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MARCH 2016

# THE *PACIFIC* SENTINEL

PORTLAND  
INTERNATIONAL FILM  
FESTIVAL

+

NOW FEATURING PSU  
COMICS CLUB



# THE *PACIFIC* SENTINEL

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## WHO WE ARE


The Pacific Sentinel magazine offers an inclusive forum incorporating in-depth content from the PSU community. We advocate on behalf of the marginalized, explore the merits of cultural artifacts, and initiate interdisciplinary communication.

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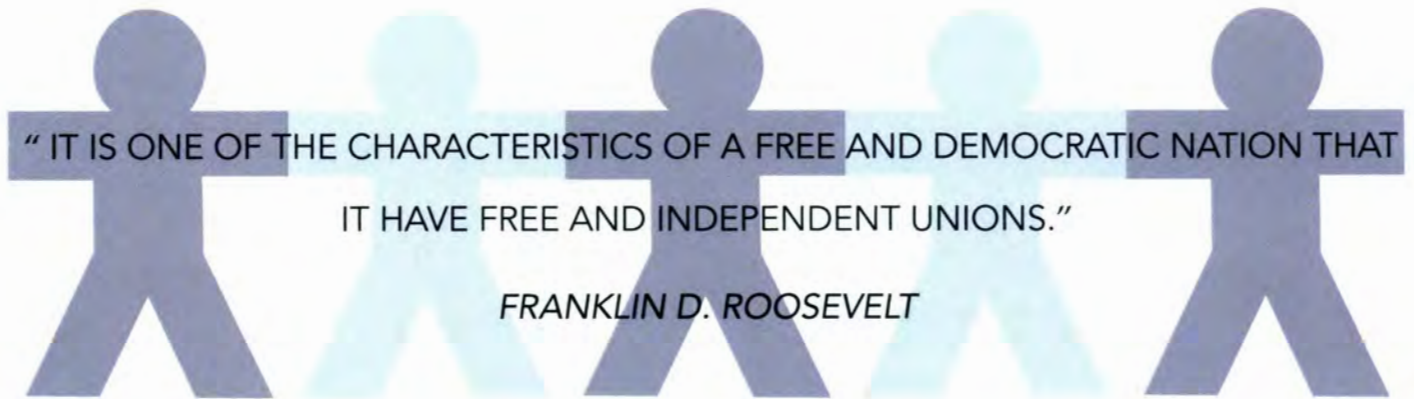
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# THE BATTLE

## FOR FEARLESS SOLIDARITY

J.R. WESTON



Over the past twenty years academia in the United States has been shifting more and more into a corporate model. Hiring less full-time faculty and relying more on part-time supplements. Over this time graduate employees throughout America are being directly affected by this transition from increased class size, fewer research dollars and higher overall demands from their supervisors and university administrators. Graduate employees often are thought of as having little power and go unheard in the fight for a fair and valued working environment.

On Feb. 1, 2016 Portland State University (PSU) graduate employees were ready for their voices to be heard. The PSU Graduate Employees Union (GEU) gathered in peaceful unison, on the steps of the Urban Center, to deliver their message to University President Wim Wiewel. Their message was delivered in the form of a letter to officially introduce themselves as an organized union and to seek a pledge from Wiewel to not interfere in their union's formation. That day was nearly two years in the making

and was the first step of many towards officially becoming recognized as a union. The GEU is currently made up of over eight hundred graduate employees that range from teacher assistants, research assistants and administrative workers throughout all departments within the university. They have come together for their voice to be heard and to show their solidarity.

Since officially going public, the GEU still has a ways to go before they can officially be recognized as a union. On Feb. 16, 2016 they held an open forum at the Smith Memorial Student Union that was the first opportunity to openly hand out official union authorization cards. According to Andrew Longhofer, a graduate employee serving as the Internship and Research coordinator for the Honors College, the GEU's main motivation is "working to get in touch with as many graduate employees as possible. To give them the opportunity to lend their voice and lend their support for the GEU." The next steps for GEU are to get as many graduate employees to sign authorization cards as



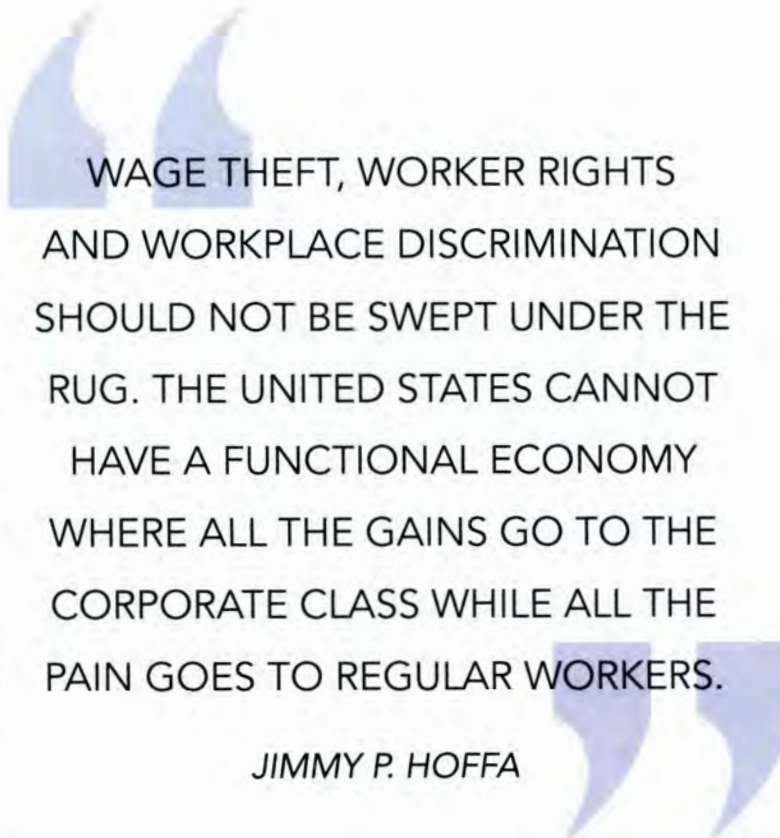
possible. “We are working towards a majority, once we get the majority then we can submit those authorization cards to the state relations board. Once the state verifies [us] then we are legally recognized as a union,” Longhofer added.

