that the price of your beloved avocados has increased by 25 cents in the last few months. Maybe you've read, too, how Dollar Tree is no longer sticking to its "everything's \$1" slogan now that its products are priced at \$1.25. And let's not talk about filling your gas tank. Ouch! On their own, these mark-ups may seem insignificant, but they reflect an ongoing economic shift. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, inflation has risen by 8.5% over the past year.

With inflation taking more cash out of their wallets, college students have spending worries beyond rising tuition rates. Fortunately, you've come to the right place. We've talked to a bunch of students who've learned tips about saving and making money along the way. Here, they share their secrets on everything from starting a side hustle to saving money on their daily coffee.

**MAKE A CUP OF STARBUCKS COFFEE IN YOUR KITCHEN:**

Keurig using a Starbucks K-Cup = **50 cents**

French press using Starbucks ground coffee = **20 cents**

Moka pot using Cafe La Llave espresso bar = **12 cents**

\*retail on Amazon



**CHALLENGE:** Daily coffee is making me broke  
**SOLUTION:** Check out some alternatives

Are you on your third coffee of the day? Yeah, we thought so. If you're anything like other college students, then you probably spend way too much time at Starbucks. Cut down on your expenses by paying through the Starbucks app. For every dollar you spend, one star is added to your account with rewards beginning at 25 stars. Fun fact: Reloading a gift card through the app earns you two stars per dollar, which Luce-ro Perez takes advantage of.

For her usual \$5.45 mocha, Perez, a second-year architecture student at the University of Oregon, earns 10.9 stars. Over the course of 2022 Perez has collected 803 stars that she has redeemed for free drinks, syrups and croissants. Get this: App users at participating stores also have access to free brewed coffee and tea refills. "It's known that architecture majors don't sleep and that's why we drink a lot of coffee," Perez says with a chuckle.

As much as Perez loves hanging out at coffee shops, she's aware of how expensive her coffee addiction can get. Perez recommends becoming your own barista as a way to spend less on your daily coffee. For her, a Keurig (retailing at \$79.99) does the trick. Perez spends \$37.04 for 40 Starbucks K-Cups. Other popular alternatives available on Amazon include French presses, available for under \$20, or moka pots, which retail at \$5.50. No matter what coffee alternative you choose, you'll end up saving a couple of bucks each day and that adds up to hundreds every year.

**CHALLENGE:** I don't have time for a full-time job

**SOLUTION:** Start a side hustle

If you need a couple of bucks for Saturday night drinks, find a side hustle. Unlike a typical job, it's one where you can follow your passion and freelance. One side hustler is Izzy Fernandes who runs her own Etsy shop called Fern & Buds.

Fernandes, 21, began selling handmade bracelets during her breaks as a high school lifeguard but figured it was just a hobby. Then she got to the UO in 2019 with little spending money. So, she launched a jewelry shop. Today, she has sold 393 pieces that have earned her around \$2,800. "When I was a little kid, it was my dream to make

stuff for myself and sell it," says Fernandes. "Now I'm actually doing it!"

Being a full-time student and the president of mock trial keeps Fernandes booked. As a result, she benefits from being her own boss. "Some of the items I sell take more work to make," says Fernandes. "So, if there's a big final coming up, I can temporarily take an item off of my shop."

Looking to make quick cash like Fernandes? Here are some ideas. Become a freelance transcriber with Happy Scribe or take short surveys on reliable sites like InboxDollars. When you're ready for a larger commitment, look into delivering groceries on Instacart or signing yourself up as a dog walker on Rover. To find the best hustle for you, write out a list of your interests and skills to help guide you to a specific industry.

No matter what you do, set a fair wage for your labor. "Don't be afraid to charge more than you think you should," says Nathan Lillegard, interim director at UO's Lundquist Center for Entrepreneurship. "A lot of people fall into the trap of giving their stuff away for a low cost."

**CHALLENGE:** I want to study abroad but it's too expensive

**SOLUTION:** Lean on your student resources

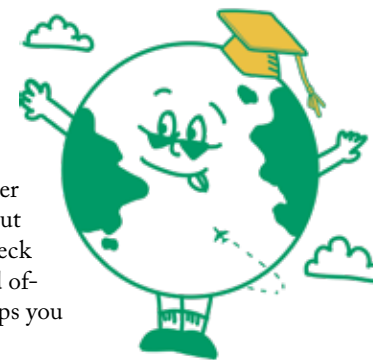
Many students cross off studying abroad as unaffordable, but you'd be surprised at the number of resources waiting for you on campus. Kaelene Spence, an institutional relations specialist with Global Education Oregon (GEO), debunks the myth that you need a lot of money to study abroad. "Sometimes it's cheaper or the same amount that you're paying for tuition on campus," says Spence. "So why not get that credit in a foreign country?"

This was the case for Mercedes Wright, a UO alumna who studied Italian. Her love for the language and desire to explore the world made her next step very clear. She packed up her bags and hopped on a plane to study in Lecce, Italy. *Ciao Eugene.*

But, let's not get too ahead of ourselves. First, Wright had to figure out how to fund her trip without going broke. Wiping treadmills at the Student Recreation Center and working at the GEO office wasn't cutting it. She did her research and found that the Intensive Italian Language program was \$6,375 per term without scholarships. *Mamma mia!* Luckily, her research paid off...literally. Wright found that there were tons of scholarships available



and that her financial aid transferred over to her program. She made her dreams come true for about \$1,000 out of pocket. Check in with your study abroad office to find the scholarships you are eligible for.



**CHALLENGE:** I can't afford moving to a big city

**SOLUTION:** Get roommates

After four years of hitting the books, we bet you're ready to run the world. Courtney Sams, a UO alumna, was itching to spread her wings during her last year in the music program. She was set on chasing a dream all the way to New York City but had no idea how to make that happen. Close friends and family telling her it was too expensive didn't help her case either.

Although Sams couldn't wait to eat NYC pizza, she weighed her options. After graduating in 2016, she began working at the Eugene Symphony. "I lived very cheaply in Eugene that year and saved up money," says Sams. If you have family you can stay with or already pay cheap rent, consider working while waiting out your move for a season or two.

As a student, you're probably used to living with other people. Well, it's no different in big cities. "Almost everyone I know lives with roommates," says Sams, who had five roommates. The six-bedroom apartment in West Harlem made rent affordable for Sams at \$975 per month. Once you've established yourself in a space, download Splitwise to help keep track of shared expenses.

Facebook, Craigslist and Zillow were outlets Julian Croman, a 2020 graduate of the UO, used during his apartment hunt. Croman experienced a competitive market in Portland, Oregon. His biggest piece of advice is to visit a city prior to moving. Get a feel for the areas you are interested in and spend time researching them. This will give you an idea of how much to save for monthly rents and signing leases. To sign for his two-bedroom, one-bath apartment, Croman and his roommate needed twice the monthly rent (\$2,400). "If you have an idea of exactly what you're looking for, you'll find it," Croman says. "It just takes time." 🏠



**SITES FOR QUICK SAVINGS**

**HONEY**

Honey provides a downloadable Chrome extension that automatically applies coupons while you shop online.

