

FLUX

ROOTED IN RESILIENCE

Oregonians rebuild from historic fires that devastated their communities



ON THE COVER: In the months that have passed since the Holiday Farm Fire wreaked havoc on their land in Vida, Oregon, **Kate McMichael** (left) and **Theresa Hausser** have processed both anger and grief. The couple stops to embrace the hope that they can continue to move forward. Read more on page 24. Image captured by Grace Hefley.

Flux is produced annually by the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication. Special thanks to the SOJC and to the Flux founders, Professor Tom Wheeler and Professor Bill Ryan. Thanks to QSL Print Communications for its printing services. We hope you enjoy this edition.

**CHANGE THE WORLD BY
TELLING STORIES THAT
INFORM, INSPIRE,
AND MAKE AN
IMPACT.**



JOURNALISM.UOREGON.EDU

Great Storytelling Starts Here

UNDERGRADUATE
PROGRAMS IN:

- Advertising
- Journalism
- Media studies
- Public relations

GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN:

- Advertising and brand responsibility
- Communication and media studies (PhD)
- Journalism
- Multimedia journalism
- Strategic communication

12

BUILD YOUR IDEAL
DAY IN EUGENE

18

ONE STUDENT'S JOURNEY
TOWARD SELF-ACCEPTANCE

24

HOW TWO WOMEN FOUND
BEAUTY IN DESTRUCTION

38

THESE ENTREPRENEURS
ARE IN WITH THE OLD

30

DID PHOENIX HAVE
TO BURN?

52

THE THIRD PILLAR
OF PUBLIC SAFETY

43

FORCES OF
NATURE

60

ADVOCACY THROUGH
JOURNALISM

70

FOUR FARMS THAT ARE
LENDING A HELPING HOME

78

THREE WAYS TO
BECOME YOUR BEST SELF

82

A CELEBRATION OF LIFE
AND CLOSURE

94

THREE CHANGEMAKERS,
ONE MISSION

I think we can all agree that we've grown to hate the word *uncertainty*. It's *uncertain* when we'll be back on campus. It's *uncertain* the next time we'll be able to shake hands with a stranger. It's *uncertain* when we'll return to normalcy. Of the countless pandemic platitudes we've heard all too much of over the past 18 months, the word "uncertainty" has usually been followed by bad news. And if not bad news, more prolonged uncertainty.

Yet, as this "age of uncertainty" — hopefully — begins to come to a close, I think we can change our interpretation of the word. To me, from here on out, uncertainty is not a negative. The world still turns despite the state it's in, as people carry on in any way they can. Whether it be juggling fire, throwing a concert in the living room, playing Ultimate Frisbee or foraging for mushrooms, people continue to live their lives and pursue their passions — and tell their stories.

If anything, these times have proven how resilient we truly are.

For this year's issue of Flux, we wanted to focus on stories of resilience in the face of uncertainty. And as people found ways to fight back against the cards they were dealt, it just so happened that stories like these were of the majority.

The following pages capture the essence of the people I worked with on this magazine. Creative collaboration in a world where everyone is so physically distant could have proved to be an impossible task; Zoom fatigue could

have easily gotten the best of us. However, my amazing teammates thrived in the challenge, and worked even harder to achieve the seemingly impossible. In turn, we created a more eclectic and diverse magazine than we ever could have in person.

Grace, Isaac and Anna talked to *at least* 40 Oregonians affected by last fall's fires. Malena scored a Zoom interview with Portugal. The Man. Julia blew us away with her photojournalism debut. This issue covers everything from how to raise a baby goat to how to be a more responsible activist. And our design team brought these stories to life.

As I sit with my fellow editors, advisors and a few eager staff members — masked up and a good distance apart — making last-minute copy edits, I am reminded of the resilience it takes to produce something that you're proud of, despite all odds, and despite not knowing if the world is watching.

I for one rarely know what my next move is — even when not in the midst of a global pandemic. But this time has caused me to revel in the not knowing, and to not take for granted the everyday stories that life brings about.

It is my hope that these stories inspire you. Because no matter what you have endured during this pandemic, we should all be proud of ourselves. Making it through something like this is an act of resilience. And I know that whatever comes next, we can handle it.



Shannon Daehnke
Editor-in-Chief

11

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-Chief
Shannon Daehnke

Executive Editor
Erin McMahon

Managing Editor
Sophia Prince

Senior Editor
Sophia Edelblute Capps

Writers
Makenzie Elliott
Elizabeth Groening
Reina Harwood
Grace Murray
Jannah Pendleton
Natalie Resendez
Malena Saadeh
Carson Skrivan
Anna Sundholm

Advisor
Charlie Butler

MULTIMEDIA

Photo Editor
Elle Wayt

Digital Editor
Griffin Reilly

Photographers
Jozie Donaghey
Grace Hefley
Isabel Lemus Kristensen
Julia Page
Sam Scudder
William Takahashi
Isaac Wasserman

Videographers
Claudia Lee
Nico Rodriguez

Podcast
Carrington Powell

Social Media
Makayla Agnew
Karley Kofman

Website
Micheal Lovett
Giulio Pozzouli

Advisor
Chris Pietsch

DESIGN

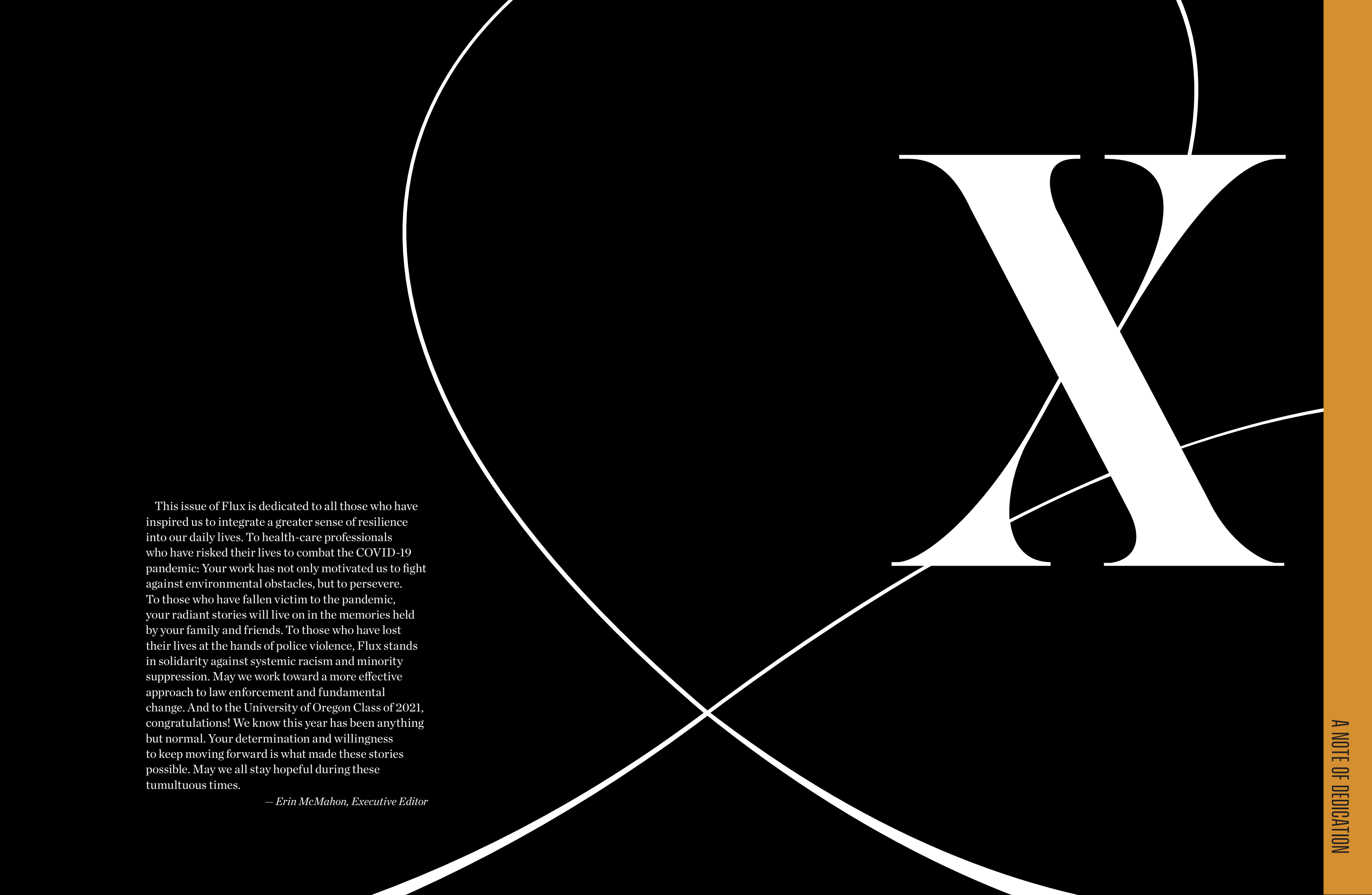
Art Director
Susannah Turley

Design Director
Emily Kenyon

Designers
Ia Balbuena
Mia Giacobazzi
Ruby Noto
Julia Pham
Giulio Pozzouli
Gigi Rutsky
Maggie Salter
Georgia Weeks

Illustrators
Milicent DeHart
Makena Hervey

Advisor
Steven Asbury

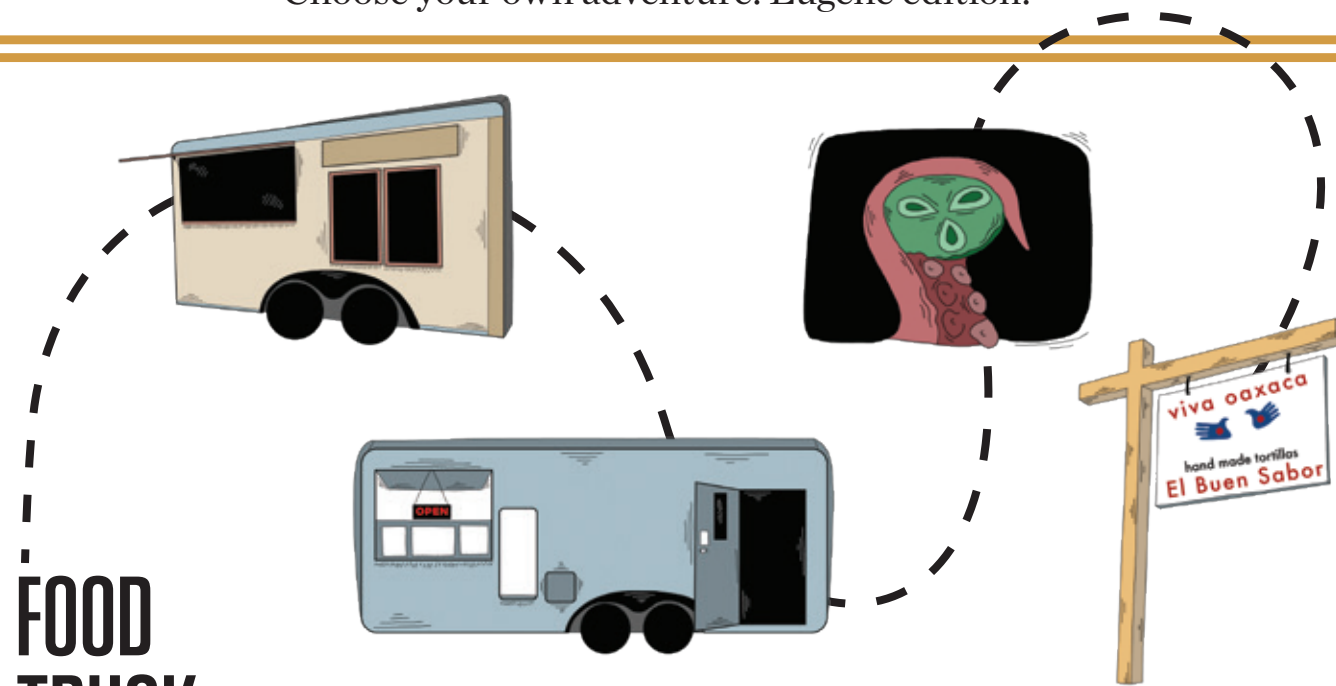


This issue of Flux is dedicated to all those who have inspired us to integrate a greater sense of resilience into our daily lives. To health-care professionals who have risked their lives to combat the COVID-19 pandemic: Your work has not only motivated us to fight against environmental obstacles, but to persevere. To those who have fallen victim to the pandemic, your radiant stories will live on in the memories held by your family and friends. To those who have lost their lives at the hands of police violence, Flux stands in solidarity against systemic racism and minority suppression. May we work toward a more effective approach to law enforcement and fundamental change. And to the University of Oregon Class of 2021, congratulations! We know this year has been anything but normal. Your determination and willingness to keep moving forward is what made these stories possible. May we all stay hopeful during these tumultuous times.

— Erin McMahon, Executive Editor

THE SCENE IN EUGENE

Choose your own adventure: Eugene edition.



FOOD TRUCK TELEPHONE GAME

Eugene is known for its unique and vibrant food truck scene. We set out to find the best ones. To begin, we surveyed students to find our first stop. The winner? Da Nang Eatery. After that, we asked one employee at each food truck where we stopped to recommend a favorite.

Da Nang Eatery

Located at 488 Lincoln St., Da Nang cooks up authentic and fresh Vietnamese food. We ordered the current special: Vietnamese poutine with smoked corn beef and pho gravy, and tofu noodles served with a hot spicy sauce. Check them out if you're itching to try a modern take on Vietnamese cuisine!

Burrito Girl

Burrito Girl, located at 150 Shelton McMurphey Blvd., has an authentic yet trendy style of Mexican cuisine. We settled on veggie and carne asada tacos and carnitas pupusas with rice and beans. If you want traditional Mexican food on the go, then visit and have a taste of Burrito Girl's flavor-packed entrees.

Sūbó Sushi

The Sūbó Sushi food truck, nestled at 1069 West Third Ave., is one of three locations in Eugene where you can grab a quick sushi burrito to go. We tried an order of the veggie spring rolls with sweet and sour sauce and one of Sūbó's signature sushi burritos: the samurai. This food truck is perfect if you're craving sushi but want the convenience of a burrito.

El Buen Sabor

At 650 Blair Blvd. is El Buen Sabor, a Mexican-based food truck that makes fresh tortillas daily. We decided on the veggie nachos and the carne asada chilaquiles. El Buen Sabor is the place to visit if you're looking for food that comes straight from the heart and is full of interesting ingredients and flavors.

— Julia Page & Karly Kofman

Finding the Best Place for You to Stay

When visiting Eugene it's easy to stay in a well-known chain hotel — but then you'll miss what makes our city special.

ECLECTIC ARTIST LOFT

The Eclectic Artist Loft is a passion project brought to life. Only six blocks from the University of Oregon campus, it features artwork from local artists, reclaimed gym flooring, a "backyard meditation labyrinth," and vintage pinball and pachinko machines.

DOUGLAS FIR COTTAGE

If you're looking for a place where you can connect with nature, try the Douglas Fir Cottage. The yard is surrounded by rhododendrons, fuchsias, hydrangeas and other flowers. Guests can take a walk around the vegetable gardens or chill in the hot tub and sauna. The cottage is adjacent to Eugene's historic Masonic Cemetery.

KASTLE COTTAGE

Staying at The Kastle Cottage is like having your own private castle. This handcrafted cottage sits between Hendricks Park and Laurelwood Golf Course and is only a mile away from campus. It's very private, tucked into the forest, the perfect place to start and end the day.

EUGENE WHITEAKER INTERNATIONAL HOSTEL

The Eugene Whiteaker International Hostel is perfect for those looking to connect with other travelers. It's a place that joins you to the heart of Eugene. Every morning there's a self-serve breakfast in the common space, a space decorated with local art.

— Carrington Powell

KEEPIN' 'EM SPUN SINCE '71

Greg Sutherland, certified wax man and manager of Eugene's hottest record spot (HOUSE OF RECORDS), presents 5 funky LPs for your listening library.