Jane Carr, a graduate teaching assistant in the College of Urban and Public Affairs and a representative of the Hatfield School of Government, said, “We are very optimistic at this point because by that Feb. 1 date we had talked face to face with a little over 400 people who were interested in joining the union. By the time we went public we had a sense from those conversations what some of the biggest issues were for those people, some of the biggest challenges, some of the biggest goals and we had a sense that we had the beginnings of a relationship network that was really important to us going forward. We want to create a democratic, grassroots, involved, active union. We have [currently] 180 days between going public and getting that 50% plus 1 support level but there is still an important piece of information gathering ahead of us. We want to achieve our goal by June 1.”

During this information gathering GEU organizers were hearing very similar issues throughout the departments and helped shape what is worth fighting for. Ted Cooper, a research assistant in the Computer Science Department, said, “What we are fighting for [are] fair compensation, affordable health care and improved working conditions that make it possible for us to do our jobs well like having a desk somewhere.” Referencing the issue of health insurance, Cooper said “PSU insurance has gone up by 12% in the last year and 38% in the past three years. In the Global Languages Department TA’s [earn] about \$650 a month and half [is used] to pay for the PSU insurance, while they are teaching two full classes in addition to being full time students.” Carr spoke to the same point by saying “as we know in Portland that is just a ludicrous way to live, it is not sustainable, it is not healthy and grad workers who are doing this kind of teaching load are put into the position to where they have to choose between spending their energy on their own studies or doing what they are ultimately here to do.” She also added that “we are being forced to choose between some things that we really shouldn’t have to be choosing between.” She went on to emphasize that it affects everyone involved, from the students to the professors and most importantly the quality of the education that is being provided.

Cooper has seen a rise in health care costs and has also seen a rise in class size for teaching assistants (TA) in rapidly growing departments like Computer Science and Engineering. “During my first year here a TA would have a 60 student enrollment cap and during this current term that same course is being offered with a 120 student cap, with the same TA and faculty resources.” Longhofer spoke to these struggles by saying “We represent a significant value that we bring as students and we find that our role as employees, our role of adding value to the institution should be respected.”

The GEU has gained momentum by speaking face-to-face with hundreds of individuals and understanding they have very similar concerns, worries and troubles that affect all graduate workers throughout the university. They have come together in solidarity to fight for what they believe is right and will make the biggest impact in everyone’s lives at PSU.



WAGE THEFT, WORKER RIGHTS  
AND WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION  
SHOULD NOT BE SWEEPED UNDER THE  
RUG. THE UNITED STATES CANNOT  
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WHERE ALL THE GAINS GO TO THE  
CORPORATE CLASS WHILE ALL THE  
PAIN GOES TO REGULAR WORKERS.

JIMMY P. HOFFA



# FOSTER AUTO PARTS AND PSN

MIKE BIVINS



Foster Auto Employee waves in a truck amidst picketers / Roosevelt Sowka

With the high-profile case of *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* looming overhead—the results of which could strike a blow to public sector unions by gutting their funding—unions have been a hot news topic. Locally, Portland State University's (PSU) graduate assistants, graduate researchers, and graduate instructors have announced their intention to unionize, with PSU agreeing to not interfere with the process. But one local union issue not making headlines so far is the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) complaint filed by Andrew Bobrek against his former employer, Foster Auto Parts and its parent company LKQ Corporation, and the resulting series of protests against them organized by local tenant and worker advocacy group, the Portland Solidarity Network (PSN).

Bobrek accuses Foster Auto Parts of reneging on an offer for a \$2-an-hour pay raise and then eventually firing him for what the NLRB complaint calls "union activity." He said that the company had fired two workers who were missing work due to "family reasons," and offered him and his co-workers the raise in exchange for taking on the terminated workers' former duties.

"We said 'of course' even though this meant ten hour days," Bobrek said. Two months went by and Bobrek and his fellow employees did not see an adjustment in their pay, so he talked to human resources and found out there was not going to be a raise. When informed that a raise was not in the cards, Bobrek said to management that the situation is "ridiculous so we're not gonna do the extra work." According to Bobrek, management responded that he would be fired if he and his coworkers did not perform the extra work.

Bobrek said that he and his coworkers then decided to organize a lunch break on Nov. 12, 2015 to talk about forming a union, and shortly before the meeting was scheduled to begin he said he was met by a member of Foster Auto Parts' Human Resources, as well as three members of management, who informed Bobrek that they had heard he had quit. Though Bobrek insisted this was untrue, he was handed his last paycheck and escorted from the premises. The next day, Bobrek said, his coworkers were called in by management and told they were not allowed to talk about wages. Foster Auto Parts "basically scared them into not unionizing or talking about wages,"



Bobrek said. "That's when I contacted the Portland Solidarity Network." To compound the matter, Foster Auto Parts is contesting Bobrek's unemployment claim which he said has put him in a "financial rut."

## COMPLAINTS AND CITATIONS

To assist Bobrek in getting Foster Auto Parts to back down from contesting his unemployment, PSN rallied, 40-people strong, on Jan. 8, 2016 to join Bobrek as he read a demand letter aloud via megaphone inside Foster Auto Parts—giving Foster Auto Parts 14 days to comply with their demands. Bobrek is seeking back pay for the \$2-an-hour raise he said he was promised, but did not receive; for Foster Auto Parts to stop contesting his unemployment; and for the company to take safety seriously.

Bobrek's pending NLRB complaint is just the tip of the iceberg. Acting on a complaint Bobrek filed against Foster Auto Parts with the Oregon Occupational Safety & Health Division (OOSHD), OOSHD conducted an inspection of Foster Auto Parts on Feb. 11, 2015 and found a number of safety violations including large metal racks not installed to manufacturer's recommendations, which Bobrek said led to dangerous working conditions due to large objects falling from the rack. Three different citations were issued to Foster Auto Parts by OOSHD.

A public records request to the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) found one civil rights complaint issued against Foster Auto Parts in 1994, but due to state records retention policies the record would have been destroyed after five years, said BOLI office specialist Shannon Willis.

Foster Auto Parts manager, Jeremy Jondahl, who insisted that he be contacted via email so the questions could be forwarded to LKQ Corporation's legal team, made no mention of the citations Foster Auto Parts was issued by OOSHD and said that Bobrek's safety complaint was an "old issue." Neither Jondahl nor LKQ Corporation have responded to follow-up inquiries.

## SOLIDARITY NETWORK INCREASES PRESSURE

In an attempt to get Foster Auto Parts to comply, PSN organized three separate call-ins to Foster Auto Parts. "We asked community supporters to call in and then just voice their concerns and their issues with the fact that

LKQ is neglecting to do what they should as far as the treatment of workers," said PSN member Alex Gates. "By having a bunch of people call in we show them that, as a community, we are not gonna stand for that."