**GASBUDDY**

With gas prices constantly fluctuating, Gasbuddy's mission is to calculate real-time gas prices based on your current location.

**TOO GOOD TO GO**

According to Too Good To Go, over 1/3 of the world's food is thrown away. So, its goal is to reduce that number by partnering with local restaurants and allowing customers to buy unsold surplus food at a discount.

**THRIFTBOOKS**

Books, movies and CDs are sold at discounted prices that vary based on the condition of the product. Reward points will add up to free purchases.

**\$5 MEAL PLAN**

For just \$5 a month, subscribers are sent weekly plans for inexpensive dinners, lunches and breakfast — plus a random goodie.

**CHECK OUT FETCH REWARDS,**

a retail application that lets users upload shopping receipts in exchange for coins. The coins can be spent on free gift cards to hundreds of companies.



Emma Garner trains their seven-month-old pitbull mix, Crew, to not jump at strangers when she gets overexcited.

# *project* Puppy

The pandemic turned lots of home-bound Oregonians into wide-eyed dog owners. For a while, they survived the puppy blues — until desperation called. Thankfully, trainers answered.

written by **CHLOE STRICKLAND** photographed by **CHARLIE NGUYEN**

**I**n a spacious, grassy backyard in Eugene, Oregon, Emma Garner held onto a dog leash for dear life. At the end of the leash was Crew, a 7-month-old puppy who jumped and lunged excitedly as unfamiliar faces entered the space. Garner, standing at 5 feet, 5 inches tall, held the 50-pound black pitbull mix at arm's length as they worked to distract the puppy from the new people.

To keep Crew from unleashing her excitement on the visitors, Garner planted a foot on the slack of the leash and waited for the dog to calm down and lose interest. Once Crew was disengaged, Garner rewarded the dog with cheese from a treat pouch. Garner flooded Crew with words of praise and pats on the head before the pup noticed the strangers again.

A few weeks earlier, Garner was unable to distract Crew when the puppy was introduced to new people. During the pandemic, when Garner first adopted her at 10 weeks old, Crew would jump on people as a greeting and couldn't be stopped.

"We had this puppy that would jump up to your chest when we came home," Garner said, "and it was really overwhelming and hard to introduce her to people."

Garner has plenty of company when it comes to becoming a pandemic dog owner, a special breed of pet parents. A survey by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) found that between March 2020 and May 2021, more than 23 million American households — approximately one in five — adopted a dog or cat.

With a majority of pet adoptions coming from animal shelters, the newly acquired pandemic pets brought with them pre-developed behavioral problems such as house training issues, separation anxiety and hyperactivity. While the convenience of working from home made these issues tolerable at first, pet owners grew fearful for what the future held.

The ASPCA survey also found that 52% of respondents were concerned about caring for their pet when COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, and 35%



were struggling with their pets' behavior. Since the world has started to reopen, shelters in Eugene and Springfield, Oregon, have seen some of the previously adopted dogs return with a complete lack of training and socialization.

Megan Burroughs, the community engagement and humane education manager at the Greenhill Humane Society in Eugene, said at the start of the year the shelter had a waiting list of more than 50 people who wanted to surrender a dog — that is, owners giving their adopted pets back to the shelter — and almost all of the dogs had behavioral issues.

“The surrendering of an animal that has major behavior issues is going to affect the long-term outcome of that dog or cat,” Burroughs said. “It does dissuade certain people who would more likely adopt that animal if it didn't have behavior issues, and a lot of those issues stem from lack of training, structure and boundaries as a puppy.”

On a weekday last winter, Burroughs walked through the kennel space where the shelter keeps its dogs; barks echoed through the facility. Adoptable dogs of all breeds wagged their tails and jumped up excitedly when they saw Burroughs. In a fenced area outside, prospective dog owners mingled with shelter dogs to see if there was a bond before adopting.

With Greenhill's hefty waiting list, the shelter must grapple with a rise of behavioral problems in its surrendered pets, according to Burroughs. The lack of healthy socialization — exposing a dog to new experiences to boost its confidence and make it comfortable in different situations — is a leading cause of behavioral problems in dogs. When the COVID-19 lockdowns forced pet owners inside, the lack of socializing with people and other dogs intensified these issues.

“People are surrendering dogs that haven't been left alone once in their life, and it is really hard to adopt an animal that can't be left alone,” Burroughs said.

Burroughs has to make tough decisions regarding surrendered animals. The shelter has been forced to turn away some animals. According to Burroughs, the shelter cannot always accept a surrendered animal when it shows aggression toward strangers or is overactive.

“When an animal, especially a dog, is harming humans or is a threat to humans, that's when we would recommend behavioral euthanasia through a veterinarian,” Burroughs said.

Burroughs speaks from personal experience; she put down her own dog because of its aggressive behavior. She explained that locking an animal in a kennel out of fear of an accident is not a way for it to live. “We want to do what's best for the animal,” Burroughs said, “and that might mean giving them peace and dignity to go without a tragic situation.”

Owners of pandemic dogs have turned to dog trainers to remedy behavior issues and avoid surrendering or euthanizing. Garner said they always intended to find a trainer when they adopted Crew, but the task became more urgent when Crew proved to be overexcited. Even as Crew became a challenge, Garner said they have never considered surrendering their puppy.

“We were so committed from the beginning,” Garner said. “That's like a worst case scenario, but I can't even fathom not having her, or having to surrender her.”

Garner searched for the perfect trainer to meet Crew's needs before finding the Eugene-based Well Mannered Dog. The facility's founder, Debbie Schaefer, has been working with dog owners to remedy their issues caused by poor pandemic socialization. According to Schaefer, a dog with unhealthy socialization is more likely to react with aggression, barking or by chewing furniture and other household items when they are afraid.

“Socialization is about the dog's choice to interact with the things that are in the environment,” Schaefer said. “People got the idea that they need to expose their dog but forgot that it needs to be a positive experience and a confidence booster.”

Garner contacted Schaefer last December to arrange training for Crew. After a few weeks of taking Schaefer's “Polite Greetings” class, Crew learned the training games and was able to greet new people politely.

“I feel like I've learned how to communicate with my dog,” Garner said, “which feels powerful and comforting when we're in public spaces.”

At a weekly beginners' class last February, Schaefer stood in the middle of the room with a microphone clipped to her mask so her clients could hear her. Owners

“People got the idea that they need to expose their dog but forgot that **it needs to be a positive experience and a confidence booster.**”

led their canine students to their assigned spaces of the room before Schaefer began her lesson. Schaefer's training style consists of games that owners play with their dogs to help build the dog's confidence and develop cues to listen to.

While some owners start training before their dog's behavior worsens, others turn to trainers as a last hope.

Schaefer's training assistant, Courtney Reinen, owns a 2-year-old black pitbull mix named Bert, who is highly reactive to other dogs. Before Reinen became Schaefer's assistant, she was worried about the fate of her dog, whom she adopted at the start of the pandemic.