1 THE RESIDENTS MEET THE RESIDENTS

1974

4 YOKO ONO PLASTIC ONE

1970

2 FRANK SINATRA NO ONE CARES

1959

5 MILES DAVIS GET UP WITH IT

1974

3 THE 5 STAIRSTEPS O-O-O CHILD

1970



CONCERT

in the

LIVING ROOM



Dylan Latimer of Novacane, captured by Julia Page

THE FAINT SOUND of music spills from amplifiers out the front door of a house just off campus from the University of Oregon. Lights illuminate the living room windows as a band plays eye level with a rowdy crowd moshing and dancing along with the music.

meet the bands

NOVACANE

Vampire Weekend and Tame Impala fans might find their next favorite band in psychedelic alternative rock pop trio Novacane. “I think the Eugene house-show scene was one of the coolest things happening on the west coast,” said Dylan Latimer, singer and guitarist of Novacane. “You could start a band on Monday and play a show on Saturday to packed house.”

BLUPHORIA

The new kids on the block, Bluphoria, have brought a fresh pop rock and alternative sound to Eugene. Fans of Peach Pit and The Strokes will dig the band’s groovy vibe. “It’s a lot easier to feed off of the energy of a house-show crowd than it is anywhere else, said Reign LaFreniere, lead guitar and vocals for Bluphoria. “It feels like you’re there in the party with them.”

THE MACKS

This Portland-based band is a part of the original Eugene house-show scene. With a hard rock-and-roll sound, the band is easily comparable to rock legends like The Doors and the Grateful Dead. “You have a lot of people who won’t miss a show,” said Ben Windheim, The Macks’ guitarist. “Everyone sees the value in the scene and wants to keep going.”

LAUNDRY

Known for their funky name and indie art rock fusion, members of Laundry live together in a house in Eugene. The quartet has been together for a few years but has built up quite the discography. Fans of the Talking Heads and The Velvet Underground will enjoy the art rock sound and rhythmic guitar.

— Grace Murray

rebels *with a* cause

Portugal. The Man talks more than music-making as we take a look at its work in the world of Indigenous activism.

written by MALENA SAADEH

I once had this dream I was hanging out with Portugal. The Man. It was glorious: I was 5’11”, just like Uma Thurman, and right after our little rendezvous the band introduced me to Marc Bolan. Much to my dismay, when I woke from this sweet slumber, I looked nothing like Ms. Thurman and Marc Bolan was still so dearly departed — but I was actually about to meet Portugal. The Man, these musical muses of mine, from the screen on my ratty old PC. The one fragment of my reverie that stuck around to see the morning is the fact that Portugal. The Man has been using its platform to acknowledge Indigenous land and share Native stories.

The founding members of the band, frontman John Gourley and bassist Zach Carothers, set off from their hometown of Wasilla, Alaska, in 2006, craving a taste of what lay beyond America’s icebox. Though their road to fame would begin in Portland, their upbringing in the Final Frontier ties them to Indigenous activism. It spurred them to found The Portugal The Man Foundation in 2019, which uses the band’s standing to advocate for Indigenous rights in the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

Seeking to turn up the volume for underrepresented voices, the band started the tradition of opening its shows with a “land acknowledgment.” At the beginning of each set, the band members pass the mic to an Indigenous person from the area, putting music second to the voices of First Nation’s people.

Gourley takes me back in time to Anchorage, where a grand opening for a Hard Rock Cafe, of all places, served

as the occasion that would prompt a vital shift in Portugal’s career path. A land acknowledgment is something many concert-goers have never experienced before, which is something that Gourley understands.

“The first acknowledgments we did brought up a lot of questions, a lot of guilt, and a lot of history,” Gorley tells me, his eyes beaming through the screen with the intensity of that first night. “I remember seeing giggling and uneasy energy. Just watching it morph the next time we’d come through, people would be telling others to be quiet, telling them to listen. And then even more so the next time through.”

I discussed this feeling with a partner of the PTM Foundation, Laura John, who speaks not only as the city of Portland’s Tribal Relations Director, but also as descendant of the Blackfoot and Seneca nations.

“When a land acknowledgment is done, it gets people thinking about all the other ties to that land and pushes them to think beyond,” says John.

Protests in the wake of George Floyd’s death, particularly those in Portland, opened the door to many new conversations regarding Native rights, she says.

“What has occurred over the last year has really elevated focus on BI-POC, and it has been changing people’s awareness,” says John, referring to both the city she works in and today’s social climate in general. “Space is being created for Native people when before that wasn’t even a part of the conversation.”

As John lays down that heavy truth, I sit with an uneasiness that

I can imagine must have hung over the crowd that night in Anchorage — an uneasiness that comes with unlearning a narrative imposed on us in elementary school classrooms and recognizing the areas of our own inexperience. Sensing the apprehension on my face in light of this newfound knowledge, Carothers works to transform what I feel about the past into something to be used in the present. The cycle of injustice is not irreversible.

“I don’t think any of us agree with how we got here, but we are here now, so we just have to be good neighbors, good friends and good allies,” he says.

Before my Zoom chat with Portugal, I changed my outfit twice and threw on my most uncomfortable pair of heels — even though I’d be a total mystery from the neck down anyways. How often can you say you get to interview a legendary band in a

Space is being created for Native people when before that wasn’t even a part of the conversation.

circumstance where pants are completely optional and they’d be none the wiser if you spewed out questions halfway in the buck? I suppose every situation has its perks. With a collection of nods, a roll off of waves, and one click of the mouse, my hour with Portugal had come to an end.

All of that aside, what I exit with is a point that cannot be dulled by circumstance. Learning how important allyship is to a band as big a name as Portugal. The Man brought something much larger than music to the table. Checking ourselves as settlers and creating space for Indigenous voices are such small steps, but if widely taken, they can change the whole narrative around Native issues for the better.

BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES

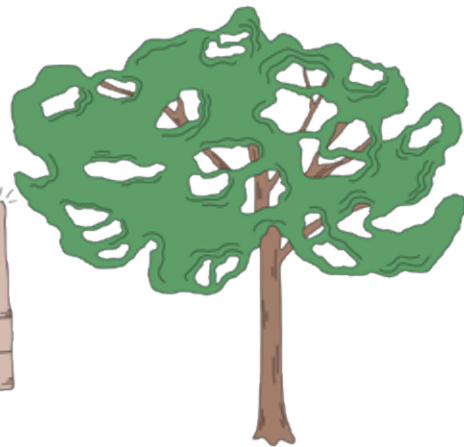
Six small businesses to explore in Eugene.



EQUIANO COFFEE

Owner: Okon & Gloria Udoseneta

This family-owned coffee roaster and cafe, Equiano Coffee, features specialty blends from small farms from around the world. Okon and Gloria emphasize the value in “empowering small farms through long-term relationships.”



MORGANIC ROOTS ECO-FIRM

Owner: Arnold E. Morgan, Jr.

Specializing in plant care and wood crafting, Morganic Roots provides landscaping services to the Eugene community. Morgan, Jr. says he started the Eco-Firm to do something “meaningful, sustainable and good for the environment.”



MOS FADED

Owners: Jason Thompson & Alan McKinney

Mos Faded is a barbershop that specializes in line-ups, fades and cuts for all hair types. McKinney says he opened the business to offer “haircuts for African Americans who may not have anywhere else to go here in Eugene.”



BEAUTY BY KINAYA

Owner: Sophia Kinaya Haug

Haug is a licensed nail technician located at Haus D’Glamour. She creates unique, custom nail art with intricate designs.



ELEV8 CANNABIS

Owner: Seun Adedeji

“You’ll find a relaxed atmosphere, chill beats and staff that treats you like family,” says Adedeji. Elev8 carries recreational and medical cannabis while curating a modern shopping experience.



WAX’D

Owner: Angela Ruiz

“There is nothing wrong with being addicted to keeping your skin soft, hairless and vibrant,” says Ruiz. Wax’d provides a personalized experience, perfect for first-time waxers.

— Makayla Agnew

*editors
designers
writers
illustrators
photographers
podcasters
multimedia producers
engagement
specialists
digital strategists
and more.*

The University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication award-winning magazine.

Application available for undergraduates and graduate students. Learn more at fluxoregon.com.

making the

TRANSITION

An athlete *once barred from his team* returns after his sport moves toward inclusivity.

written by **MAKENZIE ELLIOTT & CARSON SKRIVAN**
captured by **ISAAC WASSERMAN**

Members of Fugue, the women's division ultimate frisbee team at the University of Oregon, spreads out across the practice fields next to the newly erected Hayward Field. Clouds fill the sky, and the crisp Sunday morning air engulfs the team as it begins practice.

Among the athletes is Owen Clifton, wearing a white No. 10 jersey and running his fingers through his thick, curly brown hair. A frisbee darts across the field, and Clifton dives for the disc, snagging it midair and crashing onto the cold, damp turf. He quickly hops up and hustles to get back in position. As one of the oldest players on Fugue, Clifton, 23, doesn't hesitate to stop and give out advice to his teammates.

He plays cutter, one of the two main positions in ultimate frisbee, meaning he's usually on the receiving end of a pass. Since joining the team in 2016, Clifton has proven himself to be one of Fugue's top athletes, according to Rachel Hess, a team captain who considers Clifton's presence on the field as "invaluable."

Clifton is also the only team member who identifies as male.

In February 2020, Clifton came out as a transgender man and began taking testosterone. The 19-player club supported his decision, but, at the time, USA Ultimate, the governing organization for ultimate frisbee, had rules preventing any athlete taking testosterone from playing in the women's division. The moment he injected his first dose of the hormone was the moment he was barred from competing with a team he refers to as his "chosen family."

NORTHBOUND

Raised in Fort Worth, Texas, Clifton grew up playing every sport he could. He even started bringing a football to elementary school so the boys would let him join their game at recess. In high school, he played basketball, ran track and field and even hoped to run for a college team.

"It's very apparent that he gets that high from being physical," said Marcia Richardson, Clifton's mother.

He made it into Fugue his freshman year at the UO without ever having played the sport, and he quickly found an inviting

Owen Clifton hopes he can inspire change as he navigates what it's like being a trans athlete during a time of attack from politicians, sports entities and society.



community at his new school. At the time, Clifton presented as a female, the gender he was assigned at birth.

“When I moved out here, I didn’t really know that I was trans, in the sense that I guess I didn’t really have the language to describe what I was going through,” Clifton said.

It wasn’t until he arrived in Eugene that he had even met an openly transgender person. Until then, his only exposure to the concept of being transgender came from “sensationalized” accounts in the media, he said.

His community in Fort Worth offered little diversity from mainstream Christian conservative thought, he said. The church was at the center of his social life; he met the majority of his close friends in youth ministries and other church-sponsored activities. From kindergarten to 12th grade, he attended the same small private school, where he never quite fit the mold most students did.

“It was definitely really isolating,” Clifton said.

He recalled becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the “distinctly feminine” parts of his body as they developed during puberty. Looking back, Clifton attributes this to gender dysphoria, a term describing the “clinically significant distress or impairment” people might experience from identifying as a gender different than what they were designated at birth, according to the American Psychiatric Association.

“It was a lot of general discomfort,” Clifton said. “And it started to affect my mental health from a depression and anxiety standpoint.”

His sophomore year at the UO, Clifton took an art class with Professor Tyrras Warren, a transgender man who also grew up in Fort Worth. Initially connecting over their similar backgrounds, the two began to discuss Clifton’s own gender identity.

“He started talking about his identity,” Warren said. “So, we sort of started developing a rapport over that.”

That same year, Clifton brought up his feelings on the subject in counseling, where he tried to learn where his gender dysphoria stemmed from. After a long and intensive process, Clifton felt confident transitioning was something he wanted to do.

But still, he hesitated. The pushback he’d face from his family troubled him, and he wasn’t sure he knew how to handle it. Two years passed while he wrestled with the decision.

Finally, in February 2020, Clifton took his first dose of testosterone, gave his mother a letter explaining his gender identity, and gave up his spot on Fugue.

“I kind of decided at the end of the day that, for me personally, waiting to start transitioning just because of frisbee wasn’t worth it,” he said.

MISSTEPS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS

USA Ultimate, which governs more than 800 collegiate club teams across the nation, implemented its first transgender policy in 2018. The creators originally intended the policy to be an inclusive measure that gave transgender athletes a sense of security. Instead, it ultimately hurt the very athletes it tried to help, according to Ashleigh Buch, a transgender woman and community liaison for USAU.

Buch played on a women’s team in Kansas City in 2017. After writing about her experiences playing ultimate frisbee as a transgender woman, she joined USAU officials to help design the organization’s first official policy outlining transgender and non-binary players’ eligibility.

According to Buch, the policy was similar to the NCAA’s policy. In order for a transgender woman — someone who was assigned male at birth but identifies as female — to compete in the women’s division, they had to be on testosterone blockers for at least a year. Athletes who took testosterone were ineligible to play in the women’s division regardless of dosage, and the policy hardly addressed athletes who identified as non-binary.

“There is a misconception that someone hasn’t ‘fully transitioned’ unless they have hormones for a certain amount of time,” Dr. Christina Milano, a family medicine doctor at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, said. Milano is not Clifton’s doctor, but she works with patients like Clifton who are pursuing hormone therapy. Milano said transitioning can range anywhere from a pronoun change to extensive medical treatment.

For patients taking testosterone for a masculinizing

Clifton and his professor, friend, and mentor, Tyrras Warren, catch up on a stroll through the University of Oregon campus.



Transgender Participation in Sports

Transgender involvement in sports has long been a controversial issue. CNN reported in April that over 30 states this year alone have attempted to push through legislation aimed at preventing transgender athletes from playing in youth leagues. Transgender women, in particular, face fierce opposition, with many critics claiming that biological advantages make their presence in women’s leagues unfair. USAU is still in the process of updating its leagues’ gendered titles. Fugue already refers to itself as a “womxn’s” team on its website, an alternative spelling of the word women meant to be inclusive.

effect, changes in the body are not immediate; the process can take years, according to Milano. Usually, patients start off with a low dose of the hormone, often via weekly shots. Every patient’s body reacts differently, but generally the process will deepen the voice, speed up the metabolism, alter fat distribution, slow the production of estrogen and halt menstruation, Milano said. Externally, some patients can develop acne, increased hair growth and, depending on their exercise habits, greater muscle mass.

“We’re trying to mimic puberty, essentially,” Milano said.

It’s a relatively misunderstood process, and frightening to Clifton’s mother, Marcia. She had little understanding of what being transgender was before Clifton came out, and

the idea of Clifton permanently altering his body left her fearing for his health and safety.

“I feel like you can read anything medically and find scary stuff about it,” Marcia said.

Clifton self-administers a shot of 0.25 milliliters of testosterone into his abdomen every week. Since he started taking the hormone, he said his mental health has improved drastically.

“I know that some people will think that this is something that I’m choosing to do because I want to,” Clifton said, “instead of something that I’m doing because I need to.”

After USAU’s first policy went into effect, multiple transgender and non-binary athletes contacted Buch, alarmed

with what this meant for their future with the sport. This prompted Buch and other officials to begin designing a new policy. This time, they had a new attitude.

“We were all very adamant that we wanted to approach it with a heart of inclusion,” Buch said, “rather than addressing that question of fairness.”

The “question of fairness,” to her, is often a cynical one. There are discrepancies among all players: strength, height, skill level or experience. Sports by their nature are unfair, Buch said.

“There’s just so many different things that go into it,” she said. “Yet, the one thing that constantly gets focused on when it comes to fairness in sport is gender.”

After a year of collecting data and consulting athletes and advocates, USAU announced its revised policy last December. Now, all incoming athletes will select their gender identity and sign up for the league they feel comfortable playing in, be it men’s, women’s or mixed.

“It was a happy surprise,” Clifton said.

That same month, Clifton traveled to Fort Worth for Christmas, where he saw his mother in person for the first time since he came out. Clifton said she was the “most accepting” she had been.

LOOKING DOWNFIELD

There were many phone calls between Clifton and Marcia after he came out — some bad and some productive, he said. She’s become more accepting of her son for who he is and has made an effort to better understand transitioning. When it comes down to it, Marcia said, a mother’s job is to support her children, and she wants a relationship with her son.

Transitioning is not a solely physical procedure, Milano said. Although testosterone may help someone fit a more masculine profile, facial hair or muscle mass are not the only goals. For Clifton, transitioning is meant to help alleviate the discomfort he’s struggled with for over a decade.

“My mental health is a lot better, and I’m just, as a whole, a much happier person,” Clifton said.

Fugue’s 2021 season has been postponed until the fall due to the pandemic. For now, the team is holding practices on Sundays for three hours and workouts once a week. Clifton keeps pushing himself, eyeing a team captain position next season.

“I don’t really know what kind of adversity I’m personally going to face,” Clifton said. “I don’t know if people are going to be okay with me occupying a women’s space.”