In spite of the call-ins, at Bobrek's unemployment hearing earlier in February Foster Auto Parts stuck to their story and repeated the claim that Bobrek had quit. "They lied through their teeth basically, even under oath," Bobrek said. "Hopefully the judge will see the truth."

Not waiting for the judge's decision, PSN decided to really put the screws to Foster Auto Parts and organized a February 15th picket of Foster Auto Parts. For several hours, 30-40 PSN members, as well as Bobrek himself, picketed the sidewalk outside Foster Auto Parts—making it difficult for customers and employees to get in or out of the company's parking lot. During the picket, what appeared to be a Foster Auto Parts employee attempted to use his body to block the picketers, and also attempted to wave in a Foster Auto Parts company truck that had found itself unable to enter due to the moving wall of bodies. The driver elected to not drive towards the picket line.

Several cops from the Portland Police Bureau responded to the picket, where they mostly stood around not taking any clear action. After speaking with a representative of the group and asking that the group let vehicles in and out of the lot, the police left.

The police returned, however, because a customer who was apparently desperate to purchase car parts was involved in a low-speed collision with Gates.

"We were doing a moving picket across one of the entrances and a customer was unhappy with the fact that he couldn't enter as quickly as he would have liked, so he started kind of moving to enter and as I was in front of him, he accelerated and hit me and knocked me onto his hood," Gates said. Gates said he then got off of the hood and the driver "zoomed on in."

"I wasn't really expecting to be hit by anybody who was frustrated," Gates said—adding that he was okay, but that if he was hit from the side, instead of behind, things might have unfolded differently. "He definitely accelerated into me, it was very intentional. He was intending to hit me. It wasn't like he didn't see us there."



"I think it was really successful," said PSN member Mike K. Mike, who was also present when Bobrek read Foster Auto Parts the demand letter, noted that "we seemed to get under the collar of management" and that the group "annoyed the right people."

"We had plenty of people talk to us and ask us what we were out for and we got to explain Andrew's campaign to them. ...you can see Andrew tried to do things the right way and see what happened to him when that happened. He had safety concerns and he went to OSHA. That put him on the radar of his bosses. He advocated for a raise that management had promised, and management came back and lied and said no one was getting a raise. He did the right thing and approached his coworkers about organizing."

"I definitely think [the picket] was a success," Gates said, noting that PSN is willing to continue affecting Foster Auto Parts and its parent company LKQ Corporation's business with community-based actions if they are not willing accept Bobrek's demands. "At this point we are starting to settle in to get ready for a longer term campaign, and building up a public awareness of the boycott of LKQ."

A second picket of Foster Auto Parts is scheduled for March 5, 2016.



Bobrek (front) leads protesters at a rally in front of Foster Auto Parts / Roosevelt Sowka



Bobrek (front) leads protesters at a rally in front of Foster Auto Parts / Roosevelt Sowka



PPD Officer patrolling picketers / Roosevelt Sowka



# PCC TO HOST:

## WHITENESS HISTORY MONTH IN APRIL

ADRIANA STEIN



Portland Community College is hosting a “Whiteness History Month” in April. The project’s goals include various student and citizen submitted projects that are showcased in order to critically understand “whiteness” as a historical construct. “There’s a difference between white and whiteness,” PCC Spokeswoman Kate Chester explained in an interview with Andrew Theen for the *Oregonian*.

PCC’s faculty have considered the event since 2014, but it wasn’t put into initiative until this year. In an interview with Abe Proctor, the Cascade Campus Community Relation Manager, he explained that the project began as a response to the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Many discussions surrounding these race issues have been fostered in faculty meetings as a result of the new “Strategic Plan” that focuses on diversity and equality. “The history of whiteness has largely been unexamined,” cited PCC’s website on Whiteness History Month. The situation in Ferguson brought to light the necessity of discussing race relations without violence.

Other heritages, like Black History Month, are now widely recognized. Dr. Carter G. Woodson began “Black Negro Week” in the 1920s, but there hasn’t been an equivalent in place for all races. For Whiteness History Month, the goal is to understand how different concepts based upon socially constructed race relations are developed.

“Beginning in at least the seventeenth century, ‘white’ appeared as a legal term and social designator determining

social and political rights,” wrote PCC’s Whiteness History Month website. The term was then used in hierarchical systems to divide access to privileges, such as going to school or even drinking from a water fountain, and even though the situation isn’t as obvious now, the effects of past racial divisions still linger.

“...we tend to look at the symptoms of racism while ignoring the causes,” stated Proctor. According to Proctor, the point of Whiteness History Month isn’t to uphold those stereotypes, but to begin a discussion about what those concepts mean.

“PCC is Oregon’s largest post-secondary school, serving 85,000 students,” reported Theen from the *Oregonian*, therefore this event could potentially reach a vast amount of people. Proctor believes this event could provide a multicultural education that people might not otherwise have a chance to critically think about.

Mark Zusman reported in the *Oregonian* that “Al Jazeera America says Portland is [the] nation’s ‘whitest’ city.” The US Census Bureau reported in 2010 that Portland is over 84 percent white, with the next highest race (black or African-American) at only 5 percent.

PCC’s website on Whiteness History Month stated that the important fact to remember is that “white” and “whiteness” are not the same word. “White” is a neutral term describing lighter-skinned people with European heritage, whereas “whiteness” “refers to the construction of



the white race, white culture, and the system of privileges and advantages afforded to white people in the U.S. (and across the globe).”.

Proctor believes that the project has had a positive impact so far. “The concept of whiteness has certainly been pushed to the forefront of PCC’s institutional consciousness” he stated. “...looking at the world in a way that is clear-eyed and honest” helps students to understand that privilege is an issue in our hierarchical system.

PCC’s Whiteness History Month intends to be part of the change. Their project goals include helping to foster community partnerships, improve interpersonal communication skills, provide access to multiple cultures, and give students a broader perspective on Race Theory.

This event delves into three main topics: context, consequences, and change. Projects could include topics that help audiences to understand these terms, how they developed historically, and what issues they have led to. Racial divisions and stereotypes affect everyone and this could help us realize that we can solve these issues together.

Beginning in April, anyone can present projects such as visual art, workshops, open discussions, lectures, and plays.

These events are free and open to the public. An online schedule will be available in March.

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THERE’S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
WHITE AND WHITENESS



# A PROFILE OF AMY KAYON



Amy Kayon, PSU Violence Prevention Coordinator

## SARAH MUSTAFA

Amy Kayon occupies Portland State University's new position as the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator (RSVP), adding a breath of fresh air and plenty of enthusiasm to start prevention efforts on campus. In the midst of our conversation, Amy advised that her intention is to make a prevention program for students, through students. Her goal is to have students connect and introduce something new to influence ways to address sexual and relationship violence on PSU's campus.