While on a walk one day, Bert lunged at another dog. Reinen tried to pull him back, but Bert bit the other dog and Reinen in the process. The incident resulted in Reinen paying a pricey vet bill and a medical office reporting the bite.

“I was worried that someone was going to tell me to put him down,” said Reinen, who also feared she would be sued by the



Overcoming a difficult past, Bert and his owner, Courtney Reinen, found help through behavior classes that allow him to better interact with other dogs.

other dog's owner. Reinen also considered surrendering Bert if his behavior didn't improve.

As a last resort, Reinen reached out to Schaefer. Because Bert can't be around dogs, Reinen trains with Schaefer via Zoom. Since training began in March 2021, Bert is in a much better place. Reinen doesn't have to worry that he'll chew up her shoes or furniture or start a fight with her cat while she's gone. She still avoids taking him to places with other dogs to avoid potential conflict, but is hopeful Bert will be able to coexist with his canine counterparts.

“I am primarily a people trainer, not a dog trainer,” said Schaefer. “And part of that is helping them understand how the things they are doing now are going to help them meet their future goals for their dog's long term.”

On a sunny spring afternoon, Bert trotted beside Reinen as she

led him by the leash to her front yard. She rewarded him with treats after asking him to sit, jump and shake her hand. He lunged into the air when she tossed a treat for him to catch. As a couple walked past, Bert stayed focused on his owner. His ears perked up when he heard the neighbor's dogs barking across the street and his eyes searched for the sound, but he stayed by Reinen's side.

This wasn't possible before training with Schaefer. In the past she would have had to hold Bert back to keep him from running after his distractions. Now, Reinen can peacefully sit in the grass of her front yard with Bert beside her and not worry.

“Recognizing the small wins and who he is now versus how unmanageable he was before is important,” Reinen said. “But we still have a long road ahead of us.”

To learn more about dog training, go to [www.fluxoregon.com](http://www.fluxoregon.com).

# in pursuit of happiness

written and photographed by ISAAC WASSERMAN

We all yearn for happiness. But as the turmoil of the last few years has shown, it is never guaranteed. Some Oregonians discover it by overcoming their most difficult struggles. Others find it in their dusty workshops, where they feel most centered. And others find it right before their eyes, though they may need binoculars to see it clearly. The following pages illustrate the complex journey to find one simple emotion.

Bright pink squid tentacles spill over artist Tim Boyden's cheeks in his South Eugene garage studio. On this April day, Boyden is playful and cheerful. It's a good day. Not all of them are. Boyden has manic depression. "I either feel way up here where I could do anything or way down there where I've never done anything right," says Boyden, 64. But when Boyden is working on his art, he is happy. His creations, like large wooden forks and driftwood sculptures, lie about his garage. Here, he feels like he is nearing a perfect emotional middle ground. "Happiness is a choice every moment of your life," Boyden says. "Even in a hard time you can choose to be the calm in the storm."

To learn more about Tim Boyden, go to [www.fluxoregon.com](http://www.fluxoregon.com).



*On Skinner Butte, looking over the city of Eugene, Lily Zeller (left) and her friend Kiana escape everyday life. In Zeller's 2000 Chrysler Concorde named Coochie Couture, the young adults listen to music and make friendship bracelets. For many, the isolation, loss and constant fear felt during the pandemic made happiness hard to come by. The friends say their daily trip to the top of the butte helps them cope with the anxiety and other stressors in their lives. As Zeller puts it, "You just forget about everyday things."*

*Norma Grier, far right, gazes toward the sky in search of birds to add to the day's list of finds. The COVID-19 pandemic kept Grier, 72, and her friends from visiting Delta Ponds, a popular wetlands in North Eugene known for its varied bird species. With COVID-19 cases subsiding and binoculars in hand, Grier is rediscovering the pleasures in her life. "Happiness isn't withdrawn," Grier says. "It's me being present and observant and connected with what's happening around me."*



*Surrounded by plates of food, wool blankets and a small space heater, a group of women come together in Brenda Kame'enui's garden house in South Eugene to celebrate a birthday. COVID-19 temporarily put a stop to the women's celebrations, but as things start to improve, they're gathering again. The group spends the evening sharing one another's company and reading poetry. "I take every opportunity I can, because tomorrow it could all be over to be with friends," Kame'enui says.*

IT'S KIND OF HELPED ME  
*blossom*  
INTO ACTUALLY WHO I WAS MEANT TO BE.

*After 16 years of organizing the popular Eugene drag show Damsels, Divas and Dames, drag queen Daphne Storm organized the last production of the event on April 30. The show raises money for the HIV Alliance and brings the LGBTQ community together. Through the years, Eugene audiences embraced the event — and Storm embraced herself. “It’s kind of helped me blossom into actually who I was meant to be, rather than this quiet shy person in school,” says Storm, 62. During her finale at the Hult Center, Storm waved goodbye to a sold-out crowd as laughter and applause erupted. Storm says, “It was a bittersweet moment.”*





**LEFT:** "Creak-creak-creak." In a big backyard, trampoline springs sing between shouts of glee that radiate into the neighborhood streets. Budding 6-year-old gymnast Catie Shorack flips through the air, a smile spreading from cheek to cheek. The trampoline, a new addition to Shorack's life, has become a popular local attraction. During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Shorack and her friends could not spend time together. The sound of laughter was in short supply. Now, with summer vacation approaching, Shorack's thoughts about jumping on the trampoline with friends are plain and simple. "I love it," she says.

**BOTTOM:** When Andre Royal Sr. began to struggle with achalasia and narcolepsy, the life he had built for himself quickly slipped away. He had to quit his job, his relationships with family and friends weakened and he struggled to navigate life with the disorders. "Everyone was grieving the loss of the man I could have been," Royal says. "I was dealing with that, too." Out of necessity, Royal began to write. With the help of his son, he wrote and illustrated two color-in picture books. The characters on the page tell the stories of his life, and through their empowering presence, he is rebuilding his life, moving forward and finding happiness.



any

How one woman learned to love herself and help others do the same through Tik Tok.

can go viral

written by **MAILE MORRISH**  
photographed by **WILLIAM TAKAHASHI**

When Brittani Lancaster arrives back at her Portland apartment after work on a recent Friday, she sets her things down, greets her 10-week-old puppy and clocks into her part-time passion.

She opens up her notebook, scrolls through TikTok and starts brainstorming ideas for videos to upload to her profile that night.

A handful of songs are currently trending on the video-sharing platform; Lancaster is drawn to a 20-second, upbeat song that users have recorded themselves dancing to, often in sports bras or swimsuits.

Lancaster loves the dance but hesitates to record her own version of it. Her body doesn't look like the other girls' dancing to the song. She can't help but compare her stretch marks and hip dips to their thin figures and clear skin. Then she realizes: *That's why I do what I do.*

She rummages through her closet, pulling out a pair of salmon-colored spandex and her favorite blue sports bra. She positions her phone on a tripod so that her whole body, stretch marks and all, are visible on the screen.