He’ll graduate with a degree in environmental studies in the summer of 2022, at which point he hopes to find work with a national park conducting research to help fight climate change. But for now, he still has one more season to play with his team.

“Fugue is definitely my chosen family up here,” Clifton said. “All of my closest friends are people that I’ve been playing frisbee with.” 🍌

To administer his weekly testosterone, Clifton uses subcutaneous injections that use a .75-inch needle that goes into the fat in his abdomen.



I’m just, as a whole,
**A MUCH
HAPPIER
PERSON.**

Clifton leaps to catch the disc in a drill at a Sunday morning Fugue practice. “He is a pure competitor,” says Fugue captain Rachel Hess.



beauty amid the ashes

A couple retired to Oregon only to have their woodland go up in flames. But they have no time for regrets. *There's a forest to replant.*

written by **ELIZABETH GROENING**
captured by **GRACE HEFLEY**

On the first Sunday of last September, the sun shone brightly in Vida, Oregon. The quaint community, nestled along Lane County's McKenzie River about 30 miles northeast of Eugene, is home to approximately 1,000 people. The warm weather begged Theresa Hausser, 56, and her wife, Kate McMichael, 60, to take the afternoon off. After a year spent digging and chopping on their 39-acre woodland, the couple's hard work was starting to pay off. They hadn't yet gotten to live among their thousands of Douglas firs up on North Gate Creek Road. However, there was a freshly dug hole in the dirt, waiting for the women's retirement home to be built.

"We fell in love with this property because we wanted to grow more things. It was too beautiful to say no," said McMichael, a retired schoolteacher. She and Hausser purchased the Vida property in 2019, eager to

leave the Bay Area. Their shared anxiety of California's 12-month fire season overrode the fact that they knew little about forestry.

Giving into the sunshine's pleas, the two gray-haired women dozed off in their camper beneath a canopy of trees. That afternoon was the first three hours they'd ever spent enjoying the forest that had brought them to the Pacific Northwest.

It would also be their last.

OUT OF THE BLUE

Around 6:30 p.m. the next evening, Hausser and McMichael sensed the early warning signs of the dangerous element they'd both experienced too many times before. They were sitting outside of their rental home in Springfield — about 25 miles southwest from their Vida land — when the sun slipped behind particles of



The couple's logs were purchased by the Eugene-based Seneca Sawmill Company. "It's cool to think some of them might become the lumber that rebuilds homes for folks in fire-torn areas," McMichael said.



smoke, shifting the sky's mood from blue to orange and gray.

The wind that suddenly hit their cheeks caused Hausser to recall being 6 years old in 1970, when a similar bluster forced her family to evacuate their Southern California home at 2 a.m. Although she was now far from Simi Valley, she panicked, unable to escape visions of fireballs blowing through the front door of her childhood home.

The gusts had a similar effect on McMichael, who grew up in the sagebrush desert of Boise, Idaho, with no fire protection. In present day, she mimicked her adolescent bedtime ritual of mentally cataloging what she'd grab just in case. Even today, her list includes her stuffed panther and a handful of books.

The sky's shade of apocalyptic gray kicked the women's stress into high gear. Swapping the drinks they'd been sipping for their cellphones, they placed urgent calls to their neighbors up on North Gate Creek Road. The six other families who lived near their Vida woodland were also noticing an unusual amount of smoke, but believed it was blowing in from other active fires in Oregon.

Hausser and McMichael didn't need a notification to know that what had tormented them separately as children and what had chased them out of California only a year before was catching up with them. They felt this fire in their bones and knew it was coming fast.

TREES TO ASHES

By 8 a.m. the next morning, the once-luscious forests of Vida resembled burnt match sticks. Overnight, the women's lofty green woodland had dissolved into brown dust and smoky black stumps.

Those 2020 Labor Day winds rapidly fueled a blaze — to be tagged the Holiday Farm Fire — with a mind of its own. Wylde Cafferata, a friend of Hausser and McMichael and secretary for Lane County's Small Woodland Association, described the fire as an unstoppable "perfect storm of dry weather and east winds."

One of the couple's neighbors, Ricky Smith, 63, received an alert around 1 a.m. that warned him that the fire was at a Level 3 evacuation and that he needed to take nothing and get out. All of the North Gate Creek Road neighbors received this notification, except for Hausser and McMichael because they didn't have an occupancy permit on the land yet. Smith ignored the alert. At the time, he thought it was irrational to think that a fire was coming down the McKenzie River Valley. Nonetheless, by 2:30 a.m., strong winds, eerie black ash in the air and panicked phone calls from family and neighbors finally convinced Smith and his wife to head down the hill.

"I've seen the wildfires in California and have felt horrible for what those people have gone through," said Smith, who's lived in Vida his entire life. "But to experience it in an area where I thought nothing like that could ever happen — it's heart-wrenching. I just praise the Lord every day that He got us through it."

The flames originated from a downed power line on the banks of the McKenzie, near milepost 47 on Oregon 126. Within 24 hours, they expanded over 100,000 acres, about four times the size of Eugene. All in all, the fire torched about 173,300 acres along the river. However, the Holiday Farm Fire wasn't the only one to spread through the state in the fall of 2020. Altogether, the season's fires burned approximately 1.07 million acres of Oregon's forestland, scorching 4,009 homes and an estimated 300 million trees.

Five months after the fire, Hausser admitted that turning onto North Gate Creek Road still feels like a gut punch. She said, "We have moments of crushing despair, and then, 'Oh, this isn't that bad,' to more crushing despair." The fire transformed Oregon 126 from a scenic drive through Oregon's greenery to a hazardous-looking war zone filled with fallen trees.

ROOTED IN THE LAND

There was nothing tangible tying Hausser and McMichael to their Vida woodland post-fire.

Although many of their trees still stood tall, most were dead. But knowing that they still had each other and their land was enough to make them stay.

"The forest we fell in love with is gone. It's just gone," McMichael said. "But this little woodland that we know and love is still there, and so we're going to stay with it because it's a relationship we've forged and a responsibility we've taken on."

Miraculously, their soil and the hole for their unbuilt home survived. The couple has worked closely with conservation specialist Lily Leitermann from Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation. This agency works with landowners to make sure their water is clean, their soil is productive and their wildlife habitat is healthy. From her observations of the property, Leitermann said the rapid spread of the Holiday Farm Fire did not allow it to deeply damage the couple's soil. In fact, it left their ground in solid shape for replantation due to the lack of vegetation left on the surface.

"Both humans and nature are resilient. Landscapes can go through changes, but that doesn't mean it's the end. Same with humans. We go through a traumatic event and we change, but we can learn from it. Theresa and Kate are being resilient so that their forest can be as well," Leitermann said.

Mirroring their soil's strength, Hausser and McMichael are moving forward and replanting, neither of which are simple tasks. In the midst of feeling heartbroken over their lifeless trees, they've had to learn about reforestation. They've utilized resources, such as the Oregon Forest Resource Institute, Oregon State University's Extension Fire Program and Women Owning Woodlands Network, by attending their virtual workshops.

"I often find myself starting to weep. We're so grateful, but so sad," McMichael said.

Their strong faith in Jewish beliefs is largely behind their decision to remain rooted in the land. Daily, the couple recites the Sh'ma — which McMichael describes as "a call to

recognize the oneness of all that is.” By doing so, they remind themselves that they are co-creators, working together with God to heal the world. Their rituals help them stay grounded at a time when their thoughts are constantly clouded in pain.

ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

In the moments following the fire, the women’s thoughts and memories were blurred. To avoid confronting their grief, they stayed busy. For instance, they spent one day carving bowls out of salvaged wood for an Oregon Women in Timber auction, while the next they focused on what types of trees to replant. They have yet to sit down and process the fire and its life-altering effects.

“I can’t name a time we were especially sad, but I know how devastated we were to see that, indeed, our little hemlocks and the ‘three sisters,’ our three self-seeding Douglas Firs, hadn’t made it,” Hausser said.

One moment they remember clearly was the Day of the Dead, October 31, when they lit a bonfire on their Vida property and called out for the souls of their dead trees. Struck by how the skeletons of their trees still looked alive in the moonlight, McMichael felt the urge to do something she’d never done before — write poetry:

*“Resolve and hope
amidst the burned husks
of ancient stumps and twisted trees.”*

The two women anticipate that the grief will hit them when they get to move into their Vida home, but they are comforted knowing that they’ll go through it hand in hand.

WOMEN OF THE WOODS

Hausser and McMichael’s hope to restore the land stems from knowing they’re not alone. Their neighbors and friends in the Oregon timber community have been there to share advice, kindness and a range of emotions. Together, Hausser said they’ve gone “from despair at how much worse it was than initially feared to enthusiasm for the possibility of more woodland diversity.”

Before the fire, for instance, their neighbor Smith made space in his barn for the couple to store their UTV. This seemingly small act of kindness made a big difference, saving them from parking it on their homesite where it could have been damaged amid construction. Smith and other neighbors continue to teach Hausser and McMichael about forestry and what their next steps in the revitalization process should be.

“Through helping each other find trees to working together on rebuilding projects, the neighbors are getting closer,” said Smith, who’s gotten over 11,000 trees replanted on his land. “Theresa and Kate come up to work every day, even when it’s rainy and cold. They have such a love for their land, just like I do for mine, so we relate.”

By having support, McMichael said that their plans to “help their resilient forest actually come back” are achievable. In the early months of 2021, the pair had a salvage harvest, where hefty pieces of equipment logged hundreds of burnt trees to make room for new ones.

“And so, a wooded landscape becomes an empty landscape. We’re grateful we have a property at all. What we lost is less



A salal plant pops up on the forest floor. McMichael compared the feeling of seeing these bits of green after the fires to a flatline. “It’s like we finally got a little bump up.”



The couple leans on the railing of their newly built house deck. Eager to move into their new home, they began development shortly after the fires.

than what so many people have lost, but we didn’t buy this place to be utterly exposed,” Hausser said. After the harvest, some dead trees remain in the ground, but there are many vast patches with nothing.

With the assistance of friends and neighbors, the women are obtaining a diverse range of seedlings, allowing them to cultivate an assorted forest from the ground up. For everyone who helps them along the way, whether it be a construction worker or a close friend, Hausser and McMichael bake them cookies to show their gratitude.

As of April, they had about 5,600 baby trees in the ground. While it takes them a full day of work to plant 50 trees on their own, it takes a professional crew merely 15 minutes. They were grateful to be gifted 175 trees — some ash, cottonwood and a box of Douglas fir plugs — that they planted themselves. In total, the pair has planted 600 with their own hands, as they’re trying to build an intimate connection with the thin baby trees. They anticipate that their first season of tree-planting will cost them over \$8,500 out of their retirement savings.

Hausser and McMichael are facing an array of obstacles in their replanting process. They’re actively working to

protect the little stems from deer and invasive blackberries. Meanwhile, if this spring ends up being too dry, there’s a chance their newly in-the-ground babies won’t make it and they’ll have to replant again. Although they’re exhausted and stressed, they don’t regret buying their forest.

“We’re still doing [forestry], just differently now. It’s fun to be learning, creating a whole new world and taking on a whole new life together. We’ve enjoyed it, fire and all,” McMichael said.

For them, the Holiday Farm Fire provided an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the planet, the health of the carbon cycle and future generations. Hausser and McMichael are aware that they’re aging and won’t be retiring among grown trees like they’d planned. But they do have fresh twigs in the ground that resemble hope.

Most of all, they have each other. Hausser knows when to hold McMichael, and when not to.

McMichael understands that Hausser needs her naps. With every seemingly daunting task, having each other is everything.

“Our women of the woods journey has only begun,” Hausser said. 🌱

as the smoke clears

After a fire decimated the small town of Phoenix, its citizens are left wondering why they never received emergency alerts. What went wrong?

written by GRACE MURRAY & ANNA SUNDHOLM
captured by ISAAC WASSERMAN

Heather Spliethof and her daughter, Sam, assess the wreckage after the Almeda fire ravaged Phoenix, Oregon. They were one of many who did not receive an emergency alert. They lost almost everything.

Meghan Hays sits in the living room of her parents' southern Oregon home on a rare sunny February afternoon. She's rolling a small chunk of colored glass around in her palm and delicately wiping remnants of ash off its surface.

Just five months earlier, on September 8, the Almeda fire ravaged Hays' small town of Phoenix, burning thousands of homes in its path. All that was left of her two-story home was a few charred and unrecognizable pieces of her worldly possessions. She's been living in her parents' home ever since.

The chunk of glass she held had been an ornate glass canister. Hays always swore the prized family heirloom would be the one thing she'd grab in a fire. She never thought to grab the canister in the mere minutes before the Almeda fire forced her to evacuate her home. Hays knew the fire was nearby but thought she was safe. She did not receive an emergency alert telling her to leave.

Prior to the fire, Phoenix residents could register for an opt-in service that would provide emergency alerts via cellphone or reverse 911 phone calls to landlines. Residents who did not sign up for opt-in alerts expected to receive warnings via the Emergency Alert System (EAS) from radio or television. The county's preferred method of alerts is the opt-in system, though many residents did not know how to sign up for them.

According to local officials, alerts only went out via the opt-in method, not via the EAS. Only registered civilians received advance warning of the encroaching fire. Those who did not sign up for alerts had little time to evacuate, a situation that amplified the loss they endured. Some would escape with only the clothes they were wearing, their pets and their families.

"If the fire came at night I would be dead, because I wouldn't have seen it coming," says Hays, who had not signed up for an opt-in alert. "There's a reason for the Emergency Alert System."

Hays only knew to evacuate because her friend, Will Clelland, called to tell her that the fire was headed toward her home. Clelland was serving as a fire battalion chief on the day of the fire.

Hays' experience mirrored that of many residents in Jackson County who ended up relying on law enforcement officers to inform them to evacuate. "The police officers from the sheriff's office and of the cities were the evacuation system," Clelland says. "They did amazing work getting hundreds of people physically out of their homes, like carrying old ladies down the stairs and putting them in cars."

Many residents of Phoenix, and the neighboring town of



At the heart of southeastern Oregon's Rogue Valley lies the desolation caused by the Almeda fire.

Drone provided by Jeremy Brady with Ascent Media.



right: Fire District 3 Battalion Chief Will Clelland sifts through the emergency dispatch system in the front seat of his engine.

below: Meghan Hays on her driveway in front of where her house once stood. "You have a big lesson in materialism when you lose everything," says Hays.



“
**IF IT HAPPENED AT NIGHT,
 I WOULD BE**
dead.
BECAUSE I WOULDN'T HAVE
SEEN IT COMING.”

Talent, were left confused, frightened and unprepared to evacuate — and demanding an explanation. In local Phoenix and Talent community Facebook groups, over 50 people came forward with their stories of frustration and anger.

Bonnie Roberts, a Phoenix resident, had just minutes to evacuate 17 of her animals: chickens, goats, birds, dogs and cats. There was no time for cages and leashes. She frantically gathered the animals into her cars until the smoke made breathing unbearable. All that she could do was drive away as fast as she could with her daughters in tow, unsure about the safety of the animals she left behind.

“The alert system was the complete failure,” says Roberts. “It was the fact that nobody had the proper warning. We had to do everything last minute.”

WHAT WENT WRONG IN PHOENIX

The Almeda fire started on the morning of September 8 in Ashland, which is approximately eight miles south of Phoenix. The fire traveled quickly north, fueled by high winds and invasive, highly flammable Himalayan blackberries. According to Jackson County Sheriff Nathan Sickler, at times the fire was moving at 20 mph. Affecting Phoenix, Talent, Central Point, Ashland and Medford, the fire ultimately devastated more than 3,000 acres, destroyed over 2,650 properties, and led to the loss of three lives.

Chief Clelland has worked for the Oregon fire service for 23 years. His 65-member team — Fire District 3 — covers eight communities and services both Phoenix and Talent during major emergencies. Clelland has worked on the force through years of wildfires, but even five months later the Almeda fire still shocks him.

“We had called back every Fire District 3 Central Point Station employee that we had. That’s never happened in 60 years,” Clelland says. “In addition to going from Ashland toward Phoenix [the fire’s] also going outward, so every minute it’s getting wider and that makes it obviously harder to control.”

In addition to controlling the spread of this massive fire, Jackson County officials had to deal with a complicated emergency alert system. Alerts are created through a collaborative effort involving the sheriff’s department, fire departments and emergency management. As firefighters work in

the field, they log details about the fire into a system called Everbridge, a hub that keeps both first responders and the emergency manager informed.