Keen in her excitement, Amy's passion and her eagerness to get this program off the ground were the themes of our entire conversation.

**So, how did you get involved with PSU as the new relationship and sexual violence prevention coordinator?**

Well it's actually sort of ironically funny – I was at this organization called Sexual Resource Center doing prevention work for them for about 14 years and my boss sent me this job opening...not because she wanted to get rid of me, but because she knew that I really wanted another challenge. And also because I wanted to work on a college campus but was not willing to relocate out of state.

A big piece of it was there were some job openings at other

schools around the area but the campus climate, like the community, wouldn't have been a great fit for me. And the way they sort of approached some of their things felt more of a philosophical approach to certain things. Whereas, with PSU, I knew it was going to be more aligned with how I would want to approach prevention.

**How did you get involved in this line of work?**

So I started in public health about sixteen years ago. I ran a statewide youth crisis line and taught youths how to answer the crisis line...for the state of Oregon. I also taught how to do...immediate advocacy response on the phone and then make appropriate referrals to whatever they needed. So then I began volunteering for another agency called SARC.

Then shortly after I got hired at SARC and didn't leave for a long time, because I could keep evolving this program and it was also programmatic development where the program really existed. But with an awareness-based focus and not prevention...so there was a lot of work to be done. It was kind of fun to hunker-down to build a program, expand the program, change the program. Until I was like 'okay I'm ready to do somewhere else.'



**What's your educational background? What did you major in?**

I actually did two years at private schools on the east coast near Boston and then came back to Oregon and finished up. So my undergrad is from PSU in sociology, which was cool. Then I went to Willamette and got my masters in the art of teaching. I took a year off from SARC to go teach in enclosed classrooms and realized it was just not for me.

Afterwards I went back to SARC, and luckily my position was still there. I think it's easy for me to sometimes to go down this road of thinking I probably should have gotten my master's in public health, but I then always remember that's where my experience is. And it's nice to kind of have a breadth of knowledge and not just a depth of knowledge in one area.

**So, in terms of sexual violence prevention, when was the first time you figured out this was something you wanted to do?**

Well, I started out just as a volunteer at SARC doing response on the crisis line, and I was just drawn to prevention and was like, 'man -- response is really important but what are we going to do to slow down the need to have so many responders?' I was just sort of interested in that bigger picture of how do we not have everyone...have the same generationally thing happen over and over again, and have the same number of women, boys, and people experiencing sexual violence?

So they had this awareness program at the time and I was like, 'you know what can I start volunteering there?' and that basically was what the catalyst of, 'oh we can educate people, we change social norms, we can start to change the chip away on anti-oppression, which leads to violence, there are things we can do!' and that just felt like a great use of my energy. Although advocacy has been incredibly important as well, prevention felt like, let's slow down the amount of victimization happening. Even if it's a slow process, I'm fine with it and I'll get on the train for the long ride.

**What goals would you like to achieve here at PSU?**

In the short term, a program! So because there's no program I want to have a programmatic development, and

for it to be student-led and student-influenced. So what I want for this program is meaningful programming that comes from students because it's for students. And not me conceiving, or the institution conceiving, prevention and telling students 'this is what we're going to do', because top-down approach is something we often try to undo later since it doesn't work. I would love to see campus-wide prevention initiatives and programmatic initiatives, and I would love to see this program develop an opportunity for student peers to do some of the implementation of those programs.

**Can you give me an example of what you see and mean in terms of prevention?**

In terms of prevention, it's about systematic cultural shifts that allow violence to happen in such vast ways. So we're talking about bystander intervention skills, anti-oppression, interrupting a process of behaviors, and looking at systematic cultural shifts that allow power imbalances to start to balance out.

**What are changes you want to see made?**

Well what's cool is I don't have to say I want to see changes because I'm not stepping into a program that's already been here. I get to just come in and for months have been listening, information gathering, and just getting ahold of what the culture is here...figuring out who needs to be [re] presented, who's traditionally at the table working on these things, and who's not, and how do I outreach to them and make them feel like their participation is important and matters? So it's not that I want to see anything changed, it's what I can implement in general.

**Is there anything else you'd like to say or add?**

I guess something I'd want students to know is that their voices are really going to drive this program and it's not just playacting that idea, I want students to innovate and share that with me so that I can help implement them. So my biggest thing to students is, if you have any ideas, please share them with me in whatever capacity. Even if you aren't involved as a long term volunteer, it can be just an email. I want ideas to come in, and I want people to feel like I've got this open door policy to come share and help create something cool.



# PIFF REVIEW

## "FRANCOFONIA"



... "Francofonia" trailer still, 2015 / Alexander Sokurov

KASEY COLTON

Upon first entering the Whitsell Auditorium, the theater under the Portland Art Museum, I couldn't figure out where to sit. Normally when I go see movies, I sit as far back as the natural progression of the theater will let me — not quite next to the exit, but with my back against the wall of the projection room. In larger theaters whose seats ascend at a more radical rate, I like to sit at the very top, as if the stairs I climbed to get there were some sort of hiking feat, and the view at the top something more beautiful than just spying on my fellow movie-goers. But, in the small space of the Whitsell, I found myself wandering further and further towards the front, until I was about four rows back.

Before "Francofonia" started, I looked around and realized I was the youngest attendee by at least twenty five or thirty years. I was suddenly glad I had worn lipstick, as if actually looking in my twenties instead of the often-estimated mid-teens would help me blend in more. Maybe there was something about a movie whose plot was described in the festival flyer

as "...the story of Jacques Jaujard...who conspired to protect and preserve the art treasures of the Louvre Museum from the cataclysm about to visit Europe in 1940, and ask what art tells us about ourselves in the faces of one of the most devastating conflicts the world has ever known" that appeals to Portland's prestigious citizens.

The movie opens with a vertical split-screen, with one side rolling credits over a white background, while the other is mostly black with small, white subtitles on the bottom. This goes on for longer than expected, and then we move to a man in a messy home office, narrating in Russian as he tries to videochat another character, the only English spoken throughout the entire film. It's presumable that the Russian is Alexander Sokurov, or somehow representative of him, as they share the same name. We return to these two sporadically throughout the film, but Sokurov's voice remains the primary narrator.

From there, the movie turns into a strange mish-mash



of vintage film reels that seem to have nothing to do with art or the Louvre, except that they were in approximately the same era; combined with strange fake reenactments with a sepia/aged filter applied over them to help them “blend”. The entire illusion is broken, however, by modern passersby and modern cars. I can understand that it would be hard for an indie filmmaker to get a Parisian street to clear out enough to get the shot, but then again, he did it with the Louvre.