When Lancaster starts to dance, her face lights up — even in the second, third and fourth takes. Her smile is radiant, and her energy is contagious.

As her video uploads, Lancaster says, "I feel like that one was good!"

She excitedly rewatches the video and starts rattling off things she could caption it with. She lands on "Hip dips, cellulite, stretch marks, bacne, & jiggle skin can't stop me from KILLING this dance!!"

"I just want to show a more realistic view of this trend," Lancaster says as her video uploads. After all, that's what her platform is all about: helping others feel confident in their own imperfect skin.

Lancaster, 24, is a body-positivity activist who encourages the acceptance of every body type, shape and size. She has amassed one million followers on the video-sharing platforms TikTok and Instagram since graduating from the University of Oregon in 2020. Her videos promote self-love and positivity and are infused with her colorful personality.

Her profile is filled with all kinds of videos. Some consist of her dancing, some feature trending sounds with a body-positive spin, and others just show Lancaster speaking directly to her followers about her, or their,

experiences. Some of her most popular posts, however, are her signature “What I eat in a day” videos where she brings her followers with her throughout the day, showing them what she eats.

No matter the format, Lancaster strives to ensure that every video will achieve the same goal: Make at least one person struggling with eating disorders and/or body image feel less alone. Why? Because she knows how it feels.

*As a young girl growing up in Florida*, Lancaster says she was always the bigger girl in her class. She spent most of her childhood unaware that she was larger than most of her peers, but external messages from people and society eventually started chipping away at her youthful innocence.

The first time she realized that her body was different than her peers’ was when her friend’s grandfather warned her not to go on a swing because he didn’t think the swing could “hold that much weight.” Lancaster was 12.

Moments like this followed Lancaster after she and her family moved to Portland during her early adolescent years. She began to convince herself that she needed to be in a smaller body. “I thought, ‘I’ll like myself more, I’ll be prettier, guys will like me more if I’m smaller,’” Lancaster says. “You know, high school thoughts that a lot of girls have whether they’re willing to admit it or not.”

## “My life is just a BLIP IN THIS UNIVERSE...”

After a discouraging water polo match during her sophomore year, Lancaster went out to eat with her family. She had been limiting the amount of food she was eating for a couple of days prior to that night because she thought eating less would make her thinner. But when she got to dinner, the sadness she felt due to the match and the starvation she felt from not eating caused her to splurge. On her way back home, she broke down crying because “athletes are supposed to be thin,” which is what she told her mom.

When she got home that night, she made a pact with herself “to do whatever I have to do to be smaller” and became fixated on losing weight. She avoided eating to achieve that new goal. She lost strands of her hair, she lost her period for almost a year, and she frequented the emergency room on multiple occasions. At 16, she was diagnosed with her first eating disorder: anorexia.

“She would miss out on so much family time,” says her stepmother, Deb. “We would go to dinner and she would

stay home because she wouldn’t order anything and she didn’t want us to see that.”

When doctors told Lancaster two years later that the state of her health put her at risk of becoming infertile later in life, she completely changed her lifestyle. She began eating again, but her already unstable relationship with food and her body led her to develop a new eating disorder: binge eating.

She gained weight at an unhealthy rate, leaving her frustrated, confused and angry with herself for losing control. “I was feeling really down about myself,” Lancaster says. “I didn’t have a healthy relationship with my body or with food and I felt really hopeless. I would think, ‘Is it ever going to get better? Am I ever going to like what I see in the mirror?’”

When her family took a trip to Europe in 2016, Lancaster’s mind was occupied with negative thoughts about herself and food. She spent the trip covering up at the beach, avoiding mirrors, and saying, “I’m just not hungry” at mealtime.

On the last day, her family visited a beach town in Croatia.

With her brother swimming in the Adriatic Sea and her parents making dinner reservations, Lancaster sat alone on a smooth, slanted rock. Though her mind had been occupied by anxiety and fear all week, her thoughts were still. The moment was serene, an unfamiliar feeling for her. As her eyes scanned the seemingly endless water, the realization hit.

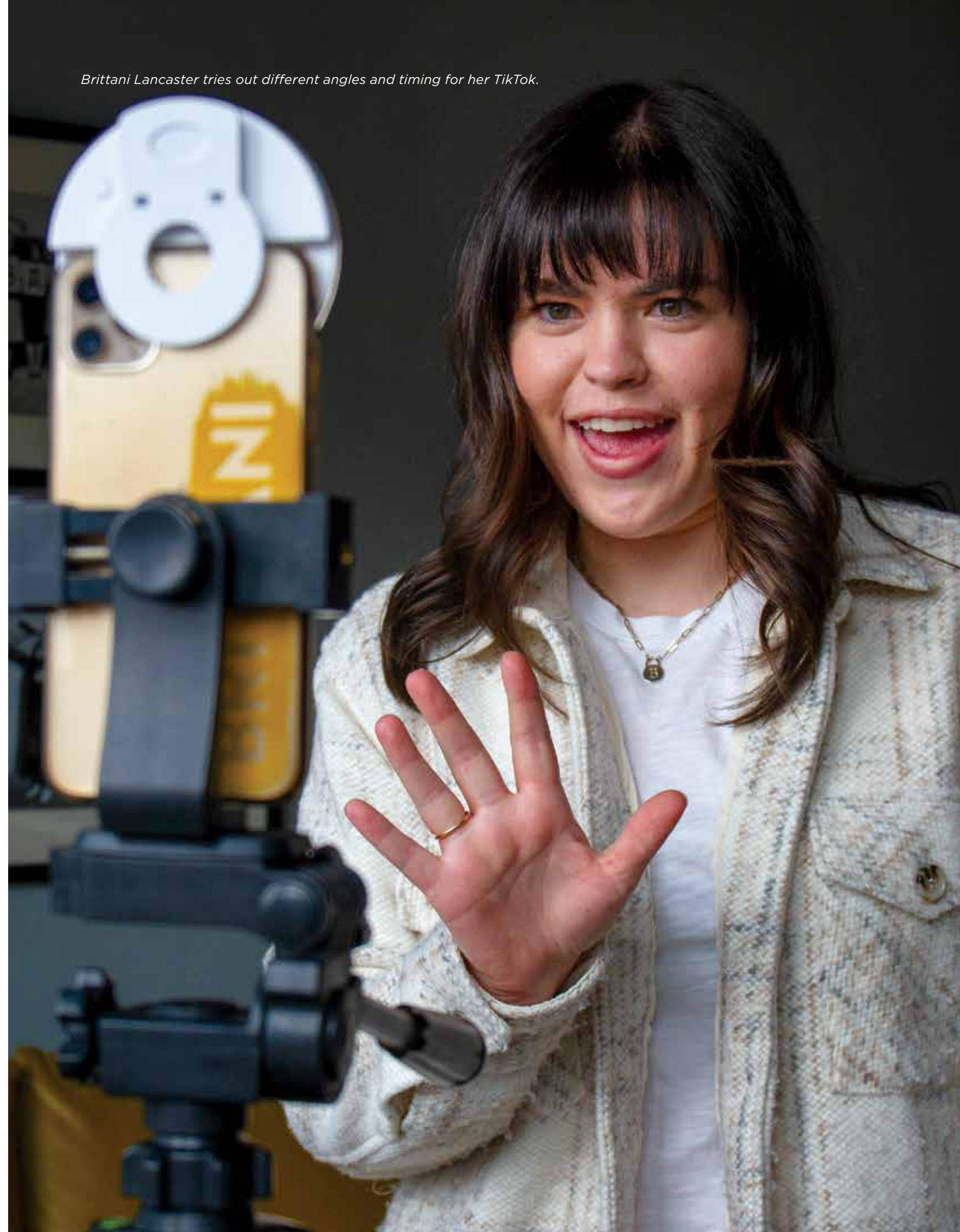
“My life is just a blip in this universe,” she recalls thinking, letting the beauty of the moment finally sink in. “I don’t want to spend it hating myself, hating my body and never feeling comfortable with food.”