The emergency manager can use information from fire and law enforcement to create an evacuation plan and alerts following Oregon’s three-step Ready, Set, and Go! procedure. Each step updates residents on the level of risk and when they need to evacuate. The sheriff’s department and fire departments work with the emergency manager to coordinate the proper messaging and evacuation procedures. The emergency manager needs input from fire and law enforcement to send messaging to the public to ensure that the right messages are communicated at the right time.

But on the day of the fire, messages only went to those who had signed up for opt-in alerts. That left both officials and residents in the area asking afterward: What happened to the radio and TV EAS alerts?

Due to the complexities of the alert system and the several different groups that are involved in creating and sending these alerts, getting a clear answer as to why the alert system was only partially deployed is difficult. “You’re taking information from a variety of positions and issuing it,” says Clelland. “On that day the cities were also doing their own piece of the pie, so you did have disorganization. There were issues there.”

In May, Andrew Phelps, Oregon’s director of state emergency management, said he was still not clear why broadcast EAS alerts were not transmitted in the Phoenix area and was awaiting a post-fire investigation report.

According to Sickler, the county’s emergency manager is the only person who can deploy both the cellphone alerts and the Emergency Alert System. “I don’t know all the ins and outs of everything or the decisions, but I do know Everbridge is like the state-of-the-art system,” said Sickler. When asked why broadcast alerts were not deployed, he said: “I can’t answer that question.”

In Jackson County, Stacey Anderson-Belt was the emergency manager. Anderson-Belt resigned from her position in January. When asked to comment on her involvement in the fire, she declined.

Phelps said that making the decision to send an EAS alert is “a lot to put on one person’s shoulders.” He added that

Sam Spliethof and her boyfriend, Adam Case, stand amid what Spliethof refers to as the “skeletons of things.”



Anderson-Belt “was a one-person emergency management shop for a pretty large county with significant hazards.”

NAVIGATING THE CHAOS

In the midst of the confusion and chaos of one of the most damaging fires in Oregon’s history, the small town of Phoenix was in disarray.

“Everybody went into lifesaving mode instead of planning mode. It became apparent to our guys and everybody involved that we were barely able to stay ahead of the fire,” says Sickler.

And as he looks back at the events of the day, Sickler says more harm than good may have occurred had the EAS been deployed. “Our guys that were in the fire firmly believe if the county would have sent out a generic five-countywide message, that’s the Emergency Alert System, the pressure would have collapsed the roadways even further in the fires,” says Sickler. “The guys on the ground were like, ‘If any more people would have tried to go back to their houses to get things, it would have been devastating for us because it would have worsened the traffic condition.’”

But Hays, who left her home shortly after receiving the phone call from her friend Clelland, says in the case of emergencies such as the Almeda fire, the importance of alerts and evacuation notices is magnified. “When somebody is panicking and they’re trying to get out, you don’t tell them what roads are closed. You tell them what roads are open. You give them an exact evacuation route,” says Hays. “I would like to see better leadership.”

Heather Spliethof, a Phoenix resident, and her daughter, Sam, spent hours on the day of the fire searching online for

information, only to find nothing. Immediately after law enforcement evacuated their family, the fire jumped the fence into their trailer park and burned every trailer in minutes.

“They didn’t tell us anything about how close it was or where it was or where it was headed. They just told us to get in our cars and head towards Medford,” says Spliethof, who moved into Federal Emergency Management Agency housing with nothing but donated clothing and the few things that the family grabbed before they were evacuated. “You’ve got to let people know their houses are about to burn and they could die.”

At the time of the fire, Sam Spliethof was preparing to start her first year at the University of Oregon. She didn’t have time to grab anything but her laptop and a couple of household items. She would eventually move to Eugene with her boyfriend, Adam Case, and with a broken desk, an air mattress and a t-shirt she received in remembrance of the fire. The back of the shirt reads: “From the ashes, we rise.”

“It was really hard to focus more attention into putting all of your effort into school when you’re just worried about what’s going to happen to your family,” Sam says.

AS THE ASH SETTLES

Following the Almeda fire, the state and county launched investigations and initiated changes in their systems.

Jackson County has hired a private company to investigate the response to the fire by law enforcement, emergency responders and governmental entities such as emergency management. The After Action Report, originally set to be released this spring, will analyze all systems used in the fire, including the emergency alerts, to identify any room for

improvement or changes. It will also analyze disaster relief response for civilians.

Phelps, along with many, seek to better understand what happened in Jackson County. “Was it just the system was overwhelmed? Were things happening too quickly? A lack of familiarity with the tools that were available?” says Phelps.

In the meantime, the county has hired a replacement emergency manager who started in the position on May 10. Sickler says eventually an additional person will work with the emergency manager, and the county is training more people to deploy alerts instead of just one person with the authority to do so. According to Phelps, having only one emergency manager in the Almeda fire was a challenge, and reevaluating statewide investment in emergency management is necessary.

“I think one of the takeaways is to invest in emergency management. In Jackson County they were doing the best with the system that they had invested in,” says Phelps.

The state of Oregon announced in May the launch of a new statewide emergency alert system, called OR-Alert. Even though OR-Alert uses the same Everbridge system as the opt-in alerts used in the Almeda fire, prior registration is not required to receive alerts. The Jackson County Sheriff’s department is also developing a cellphone app to alert citizens of emergencies.

While Chief Clelland is waiting for the After Action Report, he is prepared to analyze his department closely. He also says he would like citizens to enroll in all local emergency alert systems and engage in fire preparedness.

“Our systems have to be designed for the worst-case

scenario. We do our best to bridge as many gaps as we see. We just know that there’s gonna be some emergency, something that outpaces us, but the public ultimately has to have some engagement in their own safety,” says Clelland. “No matter what we do to fix the system, we have to look out for each other. You can’t be reliant on someone else — but it’s sure nice to have someone else.”

The scars of the last fire season are deep and have manifested in different ways and from person to person. Months passed before Bonnie Roberts was able to bring her beloved goats home to their backyard oasis. Heather and Sam Spliethof still find it difficult to visit the site of their former home as they pick apart what was once their life, reminiscing over former neighbors and shared memories. And many Phoenix residents admit to being plagued with PTSD. For Meghan Hays, the sight of smoke billowing in the air churns an uneasy feeling, bringing back unwanted memories and fears. “I was driving to Ashland and I saw smoke,” she recalls. “Somebody was cooking their breakfast in front of their tent and I just panicked.”

As chair of her neighborhood’s Homeowners Association, Hays has become even more involved in fire safety. In regard to tackling the rebuilding process, Hays says that she hopes to make a difference in her community.

“It’s really hard to start rebuilding when there’s so many unknowns, and you’re feeling kind of like a balloon. You’re just floating around and you don’t have an anchor,” Hays says. “It’s grief. It’s like a corkscrew. It spirals up and down, and you just have to work through it and know that whatever path you’re on is the path that you need.”



Hays takes in her neighborhood after the Almeda Fire. “It’s not going to be the same. All the trees are gone,” Hays says. “This was a beautiful place.”



Harrison Stevens (left) and Eduardo Olivares sit in The N.E.S.T. surrounded by vintage Duck gear.

OLD SCHOOL THREADS

Looking for a one-of-a-kind, vintage University of Oregon sweatshirt? How 'bout a football from the 1995 Rose Bowl? Two young entrepreneurs have just what you're looking for — and plenty more — just steps from the UO campus.

written by **NATALIE RESENDEZ**
captured by **WILLIAM TAKAHASHI & ELLE WAYT**

Glancing at the clock, Julisa Silva Ramirez did a double-take. It was almost 3 p.m. She had to be somewhere — and soon. A University of Oregon junior, Silva Ramirez closed her laptop and rushed to put her shoes on before running out the door of her apartment. It was March 10, the day she had been waiting weeks for.

Finally, she could go shop at The N.E.S.T.

N.E.S.T. is shorthand for Neighborhood Eugene Sustainability Team, a vintage clothing store just feet from the main entrance of the University of Oregon. But there's nothing short about the wait time to get into The N.E.S.T. This was the first time Silva Ramirez had snagged an appointment at the shop since its opening two months earlier. And she wasn't the only one struggling to land an appointment.

Due to COVID-19, The N.E.S.T. owners Eduardo Olivares and Harrison Stevens have used an online appointment system where shoppers can choose a 30-minute time slot to do their shopping. Although the store is open most days from

noon to 5:30 p.m., would-be shoppers have had a hard time finding an open appointment.

Silva Ramirez arrived at the shop and climbed a set of stairs where she was greeted by eclectic decorations and UO memorabilia. The most notable keepsakes include a pair of yellow and green Nike Dunks hanging off a shelf by its laces and several Duck-themed footballs and basketballs.

Scanning the clothing racks, she found a teal vintage fuzzy Champion sweater and a baby blue North Face t-shirt. She was surprised she was able to find such a colorful wardrobe.

"The experience exceeded my expectations," said Silva Ramirez. "Typically going into a thrift store there's nothing exciting about it, but here it was different."

Besides its Champion and North Face pieces, The N.E.S.T. carries a wide variety of t-shirts, sweaters and pants in every color. Customers wait for the store's new merchandise to come in so they can schedule their next visit. Not only has its large inventory excited UO students, but co-owners Olivares

and Stevens have made sure that their shop can serve the locals with much deeper purposes: accessibility and sustainability.

The pair also speak of how they are giving back to the community. They allow Article Won, a Eugene vintage store, to market some of its own inventory within The N.E.S.T. Chet Fiedler, owner of Article Won, has used his experience as a store owner to serve as a guide for Stevens and Olivares as they opened The N.E.S.T.

“Eduardo is very steady and Harrison fluctuates a little more. I think they make a good team in recognizing each other’s [strengths],” said Fiedler. “They’re both very different people, kind of a yin and yang situation.”

Olivares and Stevens previously owned individual vintage online clothing businesses and amassed experience before teaming up. While they promoted similar products, each had their own struggles to begin with.

Stevens’ love for vintage clothing and thrifting began at age 10 when the NBA Seattle SuperSonics moved to Oklahoma City. He had grown up in Seattle rooting for the team. Saddened by their move, he began to scour local thrift stores for SuperSonics apparel. His thrifting ventures only solidified when he resold a Wonder Woman action figure at age 16. He continued to resell as a

freshman at the UO in 2016. Inspired by others selling their vintage finds via Instagram, Stevens created his own reselling business, Stanley Thrifts, in November 2017, during his second year in Eugene.

“I thought, ‘Why don’t I try my hand at this? What do I have to lose?’” Stevens, 23, said.

One of Stevens’ biggest inspirations was Sean Wotherspoon who owns the vintage clothing store Round Two. Stevens even owned a one-of-a-kind pair of hybrid Air Max 97 x Air Max 1s that Wotherspoon designed for Nike’s 2017 Vote Forward campaign.

Aiden Ullman, a former roommate of Stevens, explained how money problems sometimes led Stevens to sell his own personal belongings in order to stay afloat.

“Harrison had a pair of [those Wotherspoon Air Max’s] and



Stevens models a custom pair of N.E.S.T. jeans he screenprinted.

had to sell them to pay off this \$500 car fee for getting his car towed,” said Ullman. “That was devastating.”

Looking to grow his business, Stevens applied to the University of Oregon Street Faire for the fall of 2018. The UO hosts the faire every fall and spring where students can enjoy a collection of trailers and tables hosting everything from food to clothing to posters. Days passed and Stevens hadn’t gotten a reply. He decided to drive to a thrift store with the intention of selling all his clothes and giving up on his business. When he arrived, he checked his inbox one last time, and he found an e-mail saying that he had landed a spot at the street faire. Shocked and excited, he ran into the thrift store to tell the workers his news.

Like his partner, Olivares had an early passion for vintage thrifting but took a different route to get into the business.

At age five, Olivares was brought from Mexico to the United States by his parents in hopes of a better future. At 16, he applied to become a Dreamer through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy. After being accepted, he then obtained his work permit.

“It really just opened up the whole door for me,” said Olivares, 21, now a junior at the UO. “I really [took] advantage of [the work permit] because there’s a lot of people that aren’t as fortunate as me to get a work permit.”

In high school, Olivares found thrift shopping much more affordable than buying from regular clothing stores. One of his proudest finds was a striped Guess shirt that he purchased for \$10 and resold for \$120. He continued to resell his finds in Portland until he realized he could run his own business.

In March 2019, during his freshman year at the UO, Olivares created an Instagram account called Bounceback Thrifts where he sold vintage apparel, including old band t-shirts and sportswear. The name was inspired by the song “Bounce Back” by Big Sean. Later that year, Olivares became aware of



Olivares in his vintage Chicago Bulls t-shirt outside of McArthur Court at the UO.

Stanley’s Thrifts. Wanting to connect with Stevens, Olivares reached out to him via Instagram. This was perfect timing as Stevens had once again been secured a spot at the UO Street Faire, this time for the spring.

After meeting and discussing their interests, goals and dreams, Stevens invited Olivares to sell clothes alongside him at the Street Faire. Selling at the faire together got the attention of Public Streetwear, a clothing store in downtown Eugene. Stevens and Olivares were asked to collaborate with the store in the summer of 2019 for a 10-week period.

Once their time with Public Streetwear ended, the two began to brainstorm other ways to collaborate. They eventually landed on the idea of creating their own vintage store. “There are some [vintage stores] in Eugene, but they aren’t quite tailored to college students,” said Stevens. “Accessibility was a big thing that we wanted to provide.”

On January 8, 2021, not even cold, rainy weather could stop the 50 students lined up for the grand opening of The N.E.S.T. Since then, the customers have kept coming back, even during the ongoing pandemic.

“Their vintage jersey collection is pretty impressive,” said Michael Poon, a UO senior. “After coming to The N.E.S.T., there’s no need to go to the other stores because we have the best one in town.”

Besides offering students a vintage wardrobe, Olivares and Stevens pride themselves on giving back to the locals in Eugene. Isaac Auxier, a UO student and The N.E.S.T.’s graphic designer, created the image that serves as the store’s logo: a cartoon of a big-eyed Earth with arms, legs and a smile. Auxier said that creating the logo and other graphics has better prepared him as a business major.

“I’m definitely getting a lot of experience there,” said Auxier, 21. “It’s nice to work with a brand that has a message they want to send and an image they want to portray.”

With other students helping with the videography and photography for the business, The N.E.S.T. subsequently started an internship program where creative students at the UO can apply to find ways to enhance skills they may be interested in.

The N.E.S.T. also enjoys helping to uplift other local businesses. Olivares and Stevens created t-shirts and featured clothing from the UO student-made brand Boxen Autzen in their store. They also collaborated with Endless Hair Studio to host an Instagram raffle where participants could win store credit and a free haircut.

“We’re a vintage store, but we’re more than that,” said Olivares. “I have lived in Eugene for 15 years now, so giving back

to the community has always been a big part of the business." The vintage clothing store also prides itself on its sustainability aspect.

The t-shirt industry uses millions of gallons of water a year, explained Stevens. "Any way we can help to minimize [that] lets us sleep at night and know that we're doing something positive for the community."

The vast majority of the merchandise in the store has been pre-owned. This alone has been one of the store's main attractions. "I think the sourcing and where they get their products from is really unique and different," Emma Graham, a UO student, said after her first visit to The N.E.S.T. "They're definitely growing their business and doing it the right way: sustainably."

One of The N.E.S.T.'s customers is David Miller, who many UO students know as Frog. He's the bearded man selling joke

books on 13th Avenue and across the street from The N.E.S.T. On Frog's first visit to the store, Stevens immediately greeted him with, "Hey, man, welcome in!" As Frog perused the clothing racks, Stevens said, "Let me know if you see anything you like. I'm sure we can get you a deal." Frog scoured the racks and found a bright red vintage shirt.

"Those guys have got really cool t-shirts in there," Frog said. "I just had to have this one red shirt."

While the sale that day was promoting shirts for \$10, Stevens told Frog he could have it for \$7. Frog went inside to pay where he found Olivares manning the cash register. Realizing it was Frog, Olivares gave him the shirt for free.

"I think that one thing that separates The N.E.S.T. from other vintage stores and reselling business[es] is that Eduardo and I are University of Oregon students," said Stevens. "We really do live and breathe Eugene." 🍌

Stevens and Olivares want The N.E.S.T. to not only embody the ageless spirit of the University of Oregon, but of Eugene as a whole.



in your
element

WATER • EARTH • FIRE • AIR

They fuel the passions of these adventuresome Oregonians.