The entire film had a strange obsession with repetitious phrases. Occasionally (though entirely too much), the narrator would simply repeat “The Louvre, The Louvre” before launching into his sentence. The trend continues with two characters: Marianne, a young woman who viewers might recognize from the painting *Liberty Leading the People* (Eugène Delacroix), and whose only line or duty seems to be repeating the phrase *Liberté, égalité, fraternité*, and Napoleon, who stands in front of assorted paintings and says, “C’est Moi!” (That’s me!). Actually, Napoleon’s narcissistic quip seems to be the only humorous part of the movie, but his and Marianne’s appearances still make little sense, other than metaphysical art value. In the ultimate “meta” moments of the movie, the narrator would directly interrupt the characters and, at one point, talk directly to them in order to sum up the rest of their lives. It was jarring, and made the story complicated to follow or even identify.

When the lights came up, I found myself again looking around the theater, wondering if I had missed something. Was I just young and stupid, not able to understand a film of such high artistic value? Did I just not care about *The Louvre* enough? Did I need historical background, or a degree in art history, or perhaps just another decade to my life? As we all shuffled towards the exits in order to go about the rest of our day, I determined maybe that wasn’t any of these things. Maybe the movie just wasn’t that entertaining.

*“Francoфония” was played at both the Whitsell Auditorium on Feb. 15, 2016 and the Moreland Theater on Feb. 17, 2016 during the Portland International Film Festival. It was directed and written by Aleksandr Sokurov and stars: Louis-Do de Lencquesaing, Benjamin Utzerath, Vincent Nemeth, and Johanna Korthals Altes. “Francoфония” is not rated.*

“

WHEN THE LIGHTS CAME  
UP, I FOUND MYSELF AGAIN  
LOOKING AROUND THE THEATER,  
WONDERING IF I HAD MISSED  
SOMETHING. WAS I JUST YOUNG  
AND STUPID, NOT ABLE TO  
UNDERSTAND A FILM OF SUCH HIGH  
ARTISTIC VALUE?

”



## PIFF REVIEW

## "THE LOBSTER"



"The Lobster" trailer still, 2015 / Yorgos Lanthimos & Efthymis Filippou

ALEX SKOUSEN

In the wonderfully bizarre world of "The Lobster", the worst thing that could happen to you is a change in your relationship, especially if that change moves you from the "couple" category to "single." This is the exact predicament that our chief protagonist, David (Colin Farrell) finds himself in. He is taken to "The Hotel" with other newly single adults where he is given forty-five days to find a new significant other, or be turned into an animal of his choosing. He's accompanied by his brother, who failed to find love several years earlier, and was subsequently turned into a dog.

"The Lobster" is delightfully strange in both its content and delivery. The surrealist dystopia that the narrative takes place in is populated with animals, presumably former humans, who frequently enter shots, creating a richly symbolic and Dalí-esq feel throughout the entire film. When animals are not populating shots, other bizarre things are happening: single people, who aren't complicit and at the Hotel, are hunted and tranquilized, people dance separately

from each other to music played on headphones, and a woman gets voluntary surgery that blinds her. The surrealism is artfully woven throughout the film, creating an almost believable landscape where wandering animals are treated with a calm un-surprise, but single people travelling alone are hunted or accosted by police officers.

Nearly every line in the film is delivered in deadpan, which creates bizarrely hilarious dialogue. Serious conversations about sex, love, and what it means to be alone are done in near monotone, which is not only funny but also allows for some thought on the content of what the actors are actually saying. This proves to be one of the film's strongest points, and serves to create moments that are both hilarious and thoughtful. This is particularly funny as characters describe traumas at a session where newly single people introduce themselves and their defining characteristic.

One of the most refreshing aspects of "The Lobster" is that despite its technical placement in the dysto-



pian genre, it avoids grand schemes and massive conspiracies or coupes, and instead focuses on the relationships of the characters therein. It follows some troupes of other major dystopian works (“The Hunger Games” for example), but only loosely. David, for example, eventually escapes the Hotel and winds up with a “resistance” group of other singles. This group’s sole aim, however, is not the overthrowing of the government or social revolution of some sort. It is only to survive and stay absolutely single.

Bizarre, thoughtful, and funny, “The Lobster” is one of the best films that came out in 2015. It is odd, too its benefit—and the possible discomfort of mainstream American tastes. It’s thoughtful and sincere in its focus on relationships, while maintaining a distant deadpan in the development of those relationships. Finally, “The Lobster” successfully hurdles over genre clichés in a way that’s both engaging and refreshing. If you like weirdness, feel frustrated with relationships and the social expectations around them, or just want to see Colin Farrell running in slow-motion through the woods, “The Lobster” is the film to see this year at the Portland International Film Festival.

*“The Lobster” was played at Cinema 21 during the Portland International Film Festival on Feb. 13, 2016. It was directed and written by Yorgos Lanthimos and stars: Colin Farrell, John C. Reilly, Rachel Weisz, and Jessica Barden. “The Lobster” is rated R.*





# PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL

## FILM FESTIVAL



PIFF poster / NW Film Center

### JESSICA POLLARD

Thursday, February 11, The Portland International Film Festival (PIFF) kicked off its donut-themed 39th year with a double showing of the Finnish feature “The Fencer” (2015) at the Whitsell Auditorium and Foxtower 10.

“The Fencer” has it all: romance, political commentary, a little round-faced girl named Marta (Liisa Koppel) whose ardor for swordsmanship and sassy facial expressions alone keep viewers watching. The film is adapted from the real life of master fencer Endel Nelis during the 1950s. Nelis (Märt Avandi) flees Leningrad, Russia to settle back in a small town of his home-country Estonia, taking a job as an elementary school physical education teacher. Soon enough, he finds love with fellow schoolteacher (Ursula Ratasepp) and puts his fencing skills to use by starting a fencing club for the kids. The prospect of a fencing competition in Leningrad forces him to consider risking his safety and possibly having a run-in with the Russian secret police, or sincerely disappointing the children for whom fencing has quickly become a passion.

“Choosing the opening night film is always a balancing act. We’re looking for something that will connect with an audience and still leave them ready for the post-film party,” Stated Northwest Film Center’s Publicity and Promotions manager Nick Bruno.

Quickly after both showings came to an end, the first floor of the Portland Art Museum became a sea of floral scarves, well-designed veggie and cheese platters, and of course internationally themed Voodoo Donuts for the Opening Night afterparty. According to Bruno, opening night sold out a couple of days in advance, and the enthusiasm for the evening was evident in the way film-goers spilled out of the museum, chatting with complimentary wine cups and beer bottles in hand.