That night, Lancaster told her parents that she wanted to commit to getting help for her eating disorders. After she got off the plane in Portland the next day, she sought out eating disorder therapists for the first time. She began recovery with professional guidance and a fresh new mindset. “Life is so short and tomorrow is never promised. Even though that sounds cheesy it’s true,” she says. “I don’t know if I would have started recovery if I hadn’t had that big ‘aha’ realization.”

*She entered the University of Oregon* two weeks later, still in the early stages of her recovery journey. While starting her freshman year was scary, she found comfort in opening up to new friends she met at school. Her best friend, Ally Rooney, whom she met when pledging a sorority, says Lancaster always found joy in making connections. “She’s an introvert,” says Rooney, who graduated from the UO with Lancaster in 2020, “but she gets a kind of high when she meets someone and has that connection and can make an impact.”

Rooney remembers watching Lancaster realize that she could help more than just her close circle of friends. Their senior year, Lancaster opened up to her sorority on the last night of recruitment. She read a personal story about her

Brittani Lancaster tries out different angles and timing for her TikTok.



experiences to a room lit up with twinkly lights and full of young women wearing gorgeous dresses.

When she finished speaking, tears rolled down the faces of the women in the room.

"I think she realized, 'If I vocalize this and really got it out there, I could help more than just my friends,'" Rooney says. "She had this perspective change that she could make a difference by becoming vulnerable to not just the people around her, but everyone."

When TikTok came onto the social media scene in late 2019, Lancaster didn't consider it a tool that she would use to help thousands. In fact, she didn't post a body-positivity-related video until months after she downloaded the app. But on February 9, 2020, Lancaster posted a 15-second video of herself dancing in a tight, pink satin dress with the caption,

**...I DON'T WANT TO SPEND IT**  
*bating myself, bating my body and never feeling comfortable with food."*



Zara, Brittani Lancaster's dog, has a following of her own on social media. "Whenever I post a video without Zara," Lancaster says, "I get a lot of comments asking 'Where's Zara?'"

"Today marks 3.5 years of recovery from my eating disorder! You are beautiful."

That was her first video to go viral, garnishing 107,200 likes and over 300 comments. Lancaster quickly realized that she could reach young girls around the world, not just in her home state, and began posting more and more eating disorder and body positivity-related videos. Since then, Lancaster has become one of the most popular body-positivity influencers on TikTok, with almost 1 million followers and over 75 million likes.

Lancaster says she hears from people "who tell me, 'You helped me get help for my eating disorder; I finally told my parents that I was struggling because of your videos. Your videos helped me eat.'" Lancaster knows how hard it can be for someone with an eating disorder to do something as seemingly simple as eating. That's why she says these messages are so meaningful: because she's been in their shoes.

"I had such negative confidence and always felt like I had to change myself when I had my eating disorder," Lancaster says. "So, to be able to help somebody not have those feelings is really beautiful."

One of those people is Julia Mastanduno, who knows how impactful Lancaster can be. Last November, Mastanduno returned to her New Jersey home from an eating disorder treatment center. As she sat in bed, scrolling through TikTok, she saw Lancaster's video pop up on her screen.

She watched Lancaster dance in salmon-colored spandex and a blue sports bra, and she read the caption "Hip dips, cellulite, stretch marks, bacne, & jiggly skin can't stop me from KILLING this dance!!"

"She brought me out of a dark place," Mastanduno, 21, says. "She wasn't letting things like cellulite and stretch marks hold her back from dancing and having fun. I really strive to be like that, to acknowledge that those things are there but not let them prevent me from doing anything I want to do."

As the video ended, Mastanduno opened up the comment section and typed, "Hi Brit! I love you! I hope you're having a great night. Thank you for making me feel less insecure."

On the other side of the country, Lancaster saw Mastanduno's message. She doesn't always have time to reply to everyone who comments on her posts. Her TikToks often generate hundreds of comments, but this time she did. "I love you too!" Lancaster typed. "You are wonderfully made!"

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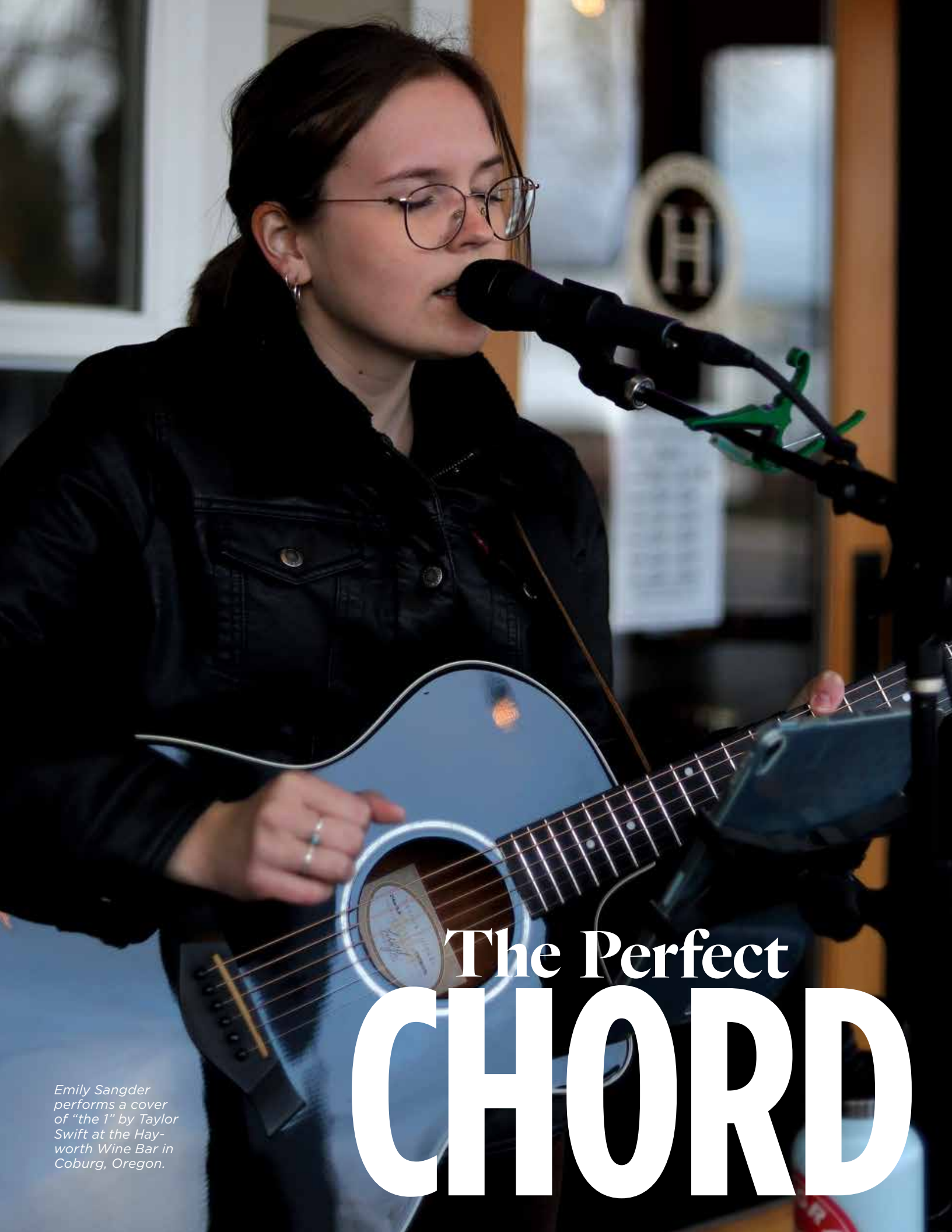