Smith wake

from the

written by **REINA HARWOOD & JENNAH PENDLETON**
captured by **SAM SCUDDER**

Above Cole Herrington's bed, in Seaside, Oregon, hangs a black and white surfboard indented with shark bite marks. The haunting decor serves as a reminder of where Herrington has been, and to where he would like to return: the ocean.

On a chilly morning last December, Herrington geared up in his wetsuit and a set of new surfbooties before he drove to a cove with his friends — eager for a relaxing surf day after a long week.

By the afternoon, he was looking up at the ceiling of an ambulance surrounded by paramedics and with a makeshift tourniquet wrapped around his ankle. Herrington had been attacked by a great white shark. "I could have died out there. I could have lost my leg," Herrington says. It was all a blurry memory, and a scary one too, he adds.

The attack, which nearly took his foot off, was a wake-up call from God, Herrington says.

In the year before the attack, Herrington had been dealing with personal struggles more so than physical ones. He alternated

between weekend partying and a quiet life of Bible study. At the time of his attack, Herrington found himself falling back into trouble, losing his way in life once again. "I truly do feel like [the attack] was God trying to get me back on track," he says.

Since the accident, Herrington has rejoined a Bible study for young men. Travis Cockcroft, a friend of Herrington's who was with him the day of the attack, joined too. Cockcroft was inspired by Herrington's enthusiasm for God after his friend's near-death experience, he explains. Their relationship, once forged through their love of surfing, has been solidified through their shared faith.

"I've never been able to connect with something as much as my surfing," Herrington says. "It's powerful being out there."

By this spring Herrington had recovered enough to walk without a cast. On one March day, while standing on the Seaside shore, he gazed to the horizon — and smiled. He thought about surfing, and old times. His time may be spent on land for now, but he looks forward to the day he'll surf again.





Fungus

among

US

written by **ANNA SUNDHOLM**
captured by **JOZIE DONAGHEY**

For Jennifer Macone, each work day starts in the early morning, before the rays of sunlight streak through the sky. It doesn't matter the time of year, whether out foraging or working on her farm, Macone's day begins in the dark.

Macone and her business partner, Dustin Olsen, established their organic-certified farm, The Mushroomery, in 2007. Macone and Olsen would venture into the Cascade forests to hunt for wild mushrooms that they could sell in order to pay for the materials they needed to build the mushroom-growing facility on their farm. The main portion of their days were spent close to the earth foraging, and time off would be spent working on the structure.

They wanted to create a farm where they could focus on growing organically, as Macone wanted to move away from the use of chemicals that she had seen on other farms.

"We have wild mushrooms that people don't have the chance to buy in grocery stores," says Macone, 42, who lives on the outskirts of Lebanon, Oregon, roughly an hour north of Eugene. "I like bringing food to people, especially unique food products like this — grown without chemicals and all natural."

A typical day filled with foraging will start by finding a place in the forest to hunt. Then, while armed with a sturdy basket, a brush and a sharp knife, Macone can spend hours searching low in the woods and up along the trees for edible

wild mushrooms. The obscure hobby of mushroom hunting has become more well-known to the general public in recent years. Macone said that the hobby gets people outside, but that it can also be dangerous if people don't know which mushrooms they are hunting for.

"I like being removed and remote in the forest. It's really fun and adventurous," Macone says. "There's pockets of places that I really like that may have older growth trees or feel a little more remote than others."

For Macone, days filled with hands-on foraging have declined to weekly excursions to the coast or Cascades now that the farm is able to support the business. Wild mushrooms are still an integral part of The Mushroomery, but the majority of the business is oriented toward cultivating fresh mushrooms specifically for their farm.

Macone admits that cultivating her own mushrooms for The Mushroomery provides her business a better sense of security, but she will always have an innate love for foraging in the forest.

"It's pretty special to me to be able to go out and harvest our food. It feels natural," Macone says. "It satisfies a primal instinct to go out and wildcraft your food, and to be out in the forest, which is just so serene and meditating and physically healthy. This is such an amazing experience to me, very spiritual."

playing with fire

written by SOPHIA EDELBLUTE CAPPS
captured by ELLE WAYT

It's a Friday night and the sun has set over the WJ Skatepark in Eugene, Oregon. Squeaks of shoes on the basketball court, the slams of skateboards hitting pavement and idle chatter echo within graffitied walls. Music plays from a speaker on the ground. The skatepark is a local hangout, a place to be with friends.

For Jackson DiChiara, it's the perfect spot for playing with fire.

DiChiara juggles fire, and despite starting less than a year ago, he's pretty good at it. The skill requires the ability to juggle — except the clubs are black, on fire and near impossible to keep track of.

On this night, the rhythmic music grows louder as props are lit and their flames lick the air. DiChiara, 23, a transfer student to the University of Oregon from Lane Community College, steps on the gravelly ground of the park underneath the I-105 with three lit torches. It takes a minute to get into the rhythm, but soon the torches are flying through the air, trailing firelight.

"It's not fun to do when you're bad at it," DiChiara says, "so that's an incentive [to practice]."

Until last summer he had never been exposed to fire spinning, which is twirling lit rings, hoops, and more complicated props. But his friend, Clarissa Sprague, convinced him to buy

his torches. He started by juggling unlit torches, just getting the timing and movements right. It didn't take long for him to introduce the flames.

"The sensation of being on fire, having something on fire, it's unparalleled. The world disappears and all that's there is you and your fire," DiChiara says. "Once you get comfortable with your own ability and once you get comfortable with the fire, then really you're just eager to get everything on fire."

The fluorescent lights over the park seem to dim. This small section of Eugene holds its breath to watch the performance. It's nothing short of mesmerizing. Fire and human working together to create art.

DiChiara heads out regularly to practice his skill. On this March night his performance runs parallel to other fire spinners. After roughly two hours of spinning, and using up most of the fuel, the group, about 20 strong, disbands. The night may be over but DiChiara will be back. He sees playing with fire as an opportunity to reconnect with the natural world.

"We enjoy our modern amenities, but I think in a lot of ways we've also domesticated ourselves, and as a result we've separated ourselves from basic elements," he says. "It's one of our most primitive elements, and without fire we wouldn't be where we are."





skyy's the limit

written by **MALENA SAADAH**
captured by **ISAAC WASSERMAN**


In the cockpit of his Cessna 172, Steve Boulton glances down at the notepad strapped to his knee and runs through his pre-flight checklist. “Check, check — hm — check,” Boulton mouths. He then sticks his head out of the hatch to let out a hearty “CLEAR PROP.” As the propeller gets spinning, a smile washes over his face. He’s on his way up.

Even as he nears 70 and with around 1,000 airtime hours behind him, Boulton is still as excited as a shaken bottle of bubbly when he hears those three magic words from the tower: Clear for takeoff.

“I had an uncle down in northern California. I must’ve been about four when he’d take me on the back of his bicycle over to the airport and we’d lay in the grass and watch the planes,” Boulton recalls. It’s a chilly February morning and Boulton is speaking from his hangar on the north side of the Eugene Airport. “That’s when I fell in

love with the idea of flying.”

Boulton’s plan from then on was to become a carrier pilot for the Navy. Unfortunately, bad eyesight shut that door for him by his early teens. He assumed that his dream of flying was over, so for years Boulton followed the family trade and worked as a minister. It wasn’t until he was 45 that he once again turned his focus toward the sky. Circumstances landed Bolton back in Eugene and he received his private pilot’s license in July 1996. Later, he became a certified flight instructor, moving up the ladder at warp speed. Getting in the air was all it took for Boulton to truly find himself in his element.

“If you have a dream you are really passionate about and you really want to achieve it, go after it with everything you got,” Boulton says. He pauses and gives a wise look from behind his aviator sunglasses. “Somehow,” he says, “it’s all gonna work out.” 

an
alternative
APPROACH

CAHOOTS is a 32-year-old Eugene-based mobile crisis response team that's received national attention as a possible police alternative. A lack of funding and a complicated relationship with police, however, leave the program's potential for expansion up in the air.

written by ERIN MCMAHON & GRIFFIN REILLY

captured by JOZIE DONAGHEY

illustrations by MAKENA HERVEY



“If you are willing to step away from the weapon you’re holding, the police don’t have to be involved,” Ebony Morgan says. “Then we can do this together.”

Morgan is a registered nurse and program coordinator for Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS). The program is made up of rapid-response mobile teams that intervene when residents of Eugene and Springfield, Oregon, require assistance during a behavioral health crisis. On this night, cellphone in hand, she stands among a group of officers from the Eugene Police Department (EPD) outside a house in which a man, alone and armed with a knife, is reportedly on the verge of suicide.

Morgan calmly continues the conversation over the phone, assuring him that everything will be okay. After a few minutes, the man agrees to put down the knife. As he exits the home, he is unarmed and, as Morgan will recall later, more relaxed than when officers had first arrived on the scene. Once cleared by EPD to leave, Morgan helps to load the man into the CAHOOTS van, where the two continue their conversation.

It’s moments like these, Morgan says, in which the CAHOOTS’ mission manifests itself. At its core, the organization articulates that armed police are often not the right solution to treat someone in the midst of a complicated personal crisis that requires emergency response. CAHOOTS workers don black vests and carry police radios. And while they offer a much more informal appearance than police, their skillset is anything but. Workers are required to train for 500 hours in de-escalation and social work practices — not counting the additional hours some members train to become emergency medical responders.

Morgan, 31, is no stranger to the type of complex cases she and her CAHOOTS colleagues face. When she was just five years old, her father died during a police encounter. Later, she says she struggled to understand the nature of her grandmother’s bipolar disorder. The services that existed during the 1990s, she says, weren’t viable for the variety of emergency situations that happen each day in cities like Eugene and Springfield. But when she joined CAHOOTS in 2020, she found a program right for the times — and right for her. “This idea that there’s someone who will respond to a mental health crisis and isn’t law enforcement was really fascinating,” says Morgan.

CAHOOTS began 32 years ago as an extension of service under the Eugene-based White Bird Clinic, a public health resource that assists the local unhoused population. Today, CAHOOTS receives its primary funding through EPD. Since

its launch, the CAHOOTS program has evolved from a small group of crisis workers to a one-of-a-kind mobile emergency response team that provides free mental health care, specializes in de-escalation and mitigates confrontations that can turn violent or deadly. On a typical call, CAHOOTS provides verbal tactics that help stabilize people experiencing behavioral health episodes. Rather than being a presence of armed authority, CAHOOTS provides a source of empathy.

Morgan describes the program as the model for a “third pillar of public safety” — a service that complements police and fire departments.

Last summer, the program gained attention amid nationwide Black Lives Matter protests that sparked conversations on what potential police alternatives could look like. And, in August of 2020, Ron Wyden, Oregon’s senior U.S. senator, announced a bill that would explore how the CAHOOTS model could be replicated elsewhere across Oregon.

But, attention and recognition aside, CAHOOTS workers report that inadequate funding and a need for greater independence from the police department prevent them from consistently addressing the situations that require their assistance the most. Due to repeated miscommunications, the Eugene police-fire-ambulance communications center often sends CAHOOTS to deal with issues of homelessness, which isn’t something CAHOOTS workers are properly equipped for. Even though CAHOOTS’ resources extend to people experiencing a housing crisis, workers are unable to provide shelter for unhoused people.

Chelsea Swift, CAHOOTS agency outreach manager, says she often breaks down in tears when she gets home after a shift. “My job is hard not because of who we work with, but because so often we have nothing to give,” says Swift, who has also been trained as a medic and crisis worker.

FACING THE NUMBERS

Shortly after George Floyd’s murder last May, protestors took to the streets of Eugene. During nightly marches that went on for weeks, protestors called out chants like “defund, disarm and dismantle the police.” They also led teach-ins at which speakers explained the history and formation of the American policing system, which originally began as a slave patrol. The conversations opened the door to imagining what police alternatives could look like.

Many of these speakers urged onlookers to look no further than their own city. CAHOOTS’ three-decade record reveals a number of positive marks — from lives saved to money saved.

In 2017 alone, the White Bird Clinic reports that CAHOOTS saved the City of Eugene an estimated \$12 million through call diversion. “Using the number of calls that would otherwise be handled by police, including suicide risk,



CAHOOTS workers keep their belongings at the White Bird Clinic on 12th & High Street in Eugene, Oregon, where daily shifts begin at 5 a.m.

1.6%

From July 2021 through June 2022, CAHOOTS received \$1,083,137 from the City of Eugene and Lane County. That's roughly 1.6% of the \$66.85 million the EPD received for the 2021 fiscal year.

My job is hard not because of who we work with, but because so often we have nothing to give.

homicide risk, self-harm, intoxication, welfare, rage and transport, CAHOOTS has saved the EPD an average of \$8.5 million each year from 2014-2017," the City of Eugene's 2017 report reads.

According to a 2016 study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 20-50% of fatalities in police response involved someone suffering from mental illness. In CAHOOTS' 32-year history, however, not a single fatality or serious injury has come as a result of its response. Furthermore, less than 1% of CAHOOTS' responses required a call for police backup.

CAHOOTS, says Morgan, is designed to "swoop in to take a [portion] of EPD's calls so that police can focus on what they are designed to do."

CAHOOTS is formally contracted through EPD, which allocates a portion of its funds every year to the program and provides dispatching services for its van drivers. Members of the CAHOOTS team, about 40 in total, use information relayed by EPD dispatchers via radio in order to respond to local behavioral and mental health crises.

From July 2021 through June 2022, CAHOOTS received \$1,083,137 — which amounts to just 1.6% of the \$66.85 million the EPD received for the 2021 fiscal year. In turn, CAHOOTS responds to approximately 5-8% of emergency call to the EPD. In 2019, that percentage amounted to 18,583 calls — about 51 per day — according to the EPD website.

Despite these numbers, CAHOOTS remains without its own permanent headquarters and is equipped with two vans: one 24/7 response van, with the second covering another seven hours each day.

Workers also willingly share that regardless of tenure, they're each paid \$18 per hour, a wage that Morgan says is insufficient.

"That wage is not adequate or sustainable," says Morgan. "We don't retain people at that wage."

A WORKING RELATIONSHIP

In addition to wages and workload, CAHOOTS workers say that another significant barrier they deal with is the way they get called to an emergency. Oftentimes, 911 callers specifically request CAHOOTS. But Swift says that it's not always clear to callers what response they'll receive in times of crisis. CAHOOTS also doesn't have its own console for dispatch, which is a specific response center for its calls.

"Because we don't self-dispatch, we actually don't have control over [dispatch] because the decision has already been made," says Swift.

Chris Skinner, EPD's chief, says that the current dispatch system features an elaborate process with a "battery of questions" to evaluate how a call can be properly addressed. Sometimes, regardless of what force is requested, information provided by the caller may require a different response than the caller had intended. "Whether the calls were for CAHOOTS, all those calls have to be triaged for the right response," he says.

Swift, on the other hand, thinks with some calls, background noise could depict a chaotic and violent scene, and the dispatcher could feel the need to involve police when it may not have been necessary.

"I do think there is a lack of transparency sometimes, where a dispatcher knows the law enforcement is going to or could be sent instead of CAHOOTS and perhaps is not taking that moment to acknowledge that with the caller," says Swift. Situations like these, says Swift, have fostered a sense of distrust between some residents and CAHOOTS.

Skinner says that while dispatch does all it can to find the right response to a situation, he can't guarantee that callers are always informed of the service that's headed their way. "I can't say that it happens 100% of the time, but there typically is that interchange [between callers and dispatchers] about what the response will be," he says.

Although CAHOOTS workers must be accompanied by police in situations deemed violent or that include weapons, this assessment of what makes a situation "dangerous" presents a gray area for both organizations.

Ayisha Elliott is one Eugene resident known for speaking out about the issues that can arise when an EPD unit arrives on a call intended for CAHOOTS. On February 17, Elliott spoke at a meeting of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Police Policy. The committee meets every two weeks via Zoom to provide a platform for citizens and activists alike to share concerns regarding policing and legislation in Eugene. Elliott related an incident that took place early one morning in July 2015. She said she called the non-emergency phone number for CAHOOTS reporting that her son, Quentin Richardson-Brown, was experiencing a psychotic break and was potentially violent. Rather than receive a response from the CAHOOTS workers she had asked for, Elliott and her son, a young, Black male with known mental disabilities, were met by two officers. Elliott says she wanted the officers to leave her property,



but that they refused. Soon after, she says, the officers “escalated the situation” until one of the responding officers deployed his taser and punched Richardson-Brown in the face.

“I didn’t even know if my son would make it to the hospital,” said Elliott, describing the moment she watched her son being taken away in the police car. “Everything had gone so wrong. How could I have trusted that they would keep my son safe?”