“[The Fencer] was okay, it was just kind of a slice of history I suppose. As a film, I don’t think it was the best film the way it was done. It was kind of over the top,” said longtime PIFF attendee Erica Moore after the Whitsell theater showing.



In addition to standalone showings of films across the city at multiple theaters, PIFF offered several series such as PIFF After Dark at Cinema 21 which this year featured flicks like the intriguingly titled *Liza the Fox-Fairy* (2015) and *Demon* (2015) that play with more macabre themes and eccentric humor.

Alternatively, Saturday, Feb. 20, *Made In Oregon* highlighted 8 short films from some more local filmmakers, including Portland State (PSU) student El Gato Negro and his short film “*Le Tram*”, which has previously been premiered at the Mission Theater in Portland and will be shown at the New York International Film Festival.

The short is the third in a trilogy regarding human connection on public transportation that is directed, written and produced by El Gato Negro, who studies education policy at PSU. It follows an alcoholic salesman’s pivotal tram ride, wherein he believes he has seen his soulmate, a woman who doesn’t speak English. “I’m not interested in just entertaining, I’m interested in inspiring. I want people to feel what I make before they can grasp it mentally. When I make something, it’s important that if I make it correctly, it’s something that inspires them to watch it over and repeatedly to see more of the layers,” said El Gato Negro.

El Gato Negro became interested in film while looking for intersectionality between his artistic loves. “I say, get a good education and then live a little bit like go to Cuba, get in a bar fight, fall in love, and then you may have something to say. You know what I mean?” El Gato Negro offers to aspiring filmmakers.

The Northwest Film Center, which puts on PIFF every year, relies on submissions and scouting to select films. “What’s premiering at other festivals around the globe certainly comes into play. And a few of us attend other North American festivals to scout for films each year. We don’t really rely on themes to put together the festival. Honestly, we’re just looking for quality films that feel like they need to be seen,” stated Bruno.

PIFF managed to fit 97 feature films and 62 shorts into just over two weeks from Feb.11-27. This year, films from about three dozen countries were featured,

according to Bruno, including pieces from every continent, save Antarctica.



CHOOSING THE OPENING NIGHT  
FILM IS ALWAYS A BALANCING ACT.  
WE’RE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING  
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# #MEOWSTERPIECE

CAT PAINTING

SCARLET DISKO



"My Wife's Lovers" / Carl Kahler, 1891

Portland Art Museum's #meowsterpiece is not the first sign of cat obsession in Portland considering the success Purringtons Cat Lounge has had finding homes for cats since its opening in 2015. While the first cat cafe of Portland may put you in the mindset of a crazy cat lover, nothing can compare to San Franciscan Kate Birdsall Johnson (1833-1894). She most likely sparked the term "crazy cat lady" as she owned nearly 350 cats, according to Cait Munro in a 2015 article published by Artnet News.

Johnson was a millionaire living on a 3,000-acre farm in Sonoma, Calif. with hundreds of pet cats during the turn of the century. In the late 1800s, Johnson met Carl Kahler who had recently arrived in California from Australia. Kahler was known for painting por-

traits and horse racing scenes. He had never painted a cat in his life when Johnson convinced him to portray her treasured felines.

Kahler then went to work painting Johnson's cats. To better understand the unique mannerisms and personalities of the cats, he spent long hours sketching and getting to know them. It took him three years to complete the painting. The finished work was titled, "My Wife's Lovers" and features just 42 of Johnson's cats—specifically her collection of Persian and Angora cats. The massive painting is on a 6-by-8.5 foot canvas and weighs 227 pounds.

The title of the painting came from Johnson's husband, Robert C. Johnson, who died two years before it



was commissioned. Johnson made up the expression to refer to the cats, and the widowed Johnson requested it as the title in memory of him..

Forty two cats or not, the painting brings up the issue of homeless and feral cats in the Portland-area. Annually, 3000 to 4000 cats are brought to Multnomah County Animal Services, with a large amount of them brought in between late-Spring and early-Autumn's "kitten season" being euthanized, according to the Multnomah County Animal Services website. The Oregon Humane Society does a great job with its animals as it maintains a 98 percent save rate, according to its website. This rate ranks 3 to 4 times above the national average of fifty five percent which makes it one of the highest in the nation. Purringtons Cat Lounge is another great temporary home for cats. In one year it has found homes for 151 cats.

"Visitors can hang out with cats and get to know them in a different way than one could at a shelter," according to the about section of Purringtons' website. In honor of My Wife's Lovers, the Oregon Humane Society is doing a series of pop-up events to spread awareness about cat adoptions.

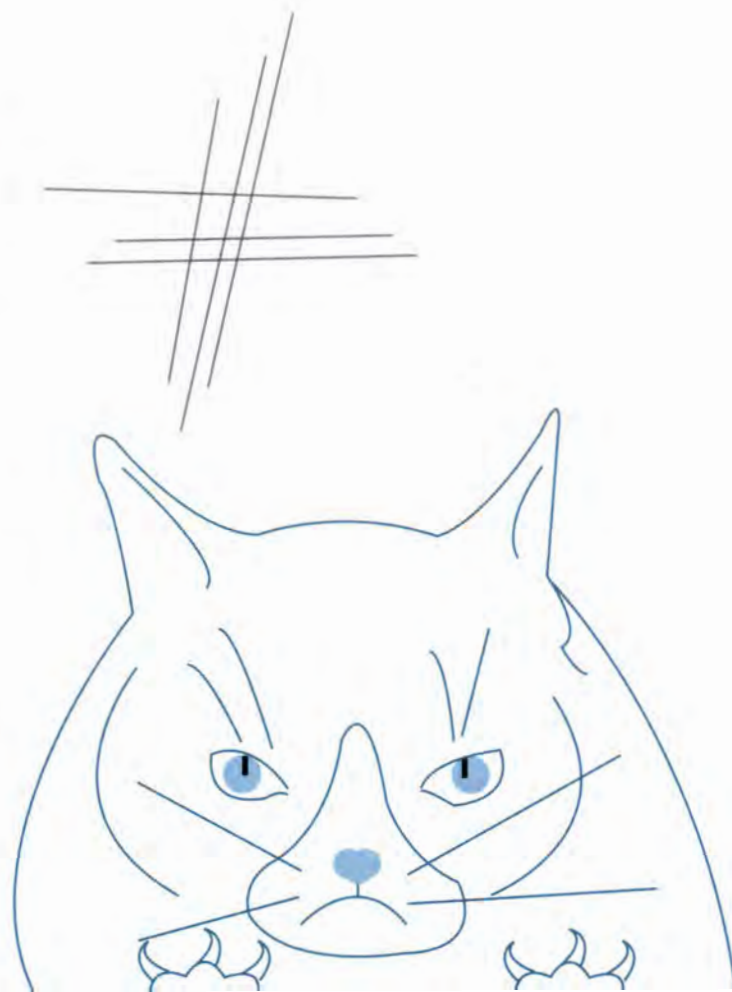
These pop-ups will be happening on Friday evenings after 5 p.m. when museum goers can pay a discounted ticket price of \$5. In addition to seeing My Wife's Lovers and Humane Society information at the Portland Art Museum's \$5 Fridays, there will also be a cutout version of the cat painting to pose with in a photo booth. The Portland Art Museum offers these Friday night events weekly unless the museum is being rented out that night.