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Emily Sangder performs a cover of "the 1" by Taylor Swift at the Hayworth Wine Bar in Coburg, Oregon.

# The Perfect CHORD

You may not know your G major from your F minor, but at this Eugene music school, there's a place for you in the band.

written by **KAYLA KRUEGER** and **MALENA SAADEH** photographed by **HIMALI GLOR**

**P**icture a little girl standing on the old wooden stage of Whirled Pies, a pizza shop in Eugene, Oregon. It's an evening in 2010 and the opening beats of "Sweet Dreams" by Eurythmics start playing. The music, the people and the environment are pulsating, but Emily Sangder is too elated to even sing.

"I remember being like, this is the coolest thing ever," Sangder, who was 11 at the time, said. "I want to do this for a long time."

Today, Sangder is a confident musician who performs with round glasses perched atop her nose, a sweet disposition and calming aura. Her music is a melange of Phoebe Bridgers and Taylor Swift, with a dash of indie-folk. Sangder, 23, has outgrown pizzerias and is navigating her way through the music industry by performing at local coffee shops and wine bars, or wherever her soothing voice and acoustic guitar jams take her.

"I want to make people feel the way that I feel when I hear a piece of music that changes my life for the first time. When I hear a lyric that hits so hard that I literally start to cry," Sangder said. "That's the feeling that I crave to give to others through my songwriting."

It was through a program called GRRRLZ ROCK that first allowed Sangder — not to mention dozens of Eugene area women, young and older alike — to satisfy her own musical craving. GRRRLZ ROCK started in 2006 as a music festival that featured female artists and performers, giving women the spotlight to jam. While the groups could include men, it was mandatory that all performances featured women as well. Fueled by gender inequality in the music industry, the festival allowed women to channel their musical talents. From there, the festival sprouted into a year-round affair, thanks to Matrisha Armitage. Seeing the festival's potential to grow into something bigger, Armitage developed what is now a multi-faceted music and performing arts nonprofit organization for people of all ages, abilities, gender orientations and backgrounds to learn music.

The organization is called Music Education and Performing Arts Association (MEPAA), and according to Armitage, it is an amalgamation of love, community and rock 'n' roll. MEPAA, launched in 2015, hosts music lessons, group classes and events for people of all musical backgrounds to come together and learn in a supportive environment.

Whether MEPAA is hosting classes, putting on festivals or building Eugene's music community, it all comes back to Armitage.

"The world of being an adult and a gigging musician, especially a female musician, is not the most satisfying," said Armitage, 41, who started performing in high school. Her rock 'n' roll dreams didn't hit the main stage, but her journey with MEPAA and as a music teacher allows her musical spirit to flourish.

"You have to throw your weight around a lot and always be in that place of 'I'm the boss,'" she said. As she looks around her office in the MEPAA headquarters, she takes a deep breath and smiles. "I'm the boss for these kids and for these other women. Standing behind them and their craft is so much different from having yourself up there. Different in the best way possible."

When you walk into the MEPAA's new headquarters, it's likely you'll be greeted by Phoenix Burns, the MEPAA administrative assistant. Burns played bass in a band formed through GRRRLZ ROCK. Since departing the band, Burns has channeled their passion for music into working for MEPAA.

Burns wants to give back to the same MEPAA community that offered them a safe space, especially while they navigated coming out as nonbinary. "I was always around music," Burns said. "Family gatherings were like...everyone plays music."

Whenever Burns went to rehearsal, they always felt comforted by the MEPAA crew. "I never felt like my coming out process was something I would be judged for," Burns said. "GRRRLZ ROCK ironically was the place where that didn't matter to me."

MEPAA offers a welcoming environment for all ages to learn music and promotes that it is never too late to pick up an instrument. Ramune Nagisetty knows that all too well. In 2009, Nagisetty hosted a foreign exchange student at her family home in Portland. After watching the student play the Pink Floyd and Van Halen songs of her youth in her living room, Nagisetty felt inspired to try music for herself. Nagisetty, 40 at the time, picked up the guitar for the first time with Armitage and has been playing ever since. Her day job is as a senior principal engineer at Intel, and she spends her evenings shredding on stage with her bands Avalanche Lily and Rocket 3. Nagisetty also does solo work and runs her own music blog.

Getting the ball rolling as a gigging musician in Portland is no easy task, and an even harder one when you're over 40, Nagisetty said. After meeting Armitage and getting integrated with the GRRRLZ ROCK program, Nagisetty said her new hobby quickly became a defining factor in her adult life.

"My very first gig ever was through Matrisha. She created a safe space for me and so many other women to go stick our necks out and see how uncomfortable we could be while still feeling good about playing," Nagisetty said.

Working as an engineer and running a rock band sound like two different ends of the spectrum, but Nagisetty said that being a woman in both fields takes a certain type of ambition and drive.

"I'm glad that I have all these different dimensions to my life," she said. "I feel like women in engineering are very creative people in a different way than their male counterparts. They have to be rebellious and push boundaries because they are a minority, they have to want to challenge the status quo. It's the same thing with music. If you want to be up there you have to want to be up there."

Some of the girls and women who have started with GRRRLZ ROCK and MEPAA share a desire to perform. Just consider what Sangder and Nagisetty continue to do. But the program does more than create rockers. It creates memories. And for Armitage, a good memory is like a hit tune — very satisfying.