In 2017, Elliott sued the City of Eugene, alleging excessive force, false arrest, illegal search and seizure, battery, negligence, and race discrimination. Though the police auditor’s review of the incident cited excessive force, a federal jury ruled in favor of EPD.

The ruling of the suit aside, Elliott would still like to see CAHOOTS be given more autonomy in regard to responding to calls. “CAHOOTS, being the entity that responds to mental health issues, I would think allowing them to decide whether or not police are necessary would be a good thing,” said Elliott during the February meeting.

Skinner, who’s served in his position since 2018, says he can’t speak directly to the Elliott incident, as it happened prior to his tenure. He says that EPD’s mission, however, is “constantly seeking to fit a resource to a need.” In many cases, Skinner says that CAHOOTS is better equipped to handle a situation than police. “We make sure to try to send officers only to the situations that are really dangerous or where weapons are present or there’s been behavior present that is combative or violent,” he says. Skinner describes this relationship between his force and CAHOOTS as “symbiotic.” His goal, he says, is to create a police department and public safety response team that the community can trust — one that’s “not deeply rooted in territorialism and protectionism.”

“There’s a lot of police agencies that just shiver at the possibility of someone else going to their calls for service. And we just aren’t built that way,” he says.

And while Morgan says that CAHOOTS could benefit from its own dispatch console, she says that it’s crucial that her program and EPD maintain a cooperative working relationship. “They share a lot of resources with us in order for us to be accessible to the community,” says Morgan.

MOVING FORWARD

Despite struggles with funding and response, CAHOOTS remains a public service that other counties and states are seeking to model. In front of the White Bird Clinic last August, Sen. Wyden announced his introduction of the CAHOOTS Act, a bill that would grant federal funding via Medicaid to create



CAHOOTS workers are not from a different planet. What are the skills they have to de-escalate that police officers cannot learn?



small-scale local mobile crisis response teams similar to the program based in Eugene.

“Americans struggling with mental illness don’t always require law enforcement to be dispatched when they are experiencing a crisis. CAHOOTS is proof positive there is another way,” said Wyden.

The Act reveals the positive impact that CAHOOTS has had on the Eugene community, as well as how it has laid the groundwork for a national conversation on police alternatives in a year defined by both social unrest and health crises.

For similar programs to be viable and sustainable in other cities across the United States, Morgan says there needs to be more of a dedication to establishing trust among citizens, law enforcement and public safety response teams. Because CAHOOTS is accessed through

EPD or the Springfield Police Department, there are people who don’t feel comfortable calling in for service, says Morgan. Creating a new dispatch console, however, goes beyond just funding. It deals with re-structuring a much larger system.

“The public safety system was never designed to have an extra part involved, says Morgan. “So the way you’re supposed to advocate and push for change and also not disrupt the existing structure too much is an experience.”

According to Laurel Lisovskis, a medic and crisis worker at CAHOOTS, the program requires 40-60 hours of basic training which involves, but is not limited to, writing reports, suicide risk assessments, restorative justice and an emergency vehicle operations course. She said after this the trainee will participate in ride-alongs with a two-person team, then graduate to two to three months of working with a cross-trained worker.

Ibrahim Coulibaly, the president of the Eugene/Springfield NAACP chapter and a former hospital worker, applauds CAHOOTS’ efforts in behavioral and mental health aid, but questions why EPD and other police forces aren’t placing more of an emphasis on these training methods. In his experience, Coulibaly says that police try to establish control in a situation as a first step.

“CAHOOTS workers are not from a different planet. What are the skills they have to de-escalate that police officers cannot learn?” asks Coulibaly.

Skinner says that his officers receive up to 40 hours of in-class de-escalation training, but that he can’t be sure how similar those classes are to the ones used in CAHOOTS’ training.

So, while it may benefit all response teams to prioritize de-escalation and empathy in their approaches, Swift and Morgan articulate that CAHOOTS workers prioritize empathy at the core of their approach above all else.

For Lisovskis, this model has allowed her to resolve conflicts in the heat of the moment on many occasions. She, like most CAHOOTS workers, can recall a particular incident where the importance of her job started to click.

Lisovskis describes a particular time when her eyes met with a suicidal caller who stood, alone, on the edge of a body of water on the outskirts of Eugene. As she walked over to her client, her first instinct was to approach the situation as a human being. Once they got talking, Lisovskis served as a source of warmth and comfort as her CAHOOTS training had taught her.

“It doesn’t take a lot. Just being super decent and being able to have a difficult conversation with someone about where they’re at and not evade the subject,” says Lisovskis. “Hold space for human decency.”

WORD
ON **1** davis
street.

Street Roots practices what it preaches — spreading advocacy on the streets of Portland while putting money in people's pockets.

written by **REINA HARWOOD**
captured by **JULIA PAGE**



After helping all morning with greetings and passing out food and supplies to vendors, Lee Vaughn stands outside of Street Roots headquarters with the latest issue.

I

In the center of northwest Portland's Old Chinatown, the Street Roots newsroom starts to perk up. Lee Vaughn lifts herself up from her wheelchair as a batch of nearly 5,000 newspapers is dropped off at the doorstep of the Street Roots building. She carries a stack to the office desks inside, the still-wet ink staining her hands.

Vaughn sets out a plate of freshly baked cookies, brews a pot of coffee and reads this week's front-page headline. A group of 20 vendors begins to line up outside — just in time for the Wednesday morning “print day” rush. Anxiously waiting to restock their backpacks with this week's edition, they're ready to start selling papers on the streets of Portland. As they wait, the smell of rain, ink and burnt cigarettes floods the sidewalk.

Street Roots is Portland's award-winning weekly street newspaper, known primarily for its reporting on the city's social and environmental justice issues. Each year, the organization hires over 800 people who are experiencing homelessness as vendors to sell the newspaper.

“Welcome in,” says Vaughn, who was once a vendor but now volunteers at the front desk. Vaughn's smile is the first thing vendors see when they enter the Street Roots building. Most days, Vaughn's Pomeranian, Natasha, follows her around the office, hopping on three legs or sitting on Vaughn's lap in her wheelchair.

Vaughn prefers to stay in her wheelchair most of the time. She worries about having a seizure, a side effect of the severe back injuries she suffers from. When Vaughn experienced her first seizure seven years ago, Natasha was on guard to alert her — and she has been ever since. The daily commute as a vendor became too much for Vaughn to handle in her chair, so she is now working her way up to a paid office position.

Of many turning points in Vaughn's life, finding Natasha and Street Roots are among the most influential. “In 1997 I took a 22 and I shot myself in the head because of depression. I've got a bullet lodged behind my eye. My depression just got out of control. I battle with it every day,” she says. “But [Street Roots] is helping. This is helping a lot.”

Among the people she greets is Scott Mattson and his dog, Indica.

“I'm a happy millionaire!” Mattson shouts after exchanging a wrinkled \$10 bill for a stack of 40 papers. Mattson and Indica leave the building, fueled by the



Gary Barker, far right, the Lead Ambassador for Street Roots, stands outside to chat with the vendors as they wait to purchase newspapers and check their mail.



Gary Barker has been with Street Roots since 2019. He is the leader of the organization's Mobile Journalism Initiative, which focuses on people experiencing homelessness producing media. "It's about giving back to where I came from," said Barker. "Even being home, I'll always be a street person."

energy that comes with working at Street Roots.

This routine repeats itself every Wednesday morning, as it has for the past 22 years.

In many ways, Street Roots operates just like your typical alternative city weekly newspaper; it's filled with local journalism and in-depth reporting. However, the unique organizational structure of Street Roots allows it to go beyond the coverage of homelessness issues. The separate non-profit advocacy side of Street Roots provides people experiencing homelessness with a way to earn a stable income.

A vendor employed at Street Roots will complete an orientation process and begin with 10 complimentary papers to sell. Moving forward, each vendor will pay 25 cents per paper, selling them to customers in Portland neighborhoods for \$1, pocketing 75 cents and tips in profit.

Street Roots co-founder Bryan Pollard previously worked as a photojournalist at Portland's Burnside Cadillac. In 1999, he became editor and transformed the Burnside Cadillac into today's Street Roots. The paper has always focused on housing issues affecting Oregonians, but its coverage of social and political issues has increased over the years.

"We became a platform for those voices and started showing the human side of the issues," says Pollard. "We made sure people understood there was a human toll to have such wealth inequality and profound poverty right in front of the faces of everyone who thought Portland was this shiny beacon of liberalism."

Gary Barker is proof of the Street Roots mission. Barker, 62, sold newspapers for Street Roots when he was homeless. He was eventually promoted to a full-time position as one of the paper's lead ambassadors. He now does outreach work and coaches new vendors.

"[Street Roots] provides opportunities to individuals who are willing to take the chance," he says. "They gave me stability."

Prior to his acceptance into the Street Roots Ambassador Program, Barker battled a crystal meth addiction. Sober for over a year now, he says he wouldn't

EACH VENDOR WILL PAY 25 CENTS PER PAPER,
SELLING THEM TO CUSTOMERS IN PORTLAND
NEIGHBORHOODS FOR \$1, POCKETING 75 CENTS
AND TIPS IN PROFIT.

25

be where he is today — living in an apartment and owning a car — without the support of his family at Street Roots and his newspaper clientele.

Barker says that the organization builds a bridge through journalism, allowing unhoused individuals to feel understood and human again. As a vendor, Barker says he would often sell to the same Portland clients each week. Some would pay up to \$40 for a single newspaper or supply him with gift cards. His clientele empowered him to get back on his feet.

“I like the fact that they believed in me. It helped me build my confidence up for me to believe in myself,” Barker says. “Street Roots gave me a purpose. They gave me some value in my life. Being homeless was only a condition; it ain’t me.”

Street Roots reports on social justice issues, legislative decisions, local movements and more. Outside of the news operation, Street Roots advocates against the criminalization of homelessness. “It seeks to be a voice for the voiceless,” says Emily Green, Street Roots’ managing editor. “I’m so grateful every day that I get to do this work.”

Although a nonprofit newspaper sold by people experiencing homelessness is far from traditional, the articles are often written by professional journalists, community organizations and private citizens and are edited by an experienced newsroom staff.

Street Roots’ journalism and advocacy tend to overlap when the editorial board publishes

editorials. These pieces will often advocate for different causes. Case in point: Last April, Street Roots published an editorial pushing for the transformation of empty hotel and motel rooms into long-term affordable housing. In the editorial, Street Roots’ editors said it was a necessary step in addressing the housing crisis in Portland. At the time, 87% of Portland’s 15,800 hotel rooms were empty due to the pandemic. The editorial requested that Oregon Gov. Kate Brown take action to protect the unhoused community.

“There’s such a disconnect between policy-making, politicians and people on the streets. It’s hard to bridge that,” Street Roots Executive Director Kaia Sand says.

Ultimately, more than 409 hotel and motel rooms were reserved for unhoused people seeking affordable shelter. Further, the Oregon State Legislature Emergency Board decided to give private groups \$65 million of general funds to purchase financially struggling motels around the state.

In addition to news and opinion, Street Roots publishes poetry written by vendors. One former vendor who contributes her work is Tina Drake. Drake found Street Roots around 2011 and underwent her gender transition in the years that followed. After selling newspapers for eight years, she became a paid Street Roots staff member.

Last year, Drake was diagnosed with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). She was scared of becoming fatally ill from a weak immune system

Tara, a Street Roots vendor, grabs a handful of newspapers. Workers for Street Roots can also receive toiletries, clothing, snacks and a hot cup of coffee.





Fun decorations and signs like this one adorn the walls and desks throughout each room of the Street Roots headquarters.

and from common sicknesses like the cold. This fear manifested itself. “I got very depressed, to the point of almost ending my life,” she says. “I was like, if I got this, then why should I even go on?”

Street Roots staff members became Drake’s family and helped her find housing. They also helped assure Drake that she could handle her diagnosis.

“The people I know here helped me understand that it’s not a death sentence. It changed my outlook and saved my life,” she says. “I wouldn’t be who I am or where I am today without Street Roots.”

After living on and off the streets for over eight years, Drake qualified for housing fewer than four blocks from the Street Roots office.

It’s past noon on this chilly Wednesday in February, and Lee Vaughn is rinsing the coffee pot and putting away leftover toiletries. As she neatly piles extra papers from the day, she is surrounded by the laughter and positive energy that is ever-present in the Street Roots newsroom. Gazing through the window, she sees Gary Barker with a group of vendors chatting outside. She steps out to say hi, with a cigarette hanging between her lips. “You got a lighter?” she asks him. “Of course I do,” he replies and covers the warm flame with his hand.

Vaughn walks back into the office where her wheelchair is parked. She finds Natasha spread out peacefully in the seat. Vaughn picks her up. “Time to go, honey,” she says.

She sits down and takes a deep breath. Putting her beanie on, she rolls out of the Street Roots front doors and looks over her shoulder.

“See you all next week!” she says as she passes the tents set up along Davis Street. 🍌



“Since they have no mother, we essentially become their mother,” says Helen Demes, a caretaker at Sunset Farms Sanctuary. “We feed them, nurture them and protect them until they’re older and can do it for themselves.”

finding Sanctuary

written by **MAKENZIE ELLIOTT & JENNAH PENDLETON**
captured by **ISABEL LEMUS KRISTENSEN**

DRAWING ON A LOVE FOR ANIMALS, the owners of Oregon animal sanctuaries are a breed like no other. They have committed almost every aspect of their lives to providing a safe and welcoming environment for their animal residents.

Staying true to the definition of a sanctuary, these farms provide temporary or permanent refuge to animals in need. Many are rescued from abusive situations or are brought to the sanctuary because of health-related issues.

With plentiful amounts of food and room to roam, the animals residing at these sanctuaries might have found their storybook ending. Life on the farm, however, isn't always glamorous — especially for the humans running them. Long days, unexpected vet bills and non-stop physical labor are the everyday norm. This past year proved even more challenging with its extreme weather and the pandemic. Despite the hardships, these animal sanctuary owners won't back down anytime soon.

GREEN ACRES FARM SANCTUARY

During the Holiday Farm fire last summer, Green Acres Farm Sanctuary in Silverton, Oregon, quickly went from no warning to a Level 2 emergency status, forcing owners Tina and John Crow to be prepared to evacuate at any moment. The Crows got moving immediately to protect their roughly 150 animals. This was a first for Green Acres; evacuation drills were never something they had to practice as the yearly fire season didn't usually affect them. Board members, past volunteers and those who had a trailer to spare showed up to take animals to a safe place. Animals ended up in multiple counties, including in people's own homes, as the sanctuary waited for the emergency status to change.

Luckily, the fire did not damage Green Acres, but the task of getting the animals back proved to be more complicated than getting them out. In that process, a goat named Gretta got away near the Polk County Fairgrounds. This launched a dayslong search that included flying a drone, bringing out other goats in an attempt to lure her back, and distributing hundreds of flyers in the area.

Tina Crow became a vegetarian at 13 years old in the mid-1980s and was vegan by 18, long before one could find dairy-free options at a standard grocery store. Prior to opening Green Acres, Tina said her veganism was the main way she contributed to animal welfare. But as she learned more about the plight of animals, she wanted to dedicate her life to helping them in some way.

This desire turned into a sanctuary for farm animals, a place to care for the animals whose lives are typically seen as expendable.

Green Acres is currently a wonderland that hosts over 150 animals, with pens built to protect the animals from the elements. It didn't always look this way. Before the Crows founded Green Acres, the property was just a run-down barn with minimal fencing and no infrastructure to house livestock.

Determined to create a haven for animals in need of a home, Tina and John spent the last decade building on the land to accommodate more animals and establishing a community support system. Since its inception, Green Acres has been a 501(c)(3) nonprofit run completely by volunteers.

Tina said that she and John have been lucky to maintain financial health because of the help they received from community members. The majority of the hardship they faced in the last year was a result of extreme weather conditions.

As the rest of the Green Acres animals were safe at home after the fire last summer, Gretta the goat was still lost. After 10 days, she was found alive about 20 miles away.

Although the thought of a natural disaster happening again is distressing for the founders and volunteers of Green Acres, they will be better prepared in the case that it does.

In the months that followed the fire, they raised \$8,000 in donations. They bought a new trailer in honor of Gretta's journey, so they can ensure the safety of their animals in the case of an evacuation.

"We have to realize that this may be a common event and really wrap our heads around the fact that we might have to do this again," Tina said.