Though the artist of My Wife's Lovers did not survive the San Francisco earthquake of 1906—the painting did and was declared the "world's greatest painting of cats" by Cat Magazine in 1949. Today, cat lovers of Portland have been awaiting this meowsterpiece as the anticipated delivery date was delayed by fierce winter weather. The painting successfully arrived at the Portland Art Museum for its unveiling on Jan. 29. These beautified cats will remain on the Portland Art Museum's walls until May 15.

Catlover or not, My Wife's Lovers is worth seeing in person. Perhaps you will even be inspired to adopt a cat or paint your own puuurfecction one day!



Scarlet Disko and friend at the Portland Art Museum





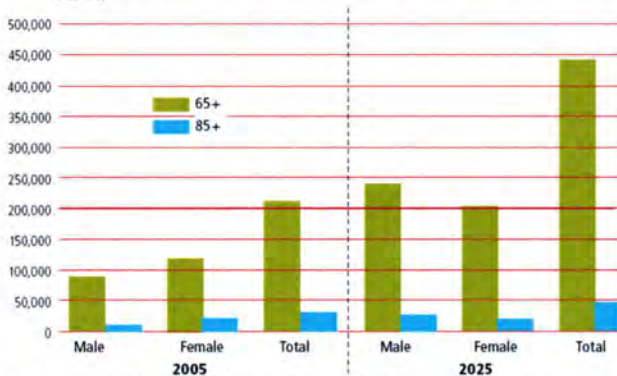
# SENIOR AUDITS

## LIFELONG LEARNING

SCARLET DISKO

Retirement and old age are imagined as a period of life when one has time for everything. There is time to read everything, time to increase various skills such as art or gardening, time to travel, and time for long walks. But, the truth is all the time one receives when they retire can quickly become boring.

**Aging Population Projection, Portland Metropolitan Area**



Source: Oregon Office of Economic Analysis; Washington State Office of Financial Analysis

As the television show, *Portlandia*, points out, “Portland is the city where young people go to retire.” However, it is not just the young who move to Portland, older people are increasingly relocating here as well. The city of Portland offers a large range of activities for all ages and groups of people. With a growing population, Portlanders must continue to create an accessible city with a community that is willing to involve all people as much as possible. According to United Van Lines, Oregon was the top moving destination of 2015.

Being a popular city, Portland is more likely to see an increased number of aging adults as suburban locations provide more difficulties for older individuals. Determined by the Aging in Community Policy Guide, suburbs often require a car, are linked with poor physical health and obesity, are farther away from shopping and restaurants, and homes require more attention as they need more repairs and payments for insurance, property taxes, and utilities. Cities are easier on age because they put one closer to the community, offer more entertainment, provide

transportation, and make staying involved much easier.

The senior audit program at Portland State University (PSU) offers another reason for older adults to live in the city. This program has been around since the 1970s and strives for “lifelong learning” or “learning in retirement” as stated on the Senior Adult Learning Center website. To qualify, an older adult must be at least 65 years old and an Oregon resident. Compared to other universities in Oregon, PSU provides one of the most structured programs. Oregon universities have only been required to have a senior tuition discount since House Bill 2011 which means PSU has involved older adults for 30+ more years than any Oregon school.

“I came on board in 2004 when there were only 200 or so senior audits,” said Dr. Jost Lottes, director of the Senior Adult Learning Center (SALC). “Today there are about 1200, aged 65-94.” Lottes advises the seniors; gives orientation to newcomers; listens to what they want, and mainly tries to meet their needs.

The number of senior audits continues to grow rapidly as one of the largest generations, the Baby Boomers, hits retirement age. Those who work for SALC at PSU are working on ways to address this issue as the number of senior audits is expected to double to 2500 in the next five years.

It is important to note that this increasing number of older adult auditors could be more beneficial than problematic. The disengagement theory of aging is generally inevitable, however providing this opportunity to senior citizens can help lessen the problem. Disengagement is an idea that as a person ages, society withdraws from them as much as they withdraw from society. Having something meaningful to do, like attending college classes,



is a good thing for older adults as it maintains their involvement in the community. It keeps life interesting for retirees who find lots of free time not as exciting as they expected.

Many of the older adults participating in PSU's lifelong learning program find many advantages to the tuition-free classes. Ann Greenhill and Jeanie Frankel who are enrolled in the senior audit program shared that they love learning new things, having the option to take classes they're interested in, taking classes to prepare for traveling, and having access to a variety of material. Older adults are required to have a degree of some kind prior to auditing classes at PSU.

"I really enjoy working with older adults [at PSU]," expressed Lottes. "They are a really fun, well-educated group who are interested in furthering their education." Many auditors have backgrounds as lawyers or professors, and have lots of travel experiences. Each individual offers a potentially unique contribution to PSU.

While there are upsides to lifelong learning programs, are the senior auditors taking away from the paying students' education?

For the most part no. Senior auditors are highly aware of the work and money that goes into earning a college degree. Often, they talk to the professor since each one has different expectations of their auditors. The level of participation is dependent on the professor. Some professors request that older adults wait until students have answered a question before they chime in. Whether senior auditors complete assignments is also dependent on the professor. Many of them ask that auditors do not complete assignments because they do not want extra work to grade for free.

"I think some of them don't know quite what to make of us," explained Greenhill when asked about how they are received by students. While it may seem strange to see senior citizens in class, the truth is that they benefit paying students as much as the students benefit them. PSU follows the motto, "Let Knowledge Serve the City," aiming for a mix of people from all

walks of life (race, gender, etc.). Age diversity can increase and perfect students' education because of real-life experiences older adults bring to share.