"When I started teaching other people and working with youth it was just so satisfying," Armitage said. "There's nothing like seeing someone shine on stage or in rehearsals and knowing that you had a part in that journey." ♦

# SUCCESS

ON THE BASIS OF



In the 50 years since the passage of Title IX, female athletes at the University of Oregon have made great strides. They also know the game is not over.

written by **SHANNON GOLDEN**  
photographed by **SEREI HENDRIE** and **ISAAC WASSERMAN**

In 1973, during her first year at the University of Oregon, Peg Rees says that the athletes on the nascent women's volleyball, basketball and softball teams shared one set of uniforms. Rees, who played on all three teams, remembers that the uniforms were simply passed on to whichever team was in season.

Not until 1976, Rees' junior year, did each team receive its own set. It had been four years since Title IX went into effect, and the university had begun addressing funding gaps between the men's and women's programs. "That was huge," says Rees, 67. "But we still had to do our own laundry and wash them," she adds, chuckling.

Gloria Mutiri, a junior on this year's UO women's volleyball team, has five sets of uniforms in varying combinations of green, yellow, white and black. After games last fall, Mutiri, 21, and her teammates simply left their uniforms in the locker room to be washed by team managers.

This transformation in Oregon's women's athletics didn't happen overnight. It took years

for the UO — and the country — to recognize what female student-athletes could achieve and build programs geared toward their success. This shift began in Congress in the early 1970s with the passage of Title IX.

June 23 will mark 50 years since Title IX was enacted. This clause of the Federal Education Amendments prohibited sex-based discrimination in any activity that receives federal financial assistance. In the half-century since Title IX went into effect, administrators and female athletes at the UO have worked to transform Oregon athletics from a threadbare program into one of national and global prominence.

In the following pages, Rees and Mutiri — along with three other pioneering athletes — reflect on their time at the UO. From the frustrating inequities to victories big and small, they tell their sides of the story. Although these five women were never teammates, they all shared a drive to succeed that overshadowed the many challenges in a decades-long fight for collegiate sports equity.

# 1970

ENACTED

When Peg Rees was a kid growing up in Compton, California, after-school sports didn't mean orange slices, carpools and agility drills around plastic cones. They meant playing "kick the can" and flag football on asphalt and front lawns. Rees says she was often turned away from opportunities to play on local sports teams because she was a girl.

In 1973, when Rees started college, she sought out every opportunity to compete. She joined volleyball, then basketball and softball. The programs were still only considered a part of the physical education department and received meager funding from the university.

"We were arguably the best women's department in the United States," Rees says. "But we had bare-bones facilities, coaching staff, budgets and resources."

The first practice space for Oregon women's softball was far from sufficient. The inaugural team practiced on the field behind the Main Library (now called Knight Library) — a sloped pitch with no infield or foul lines. A

flimsy wire mesh backstop prevented foul balls from striking unsuspecting students walking to class.

"It was a place to throw and catch," says Rees, who was a pitcher and catcher for the team. "But it wasn't a place for really honing your skills, which is what you should be doing every day."

By 1977 and the end of Rees' college career, the Women's Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics at Oregon had a budget that was one-thirteenth the size of the men's athletic department budget. Still, small victories punctuated her time. In 1976, 10 of 11 women's teams qualified for postseason play.

"Every once in a while, something would change to our benefit. It was encouraging. It was hopeful," says Rees, who made it to three national Women's College World Series with her teammates. "Even though I didn't personally experience a lot of the positive change, I could see it coming. There were glimpses of it along the way."



**LEFT:** Peg Rees (right), a member of the UO volleyball, basketball and softball teams in the early 1970s.

**ABOVE:** Rees now serves as a game caller and public-address announcer for the UO softball program.

In 1974, the University's Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics finally approved scholarships for female athletes based on individual need. With support from former coaches, basketball forward Bev Smith became one of the first female players at the UO to receive an athletic scholarship.

During Smith's freshman year, 1978, the UO women's basketball team celebrated its sixth official season with a different kind of win — university athletics gave the team full access to McArthur Court. The team was finally allowed to practice and play in the building the men's teams had been using since 1927.

According to Smith, 61, there were still "huge discrepancies" between the men's and women's teams. The men received higher quality gear, including shoes and practice uniforms. Smith still commiserates with former teammates about the physical education department-issued cotton practice shorts that chafed their thighs. "Chub rub," she calls it.

For Smith and her teammates, it didn't matter what they wore to practice. It mattered that they had a space on campus to showcase their talent. "We were just trying to take advantage of the opportunity and the chance we were given to play in Mac Court or to have our own marquee," says Smith, who led the team to 40 wins on the Ducks' storied home court.

In 1979, Smith and her teammates played against the South Korean women's national team, which was preparing for the 1979 World Championship. Over 5,000 people paid \$1 to watch the game. "The student section was awesome. They were down on the floor across from us on these old wooden bleachers that were pulled out," Smith says. "When they would get stomping and yelling, it would just shake the whole court." Oregon won the game by one point.

"Once we sort of established ourselves as a competitive team at the University of Oregon, I never looked back," says Smith, who received her degree in 1988 and earned two All-American honors. In 1992 she was inducted into the UO's Hall of Fame. "I just completely enjoyed the thrill of competing in collegiate athletics at that scale."



Bev Smith (#24) puts up a shot against Louisiana State in 1981. The Ducks won by four points.

# TEN YEARS

# 1980

*Title IX slowly increased scholarship opportunities and recruitment efforts for female student-athletes at universities across the country.* For some lower-income students and students of color, their athletic abilities began to open doors for them in higher education.

After a record-setting high school career playing volleyball and basketball and running track, LaReina Starr received offers from several colleges. “I always wanted an athletic scholarship. I knew that was my avenue to getting to college,” says Starr, 49, who grew up in Corvallis, Oregon.

In 1991, Starr accepted a full scholarship to run for the UO track and field team and play on the volleyball team, becoming the first Black woman to play Division I volleyball for Oregon.

Having grown up in Oregon, Starr felt prepared for the predominantly white environment at the UO. She attributes her success to other pioneering women of color around the country, such as volleyball legends Flo Hyman, Tara Cross and Trisonya Thompson.

Starr says it wasn’t always easy being the only Black woman playing a predominantly white sport, yet she worked to find her space on campus. “My goals when I got to the UO were to be a part of something great and to leave it better than I found it,” Starr says. “To me, being one of those African-American females on that campus, I was going to let my light shine.”

By her senior year, Starr was the Pac-10 champion in the 100 meters and a member of UO’s 1600-meter All-American relay team. Rees was an assistant volleyball coach during Starr’s time at the UO, and the two formed a longstanding bond.

“She just made me believe I could do anything,” Starr says of Rees. “She stuck with me.”

It was in moments of community-building when Starr found her stride at the UO. She and some of her teammates often confided in each other about being women of color on campus. They worked together to fundraise for track meets and buy new uniforms.

“I always felt like the women’s teams outshined the men by just doing their work,” says Starr, who now coaches track and field and girls’ JV basketball at Portland’s Central Catholic High School. “We were getting the second best, but it never stopped us from dominating or doing what we did.”