The weather is likely to continue to be extreme in the following summers, but the Crows will endure it to keep the animals in their care safe.

WELCOME HOME ANIMAL SANCTUARY

El Rey the turkey hobbles down the gravel driveway of Welcome Home Animal Sanctuary in Creswell, Oregon. Feathers sprawled out in full display, he lets out a big gobble.

"He really likes the ladies," said Misty Moore, the owner of the sanctuary, while closing the front gate before a curious pig can escape.

A baby goat in one hand, Moore welcomes visitors to her farm. A real life "Charlotte's Web" plays out as animals of all kinds socialize and roam the 10 acres of the sanctuary. Pigs sunbathe in the long-awaited March sun, goats rest on the front porch and little lambs follow along looking for a quick pet.

Moore founded the sanctuary in 2016 and now cares for 78 animals, including cows, pigs, goats, sheep, alpacas, chickens, ducks and turkeys.

Funds can be hard to come by during the first few years as an organization, Moore said. Feeding 2,000-pound cows isn't cheap, and unexpected vet bills happen often. Moore planned to promote the farm in the spring of 2020, but when the pandemic hit, she didn't have a chance to build a large donor base. Currently, Moore and her husband, Robert, work other jobs outside the sanctuary to provide for the animals.

"It's the hardest thing emotionally, physically and financially," Moore, 44, said. "But at the same time it's the most rewarding thing, and I would not give it up for anything."

Back in the pasture, Poppy the pig peeks out from behind the barn. Moore rescued her from a nearby pig farm after the farmer noticed deformation in Poppy's legs. Moore took in the little pig and spent a year rehabilitating her. She massaged Poppy's bowed legs and used braces to hold them in shape. The owner of the farm later approached Moore with another disabled pig from the same mother. Moore accepted the second pig but asked the farmer to surrender the mother too, as she was consistently producing disabled babies. After a long debate, Moore was able to rescue her. Now, the three pigs have 10 acres to run around on.

"I don't care if I'm out there in the hail and the rain every day," Moore said. "I am keeping the animals warm and I'm keeping them dry and I'm keeping them comfortable — and that's what matters."



left: Lennon is one of two newborn goats rescued and brought to Welcome Home Farm. The newborns and their mother received emergency treatment but "they are both doing great now and Mama Maple is running and playing and being super sassy," Misty Moore said.

below: When Bastian Schweinsteigers came to Green Acres he had never been around other pigs. Now he and two other pigs, Pete Henry and Gilbert, are family. Tina Crow said they can find a sense of community with their own species.



OREGON HORSE RESCUE

Jane Kelly reaches out her hand to touch Big's leg. The horse recently cut his leg while trying to jump a fence. Jane's husband, David, watches from behind the fence as she begins to evaluate Big's injury. Jane and David have been monitoring the wound to ensure proper healing. After a quick inspection, Jane yells to David to call the vet. The wound had worsened and now requires immediate medical attention. David calls the clinic to make an appointment, but the only time available is after-hours at 6 p.m. This means a larger vet bill and a longer day for the Kellys.

David, 66, and Jane, 55, own and operate Oregon Horse Rescue. Sitting on 70 acres of rolling pastures west of Eugene, the rescue provides permanent and temporary homes to horses in need. The couple founded OHR in 2013 and have since rescued about 120 horses.

Big is just one of 15 horses currently living on the property. Each horse has been rescued for a variety of reasons: some come from abusive situations and others from owner surrenders.

According to David, OHR will often receive one to 10 requests each week for an owner to surrender a horse. He said it's hard to turn horses away, but he is often inclined to accept disabled or blind horses.

OHR operates as a hybrid rescue and sanctuary. This means that some horses, like Big, are available for adoption, while others will reside on the farm permanently.

David and Jane personally funded the majority of the expenses for the farm during the first few years, David said. OHR now relies heavily on donations. Those usually come in the form of payments or physical items like hay or equipment. David said he's thankful for any donation, regardless of size.

"We received a donation once in the mail that was \$7 in cash crumpled in an envelope," he said. "And we appreciated that because I'm sure that was a struggle for that person."

Every little bit counts because the cost of a horse isn't cheap. David said he's had years where the vet bill was as high as \$44,000. Other costs include feed and hoof care.

Despite the financial and physical hardship, the Kellys say it's worth it.

"It's very, very rewarding because you see horses saved, you see horses' lives transformed," David said. "You see people's lives transformed that groom the horses as volunteers here. You see people's lives transformed that adopt the horse."



Cornish cross chickens are selectively modified to gain weight quickly. But this weight gain comes at a price. Overeating causes leg injuries and heart failure. At Green Acres, they are kept in their own pen to keep them healthy and control their food intake.



Jane Kelly treats India's eye injury with an antibiotic ointment. India is a 23-year-old Arabian cross and one of the first horses the Kellys rescued.

SUNSET FARMS SANCTUARY

If you walk up to Helen Demes' house, you better watch where you step. Hay covers the front porch, and that's just the beginning. Stepping into the old Victorian farmhouse in Brownsville, Oregon, you notice the dirt and hay covering the floor as cats, pigs and goats roam freely throughout the kitchen. Tabitha, a disabled goat, rolls around in her make-shift wheelchair. The line between home and barn? Blurry may be the right word.

"Right now, living in my house," Demes said, "I have two dogs, three cats, one disabled rooster, one teeny tiny rooster who's too small to go out, a hen that's sick, a turkey that's sick, two goats that are deformed, one goat that was abused, and 10 lambs."

After a career in Washington D.C., Demes made the move to Oregon and opened up Sunset Farms in 2017. Initially, Demes said that she established the farm as a domestic rescue, but people began dropping off farm animals too. Today, Sunset Farms Sanctuary houses over 140 animals of various species.

"EVERY SINGLE SENTIENT BEING DESERVES DIGNITY IN THEIR LIFE AND DEATH."

"I don't care if they're two-legged, four-legged, winged," Demes, 58, said. "Every single sentient being deserves dignity in their life and death."

As the sole caretaker for every animal on the farm, she starts the day at 3:30 a.m. and sometimes doesn't end until 8 or 9 p.m. Most of her day consists of feeding, cleaning and vet care.

Volunteers are hard to come by, Demes said, as the volunteer base for domestic animal shelters doesn't carry over into the farm animal world.

Making her way across her property, she calls out each animal's name and gives them a quick pet before moving to the next. When asked how she remembers all the animals' names, Demes replied, "They're basically my children."

Whether it's a nine-pound baby goat or a 900-pound pig, Demes said she will provide love and respect for the animal. What might seem chaotic to some people is simply Demes' life. A 17-hour workday is the norm and sharing a home with goats is just the nature of the job.

"It's at times soul-wrenching, it's at times disheartening," Demes said. "And it's at times unbelievably happy." 🐾



From right to left: Namun, Joey, Savina and Cleo rest under the sun at Sunset Farms Sanctuary. "All the lambs are from local farmers who pull them from [their] mother either because they were undesirable or a triplet that wouldn't thrive," Demes said. "We are their only option."

NOTE to SELF

For women, letting go of society's ideas of who we should be is self-care.

written by ELIZABETH GROENING

In an episode of the classic 1950s sitcom “Leave it to Beaver,” Wally Cleaver comes home to find his mother, June, reading on the couch. Stunned, he asks, “Are you sick or something? I never saw a mom lying down in the daytime before.” Wally’s mom replies, “I’m just resting. I know it’s against the rules, but don’t tell anybody.”

Wally’s shock is warranted. Over the course of the show’s six seasons, the mom is always on her feet, cooking and cleaning up after her husband and two sons. Not only is June constantly caring for men, but she’s hardly ever shown outside of the house or doing things for herself.

I grew up watching other old TV shows like “I Love Lucy” and “The Brady Bunch.” Whenever I’d stay home sick from school, my mom would break out the DVDs and we’d have all-day marathons. While she took care of me — taking my temperature and placing cold washcloths on my forehead — we’d watch Lucy Ricardo care for her husband, Ricky. Or June looking after Ward, Wally and Beaver. Or Carol Brady making sure her husband, Mike, and their six kids were okay.

These three female characters always looked beautiful, and their lives appeared nothing short of idyllic. All they ever did was prepare meals, clean their homes and spend quality time with their families. As a little girl, all I wanted was to someday have that effortless beauty and simple lifestyle.

However, as I’ve gotten older, I’ve realized that Lucy, June and Carol represent a way of life that’s anything but easy. They were written in a way that trapped them inside, minimized their voices and reinforced society’s beauty ideals for women. There’s even an “I Love Lucy” episode called “The Diet” in which Lucy starves herself and overexercises to lose 12 pounds in five days. Today’s women are still expected to be thin, married nurturers. Even working moms — like mine, who’s been a teacher for 17 years — don’t get a reprieve from household chores. Recent research finds that most women who are married to men, whether they are working or not, are doing the grocery

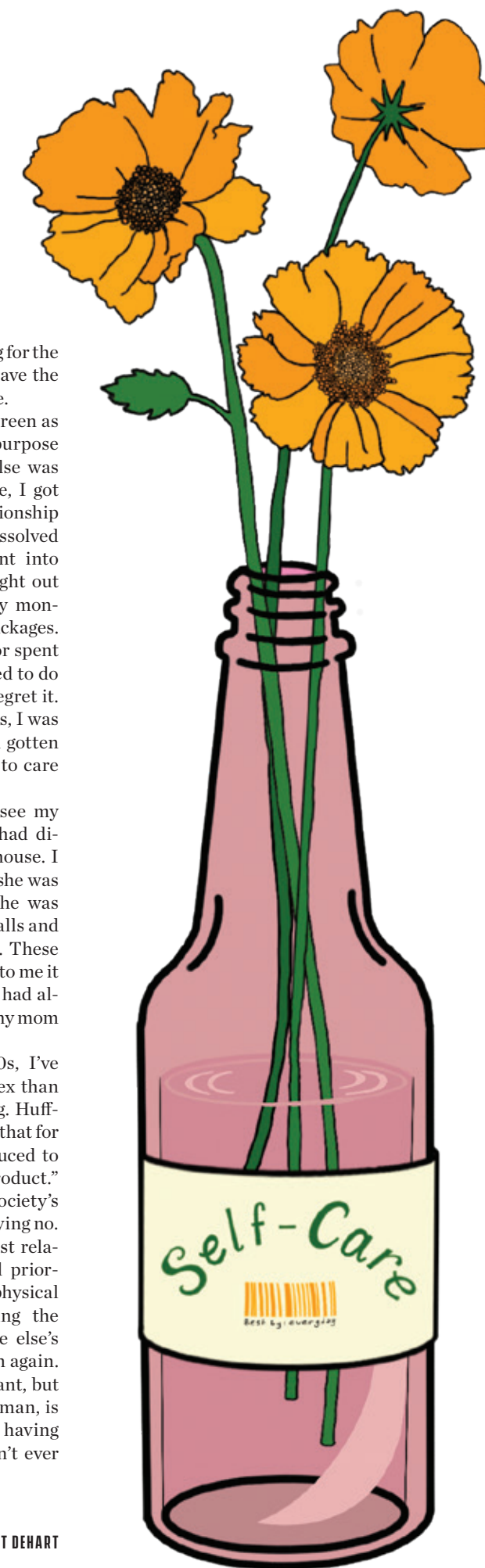
shopping, laundry, dishes and caring for the kids. As a result, they often don’t have the time or energy to prioritize self-care.

By admiring women on and off screen as caregivers, I internalized that my purpose was to make sure that everyone else was happy — especially men. In college, I got into a serious long-distance relationship with a guy I loved, but my identity dissolved completely. All of my energy went into caring for him. I’d turn down a night out with friends to FaceTime him. My money went to plane rides and care packages. I’d feel guilty if I ever told him no or spent time on myself. It was what I wanted to do at that point in my life, so I don’t regret it. But when we eventually parted ways, I was drained. My hair and my body had gotten extremely thin. I didn’t know how to care for myself, but I knew I had to start.

Around this time, I’d begun to see my mom in a new light. My parents had divorced, and she’d bought her own house. I was shocked by all of the decisions she was capable of making on her own. She was choosing what colors to paint the walls and which roses to plant in the garden. These choices may seem insignificant, but to me it was inspiring. Growing up, my dad had always been the decision-maker, but my mom finally had a voice.

Being a woman in my early 20s, I’ve found that self-care is more complex than applying face masks and journaling. Huff-Post writer Lindsay Holmes argues that for women “self-care shouldn’t be reduced to a fleeting activity or dispensable product.” Instead, self-care is letting go of society’s notion of who we ought to be and saying no.

I’ve come a long way since my last relationship. Sure, eating healthy and prioritizing sleep has replenished my physical health. Ultimately, however, taking the pressure off myself to be everyone else’s caregiver has made me a full person again. I no longer focus on what others want, but on my own needs — which, as a woman, is harder than it sounds. By finally having enough confidence to say no, I won’t ever lose myself in another relationship.



illustrations by MILIGENT DEHART

How finding comfort in being alone can lead to a greater sense of self-love.

written by ERIN MCMAHON

To be blunt, my whole friend group is dating each other. Dylan is with Emily. Megan is with Rob. Emmett is with Kylie. Most of them met before COVID-19 turned the world upside down or have been together for upwards of three years. And me? I'm with myself. In turn, I find myself craving an answer to why I am the perpetual single girl. Is it the pandemic? Is it where I live? Is it my allegiance to the Lakers?

Or the question that plagues us all at some point or another: Is it me?

I'm known to be quite hard on myself in many aspects of life. This is probably why I self-deprecate a lot by using sarcastic jokes as a crutch for being single. I cope through humor, but I've also realized it's in a lot of people's nature to do so. My whole life I've been told, "You've just got to put yourself out there!" But what do you do when you physically cannot?

And, truly, I don't mean to uptake this Carrie Bradshaw persona with all these relationship questions and curiosities, but this seems to be affecting a lot of people. In an Instagram poll of 258 college students, 54% reported their relationship status as single. Of that pool, 67% said they find it hard to meet new people in the current social environment.

With the absence of a significant other, the singles of the world are attempting to fill a gap that others just aren't filling. Since my last breakup, I've been on a journey towards self-love — the physical and psychological relationship I have with myself. And, like a relationship with another person sometimes it doesn't come easy and, it takes a lot of time and attention. For me, it took a change of scenery.

After my sophomore year of college, I struggled with being comfortable in my own skin and being alone. I had plans to

study abroad that summer, and while I voiced excitement, I felt timorous. Still, I boarded a plane to London and threw myself into a completely new environment. I knew a couple of people on the trip already and met some others while there, but sometimes our class schedules didn't line up to explore the city together. What started out as walks down the street for a morning coffee turned into solo expeditions from Russell Square to the Tate Museum. My passion for art got me out of bed the majority of the time I was in London. I wanted to see it all, and seeing it alone I got to experience it the way I wanted to: sometimes chatting with strangers, and other times with my headphones in listening to my favorite albums.

Upon my arrival back in the States, I reached a new level of certainty within my relationship with myself. I was comfortable going about my days alone and more accepting of my self-perception. And, when I find myself third-wheeling with Dylan and Emily or in distress about societal pressures to find someone, I find comfort in how far I've come.

My trip across the pond didn't absolve me of inherent envy or disparagement, but I can handle it. That's not to say things have been fantastic. No idea who decided a pandemic was in order.

That said, now is a better time than ever to take yourself out on a date.

Practicing self-love comes in many forms, but at the root of it all is finding comfort with yourself mentally and being at peace with yourself physically. Without that foundation, having a significant other won't solve all your life's problems the way you think it might. So, while I will soldier on as the single girl in my friend group, I need to remind myself of the value in being alone, and being just a little bit in love with myself.

Finding the line between being self-conscious and having self-awareness.

written by SHANNON DAEHNKE

As I catch myself wondering what my therapist *really* meant by her painfully long pause — which I'll later realize was simply a lagging internet connection — I am quickly reminded of why I started therapy in the first place.

While I don't think I could name *many* upsides of the pandemic, opening up the conversation about mental health has got to be one of them. As more and more people are left alone with their thoughts for a majority of the day, they've realized, some perhaps for the first time, that their mental health may not be as resilient as they previously believed. Luckily enough for me, I already had some experience on the subject of mental health pre-pandemic and am no stranger to the art of self-rumination. So, this whole thing had nothing on me. Or so I thought.

The people closest to me are well aware of my day-to-day struggles with the demands of modern existence. From my "tragic" inability to keep my room clean to my ridiculous procrastination habits to my ever-anxious brain, things that have always been lifestyle habits for me are often deemed "chaotic" by my inner circle. I am not exaggerating, by the way. Each surface of my room is covered at any moment (including this one), and I fully procrastinated writing this essay until the absolute last second.

Of all of my recurring tropes, a feeling of hyper self-awareness rears its ugly head every single day. Just yesterday, I came across my roommate and good friend Danielle in our kitchen, making herself a mock Café Yumm bowl. I noticed that the can of black olives she was using looked suspiciously like the one I had left in the fridge the day before. I decided to confront Danielle about her olive usage, to which she assured me that they were in fact her olives, not mine. The Great Olive Debate plagued my thoughts for the next hour. I truly was convinced that Danielle was probably furious with me for accusing her of theft.

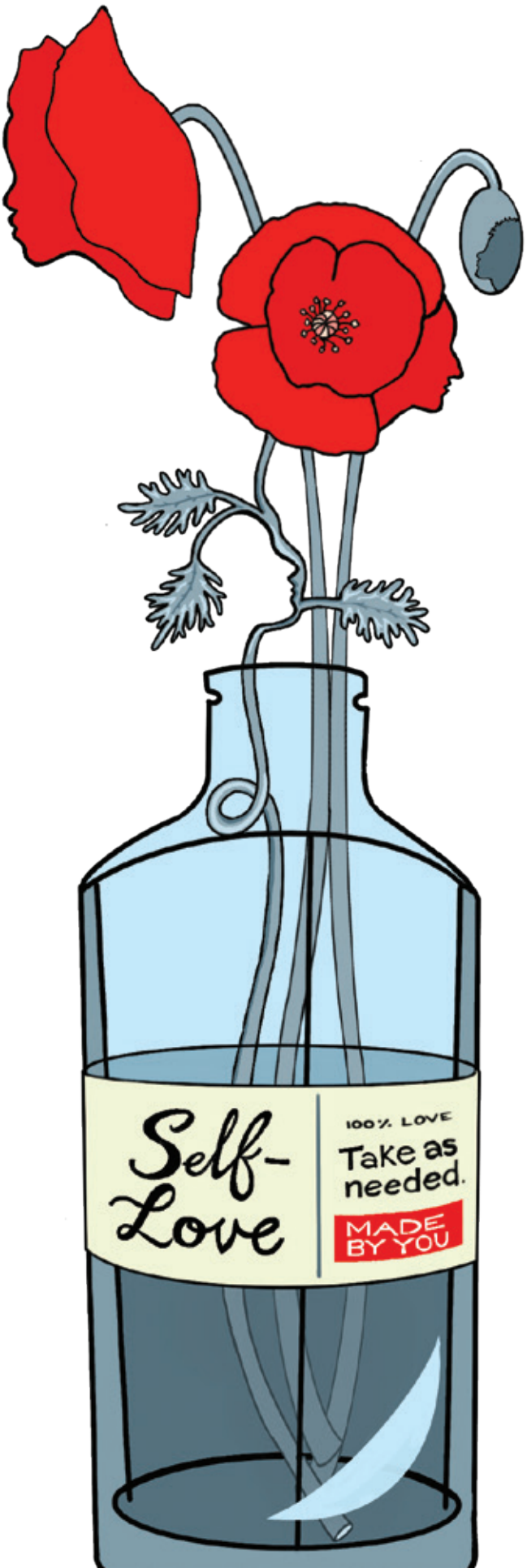
The shift from in-person interaction to Zoom has provided no escape from this turmoil of awareness. If anything, having to see my face looking back at me while I deliver a five-minute monologue to a sea of silent faces staring at me as I sometimes-awkwardly fumble over my words or make a dumb joke has been, at times, a nightmare.

The common thread between The Great Olive Debate and the torture that is Zoom? There is a fine line between being self-aware and being self-conscious. And to me, the difference lies in seeking validation from others.

With Danielle, it took everything I had not to text her a long-winded apology over the olive accusation, simply so that I would know that she wasn't mad at me. And when I make a dumb joke over Zoom, I always turn to my boyfriend afterwards to have him assure me that it was in fact funny; I just couldn't hear anyone laugh because it was muted.

As self-aware as I have always believed myself to be, it took a global pandemic for me to self-reflect enough to finally seek therapy for the anxiety I've always known I had. I chalk this prolonged search up to my sheer procrastination habits and my — rather impressive — ability to compensate for these issues, rather than any sort of aversion to therapy. But, truthfully, it takes a very strong person to seek therapy. So, I am proud of myself for realizing that however self-aware I deemed myself to be, I could always use the help.

My first few trips to therapy have brought about many things. From my now-confirmed anxiety disorder to an ADHD diagnosis at the fresh age of 21, the generally chaotic way I have always lived my life was given some sort of validation. But I'm learning not to depend on this validation, or on the validation of others. The thin line between being self-aware and being self-conscious is one that I walk daily, though now with more ease than before. But I'll save the rest for my therapist. 📌



for a friend.

words and photographs by **SAM SCUDDER**



This picture was taken the last time I saw Cayden (right). In January 2020, we jumped around to different house shows in Eugene, having the time of our lives. We parted ways with the future looking bright, as we talked about forming another band. It was a special weekend that I'll hold close forever.



The moon hangs over the Nevada desert. It shone brightly throughout our three-day trip. Sometimes I tell myself the moon was Cayden watching over us.

Cayden Himes lost his life to a car accident in March 2020 while driving from Oregon to his home in Arizona. Near the one-year anniversary of Cayden’s death, a group of his friends and I retraced his final drive. As his father, Tony, put it, we served as a “bridge” between Cayden’s college and family life, recalling painful and beautiful memories of what he meant to us.

Cayden was an art history major at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. When I was at Willamette for my first year of college, he was the first person I met. Within a few hours of our introductory conversation, Cayden and I decided to form a band. The plan led us to a third-place finish in Willamette’s battle of the bands: a hotly contested competition that had never seen our level of “spirit.” The last time we spoke, we talked about forming another band. I can’t help but compare how our time together began and ended in such similar fashion: centered on ambition and what we shared in common.

Spending time with him felt like being accepted. He would match my humor and make it even better. He was honest about bad ideas, but not brutally. Wise beyond his 21 years, he always understood my true self and helped me through dark times, whether he knew it or not. I miss him but will always feel lucky to call him a close friend.

To this very moment, Cayden’s death lingers in my mind. In the days following the accident I wondered what road he took on that fateful day, and if I ever passed it on one of my many trips across the state. Filled with an urge to conquer the road that took our friend, I got in contact with two of Cayden’s close friends, Henry Vietenhans and Larson Stalder. A few days later, we did just that: from Oregon to Arizona and back.

There were moments during the drive when I felt irritated. I thought to myself, “We shouldn’t be doing this drive. This was his drive to make.” But as Cayden once wrote, “*Good, then bad, then realize, then accept.*” And that’s how this trip went.



Odell Lake around 5 a.m. After driving the icy road of Oregon Route 58, it was nice to stop and watch the sunrise.



Henry Veitenhans, 20, and Larson Stalder, 21, in traffic on U.S. Highway 95 in Nevada. The thought of Cayden during the 20-hour drive felt like a weight, occasionally lifted by the recollection of our fond memories of our lost friend. We remembered late-night existential talks with Cayden when we considered how sadness was necessary to truly appreciate good days.



“I knew him to be a seeker like myself, *someone who divined meaning from living life richly, from new discovery and experiences.* In the entirety of my life, I have encountered very few people who lived life as fully as Cayden.”

— Henry Veitenhans

Veitenhans holds one of Cayden's most recognizable button-up shirts. He usually wore one of his favorite band tees underneath. I remember him wearing the shirt while we walked from music improvisation class to the dorms. He was beside me, playing his acoustic bass and nodding his head wildly, making everyone who passed smile.

Aubreigh Himes, Cayden's sister, **Stalder** and **Veitenhans** stand on a natural rock formation outside **Cayden's** hometown of Prescott, Arizona. When we left this spot, I remember crying because it felt like I was saying goodbye to Cayden again. I didn't want to go.



“Watching that sunset brought a wave of emotions: grief most of all, but also *love, fulfillment, healing.*”

—Larson Stalder

Aubreigh brought us to this trail where she comes to remember **Cayden**, a place where they bonded. Whenever his family walks this trail, they bring a quartz rock from the bottom to the top and set it on the pile.



*“Over the years it was apparent that Cayden was a natural leader. He was often looked up to literally and figuratively. He was tall for his age early on, and by the end of his teen years he stood at 6’ 6”. He was never afraid to step forward and take the lead in most settings. **He possessed a profound sense of empathy.** He wasn’t outspoken about it; he would stand up for the underdog or any injustice. He was a good listener and it made him a good leader.”*

— Tracie Himes, Cayden’s mother



“Generationally there was a gap. However, emotionally there was no separation. We were all there together in our grief and gratitude related to Cayden,” Tony Himes, Cayden’s father, said. On our last night before leaving Arizona, Cayden’s family and friends gathered around the bonfire. We shared stories and sang songs late into the Prescott night. When it was over, I felt Cayden smiling somewhere.

Activism can take many forms. Three Eugene changemakers speak on what activism means to them and what its future may look like.

written by REINA HARWOOD, CLAUDIA LEE, ISABEL LEMUS KRISTENSEN, JULIA PAGE & NICO RODRIGUEZ

Oregon activists and educators don't shy away from addressing systemic racism and social injustice. For generations, survivors and fighters have withstood white supremacy, discrimination and hate crimes: each a symptom of an American society paralyzing BIPOC and LGBTQ communities nationwide.

Flux had the chance to speak with three community leaders on what activism looks like to them. The interviews have been edited for length and clarity.

Nikolaj Byrdman, 31, is the founder and organizer of Lane East Asian Network, a group that aids the Eugene community through protests against Asian hate and provides a safe place for East Asians to speak on social media.

Beck Banks is a doctoral candidate at the UO working in researching in transgender media, particularly television representation, and trans rurality. Banks also makes short films and has been working on a documentary about transgender healthcare in Central Appalachia.

Tyshawn Ford is a leader at Black Unity, a Eugene- and Portland-based activist group working on educating people on forms of institutionalized racism and giving back to the community. Through efforts such as clothing giveaways, organizing events for certain holidays and house feeds, Black Unity prioritizes events that focus on promoting the needs of the BIPOC community.



united through
ACTIVISM

NIKOLAJ BYRDMAN

Lane East Asian Network (LEAN)

Since you started getting involved with activism, have you seen any changes in your lifetime since you've been involved with LEAN?

The main thing I'm seeing in our community, and even specific to myself, is that all of these people of color groups are finally realizing that we can unite and support each other. I think in Eugene that's really hard to find because not only is it difficult to find other East Asian people but just people of color in general. And now that Black Unity has kind of pioneered that direct action in Eugene, a lot of us are waking up and realizing we can unite and get a lot of stuff done together. I think that's the biggest thing — not only class consciousness, but also a "people of color consciousness." An awareness of each other's existence and how we go through a lot of the same issues.

Do you think that the Eugene community has supported your movement/the movement in general?

I believe we have actually had a lot of support from the Eugene community. My only hope is that the people supporting our movement — to stop Asian hate — also support Black Lives Matter. I mentioned that at our last march because the Black community in Eugene has also gone out of their way to support our movement. But even if they didn't, people should be digging a little deeper into why they support us and not Black Lives Matter if that is the case.

What message would you want to put out there for the Eugene community to know and acknowledge?

It's incredibly, incredibly important that people come out and show up to these direct action events, but sometimes even more important than that is to make sure you see the humanity in the people of color in your life. Something that I've found to be a common thread is that other people of color that aren't East Asian have had the same experience as me, where they would be sitting in a room full of white people without a single person making eye contact with them, without including them in conversations and without asking them about their lives. And so I want the Eugene community to know: We are not accessories; we are humans and we must be heard. Because to not truly listen is to not respect and appreciate our humanity.

BECK BANKS

PHD Candidate, University of Oregon

What does activism look like to you — especially as someone who works in higher education?

It can take on so many different forms. Some people see writing as activism — whether it be journalism or just creating a place for trans people in the canon of academia for there to be research in the future. Within the academy, there are always going to be these moments of tension of how to move forward. We need to move forward in terms of how people address gender, because I think that there are certain ways that we could have classrooms be more trans-conducive.

There's a place for a lot of growth that can happen within higher education, and I think there could be even more going forward. It's not enough just to sit around and study these things. You have to go out into the world and act. And what will you do once you have this knowledge? We always need to be asking what you can do now that you know this.

How have you seen activism evolve or change in your lifetime?

Where I'm from — I grew up in east Tennessee — the word activism had some really bad connotations. That was something that was rocking the boat. So, it took me a long time to understand activism for myself. I don't think I really grasped it until after my undergrad. I took a media activism class where we all had to have our own projects that we were doing, and then that kind of set off some things for me where I was just like, 'Of course I'm an activist. I am active in the world. I want to make an impact. I want to make this place better.'

I think a lot more people have understood activism is a way of having agency or having a way to give to the world or helping shape it onto a better path. I think now it is incredibly common. I would be shocked if I know somebody who hasn't been to a protest. It is what you do if you're a good citizen now. And I think that has been a radical change, at least from where I came from where it was like, 'If you do this, you're a bad person.' I think it is also a matter of understanding what you can do as an individual and what you can do as a group. You can do a lot as an individual. Never downplay that, and as a group, you can do just phenomenal things.

What do you think activism will look like for younger generations?

I hope it's just a given. I hope that it's just like: Of course you're going to be an activist; this is just going to be a part of who you are; this is going to be your work that you do in the world. I hope that is the track that it takes. That it is something that people learn more about in K through 12. That it's something you just naturally do on the weekends or in the evenings or maybe we have more projects in school that work toward change. So, I hope that's what the future will be.

TYSHAWN FORD

Black Unity

How did Black Unity start and get to where it is today?

I started organizing with recipe justice in Portland, came back to Eugene and just taught members of the activist community everything that I knew about organizing. So before Black Unity, we were BLM Eugene. I changed it to Black Unity, added more people. And that's how we came about for the most part: I came to a protest in Eugene, and kind of got handed the keys to the truck by Midas and then it was just kind of up from there.

What is your biggest advice to the incoming generations of activists in terms of how to radicalize your mind, and how to be able to like, acknowledge what's happening?

I'd say live the life of activists. Be out there in the streets when you can. Also, just make sure that you are taking the

time to deeply educate yourself on the system that you're trying to dismantle. Because the most important thing I feel like with activism is not changing the minds of those who speak like us; it's changing the minds of those who, you know, don't think like this. The people who disagree with us. Those are the people's minds we need to change because we already have people on our side. We need to get more people on our side and more people to understand. Education is elevation; it's the most important part of what being an activist is — knowing about the system to try and dismantle, and being known to have a conversation with people about why we're doing the things that we're doing. Because we hear abolish and stuff like that. Those can be scary terms. But when it's broken down to you, it makes total sense. Absolutely.

How have you seen activism change from a previous generation, from like the late 1900s to like now? How has it grown and developed?

Social media has played a big part. Imagine if there was like a Malcolm X now. They would just be way more huge because their message would actually reach people throughout the whole entire world in seconds. So, there's way more people that are gonna listen just. When it's on everyone's platform, and it's right there in your face, there's really nothing that you can do to combat that. So the movement back then was just a little bit different because I feel there wasn't as much co-opting. From what I could tell, it just seems like a different time for activists, but I guess it was a lot more radical back then because they were doing a lot more radical stuff. 📌





Leona Malama



Lily Noling & Melanie Moore



Miranda, Henry & Charley Page



Nathan Nguyen



Chuck Dean



Dave Addams

15 minutes

What can happen in 15 minutes? For these new vaccine recipients — who wait in Eugene's Autzen Stadium parking lot on April 29 and May 1 — 15 minutes can mean a lot. For some, it means smiles radiating through windshields and muffled laughter seeping from open windows. For others, it means time spent on Zoom in the driver's seat. For most, it is a moment of silent reflection as they wait for their chance to drive away and move on. Regardless of how these 15 minutes pass, all these people have likely experienced intense grief, confusion, love, growth and loss over the past year. As vaccinations roll out, a society in flux can slowly move back to normalcy.

— captured by Jozie Donaghey & Isaac Wasserman



Sioux Sternath



Chad Crabtree



Amanda McCarter



Anette Scarle



Brian Sackey



Kam'Ron Taylor



Ian Whetzel



Rikki Williams (right) & Grace Mani



Aryeh Masters & Finnley