*LaReina Starr returns to McArthur Court at the University of Oregon. Starr was a two-sport athlete at the UO, competing in volleyball and track and field.*

### BY 1990

Over 90 percent of the population in Oregon was white. The UO Black Student Union spearheaded initiatives on campus that helped increase enrollment rates for Black students. Still, rising tuition excluded many lower-income students and students of color from attending Oregon universities.

# 1990

TWENTY YEARS

# 2000

THIRTY YEARS

*Louisa Dorsch lugged her heavy lacrosse bag with her each day to class.* As a member of the UO club lacrosse team, she didn’t have a place on campus to store her goaltending equipment, so she carried her gear around until the team’s evening practices. “You’re basically a giant billboard of what sport you play when you have to do that,” she says jokingly.

Dorsch played on the club team throughout her time at the UO. In addition to her position as goaltender, she managed the team and ran practices. During Dorsch’s fourth year, the athletic department had taken note of the club team’s growing success. In 2004 it hired coaches for the first Division I women’s lacrosse team at the UO.

The new coaches attended a few of the club practices. Impressed by the players, they offered four students spots on the team. Dorsch made the cut. She decided to stay in school as a fifth-year senior and signed on as a member of the inaugural team — with a locker in the student-athletic center to store her equipment.

Shifting from club play to Division I competition was more intense than she expected. Dorsch said she and her teammates learned to embody the “intense work ethic” of student-athletes — excelling on and off the field. When she wasn’t going to class, Dorsch spent hours studying film from past games and practicing stick skills.

“To get to this top level of playing and even compete against these other amazing teams, it was really special,” she says.

Dorsch, who now teaches at Churchill High School in Eugene, spent only one year in Division I, but representing the UO on the field brought her a new sense of community. Despite being the newest team on campus, women’s lacrosse never felt second to the well-established programs, Dorsch says.

“That’s kind of the beauty of going to a big university,” she says. “Everyone can tether themselves to something and feel seen and valued.”



*Former lacrosse player Louisa Dorsch works with the next generation of female athletes by coaching young girls in Eugene.*

# TODAY

FIFTY YEARS



## JUNE 2022

Division I athletes can now monetize their name, image and likeness through brand deals. Last year, Gloria Mutiri received a \$10,000 sponsorship from the insurance company Clearclover. As part of the company's Inspired Underdog program, she and other student-athletes created sponsored content for the company on their personal social media accounts.

*For Gloria Mutiri, 21, the fight for sports equity at the UO looks different than her predecessors'. Mutiri and her volleyball teammates now play in million-dollar arenas and have access to state-of-the-art training resources. But their accomplishments on the court sometimes go unnoticed.*

"Women's sports are the fastest growing sports in the U.S. right now," says Mutiri, a right-side hitter for the Ducks the past two seasons. "But if I turn on the TV, I would probably find a men's basketball game."

Female athletes have turned to social media to promote themselves as student-athletes. "I think that's helped put some of the power back in the athletes' hands," Mutiri says.

Women of color are still underrepresented in the fight for collegiate sports equity, especially in coaching positions, Mutiri contends. "I've never had a Black coach in my life, or anyone who even looks like me be involved in my volleyball journey," says Mutiri, who received the UO Black Student Union Female Athlete Award in March.

During club tournaments in high school, Mutiri's teammates often wore matching hairstyles, complete with colored ribbons. For Mutiri, this camaraderie was often isolating. "I'm the only one with kinky 4C hair. I'm the one with braids in," she says. "Those kinds of experiences can make you feel alienated even within a team."

Last fall, Mutiri had green braids for the start of the Pac-12 season to show school spirit. She stepped out on the court for the first few games and noticed other Black players wearing braids that coordinated with their school colors. To her, it was empowering to see more Black female athletes in the Pac-12 who took pride in their teams.

"I'll definitely never take this experience for granted," says Mutiri, who plans to play volleyball professionally and pursue sports-casting after college. "Playing with strong women who know what they want and stick up for themselves and demand more from the UO and from the National Collegiate Athletic Association is really cool." ♦

*Oregon's Gloria Mutiri serves during a volleyball match against Cal at Matthew Knight Arena last fall.*

# *Listen to this*

My brother taught me inclusivity, even before I realized it.

written by JANE GLAZER

At the start of the pandemic, I moved back home to Omaha, Nebraska, and returned to the job I had in high school at Smoothie King. As I was working in the back room peeling bananas one day, my coworker peeked her head around the corner to tell me to come and take an order. I readjusted my mask and quickly threw my slimy gloves in the trash before realizing it was my brother waiting to order.

"Hi," I said. "Do you know what you want?"

"What?" Danny responded, scrunching his eyebrows and throwing his hands out in front of him, a little bit frustrated.

I pulled down my mask to uncover my lips, and asked again.

Danny is deaf.

My brother has lived his life in a hearing world. Until a couple of years ago, Danny, 25, had gotten used to navigating everyday interactions primarily through reading lips. COVID-19 changed everything.

It's been two difficult years for everyone and certainly more difficult for some than others. But, we've all had to deal with the immense challenges COVID-19 brought, and they have made us all a little insular. We've complained, whether it's about classes on Zoom, lame 21<sup>st</sup> birthday celebrations or having to reschedule trips. Communicating while wearing a mask or six feet apart or on Zoom was inconvenient for everyone.

For Danny, it was more than just inconvenient; it was limiting and exclusive.

These COVID-19 years, for all their inconveniences, have taught me more about being aware of peoples' differences. I'm nearing graduation, and I've learned plenty in the classroom — from understanding standard deviation to editing a podcast. But I've also learned about the real world.

The pandemic exposed discrepancies in our world — our flawed healthcare system, where access to medical resources correlates with wealth. And our flawed interpretation of the Constitution, where women's rights are threatened. The list goes on.

Those are big societal issues that need reckoning, but inequities can exist closer to home. I've always known Danny as just my big brother. Talking to him never seemed like anything more than maybe having to repeat myself one or two times. When mask-wearing and social distancing became norms, I realized just how complicated it is being deaf in a hearing world. The COVID-19 regulations constantly reminded Danny that most people can understand words through a mask or order dinner through a drive-thru. Most people don't need to ask the girl at Smoothie King to take her mask off before they can understand what she's saying.

Danny's restrictions to COVID-19 regulations reminded me that we can become ignorant to other people's differences. It takes active awareness to be inclusive and it is easy to adapt to other's needs.

The lessons I've learned from understanding how Danny navigates life in a pandemic go further than just witnessing what it's like to be deaf. It's taught me that the world needs to be all in this together, and it's up to us to look out for one another. That's how we move forward. ♦



Danny and Jane Glazer circa 2005.



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*“The river is my playground. It’s our church. It’s where I get my food. It’s a school. It’s an extremely important part of my personal life. I don’t have kids, but it is the one thing that I can share with my nieces and nephews.”*

*— Jamie Holt from “Stewards of the River”*