Greenhill, Frankel, and other senior auditors were invited to a meeting with Stephen Percy, the Dean of the College of Urban and Public affairs. Percy wanted to discuss how the auditors would feel about taking classes with people their age versus the typically younger, paying students. "No, no, no, we don't want that," stated Greenhill. "We want to take classes with students because they bring more energy and different perspectives. Older people always want to talk too much about where they've been." She went on to explain that students have yet to experience many things, so they are strictly there to learn. "If older adults wanted to hear each other tell stories and talk their mouths off, then they would meet up elsewhere to do that." Senior auditors are auditing classes because they want to be there in the classroom with the diverse students who attend PSU.

"It's interesting to see what students are thinking and how they react to certain events," said Frankel. Having age diversity brings many different perspectives together in one room to examine various subjects. There is the occasional "talker," however it is rare that an auditor will fill class time with their voice. Auditors are respectful of the professor and do not want to take away from what students are paying for.

Along with the issue of auditors talking too much comes the question, are they contributing to classes getting too large? To control these concerns, there are several limitations to the lifelong learning program. For instance, they can take up to eight credits or 2 classes a term and most only take one as Greenhill and Frankel pointed out. Also, classes are allowed on a space-available basis with paying students having priority. Audited classes do not count towards a degree or come with an official grade. They are tuition-free, however extra payments like material and lab fees must be paid.

Auditors are treated like any other student at PSU, they do not receive special treatment. They simply want to continue their learning.



# COOL CATALYZERS

## LOW ENERGY NUCLEAR REACTION

JEREMY KING



ECAT CAD Model of 1MW plant

In the field of nuclear science, the largely hypothetical application of cold fusion—or as it's more preferably referred to as today by its proponents, low energy nuclear reaction (LENR)—has enjoyed a less than stellar tenure amidst its contemporaries due to a general lack of solid empirical support, dubious or unverified reports and findings, theoretical inconsistencies, and more.

So what, exactly, is it? And, more importantly—why should we care?

The key to understanding the difference between where modern nuclear energy is derived from and the manner in which it differs from LENR comes from understanding the difference between fission and fusion.

Nuclear power, in its current incarnation, is created via nuclear fission; the process through which atoms are split to generate steam heat. Because fission necessitates the presence of ample fuel, high temperatures, and a great deal of pressure within a fusion reactor to yield satisfactory results, it releases a tremendous amount of electromagnetic energy; all of which leads to a lot of radioactive waste.

Nuclear fusion differs on a very fundamental level. Where fission is a process of separation, fusion

is a process of combination. The tricky bit lies in the execution of said combination. Atoms, by their irksome nature, are a finicky bunch; playing matchmaker to any given pair of the buggers is, quite often, an exercise in frustration. There's a mutual attraction, to be sure, but those pesky protons atoms have make it rather difficult for either one of them to waltz up to the other and give them a smooch on the nucleus.

Yet if one manages to “push” the atoms past this barrier, it becomes possible to fuse the nuclei of both atoms into a single, heavier one. And, as it turns out, if the conjoined atoms each boast a low enough mass, they generate energy as a result.

It stands to reason, then, that “cold fusion” is at its core a means of generating nuclear energy through this process of fusion at much lower temperatures than nuclear fission would allow for. Theoretically, LENR presents us with the fantastic possibility of a more environmentally friendly nuclear power that can be generated without an excess of heat or energy. Sounds great, right?

Sure. And, lo and behold, along comes the world's first actual LENR Fusion Reactor!

Or, so we're told.



Invented by Andrea Rossi, CEO of the Leonardo Corporation, the ECAT—short for ‘Energy Catalyzer’—is potentially one of the biggest scientific breakthroughs in a long while.

The ECAT, described as a “table-top fusion reactor” in the official site’s FAQ section, is touted as being capable of producing “nuclear size energy output at room temperature or temperatures close to room temperature” for “...a long duration of time (months) at negligible fuel cost.”

Advertised proudly as “the new fire”, we are treated to another bold proclamation that the ECAT will go on to “...define the next era of energy production and render fossil fuels obsolete as it is cheap and 100% environmentally friendly.”

On Dec. 26, 2015, Rossi made another bold statement with the claim that the ECAT X—a more recent model of the generator that the Leonardo Corporation began working on within a separate lab—was capable of generating electricity entirely by itself.

The confidence seems inspiring, and the inclusion of 3D concept renderings of both small-scale, domestic ECAT generators and larger plants instills a similar sense of confidence. You can even fill out an inquiry form and pre-order one for yourself.

Yet the scientific community remains largely unconvinced due in large part to Rossi’s general lack of transparency regarding the many fantastical claims. To date, nearly everything about the underlying technology and plausibility of Rossi’s ECAT—and the subsequent viability of practical LENR as an energy alternative—has boiled down to a matter of believing or disbelieving on behalf of all those invested in the subject.

But, as luck would have it, it might not be long before we have a definitive answer regarding the legitimacy of Rossi’s proposed energy savior.

Author and scientist Mats Lewan, an avid supporter of LENR and of Rossi’s work, wrote in his most recent blog entry that “on Feb. 17, 2016, a 350-day

commercial test of a one megawatt heat plant based on Andrea Rossi’s E-Cat was completed.”

While stating that the results of the test would not be available for at least a month’s time, Lewan goes on to write that he was “told the test [had] been successful” and that he was also told the “total amount of fuel—mostly harmless elements such as lithium, hydrogen and nickel, according to Andrea Rossi’s granted patent on the technology—was in the range of tenths of grams. And supposedly the charge has never been changed during the year.”

Again, there is the issue of telling rather than seeing. Without any cold, hard facts to back up Lewan’s excited commentary, believing in Rossi’s vision is still very much a matter of faith.

Yet one thing’s for sure; if Rossi’s invention turns out to be as good as he’d like to have us believe, we may very well be standing on the precipice of something very, very exciting.

“So, now we all wait for the report”, writes Lewan. “Personally, however, I will put the champagne on ice. [For] now.”

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# iCRACKED

JULIANA TATTOLI

Have you ever broken your phone and gone resourceless for a day because you couldn't make it to the store to fix it? Feel like waiting in long lines at the Apple store is a drag? California Polytechnic State University student AJ Forsthye created a service specifically addressing these issues in 2010, and is now making millions of dollars in revenue from it.

"I was a clumsy college kid who broke his phone regularly and after quite a few mishaps, it was too expensive to keep going to Apple to fix the phone. I wanted to try my hand at doing it myself, so I bought parts from Alibaba and quickly realized I could fix iPhones better and faster [than Apple stores could]," Forsthye said to Mashable.

At CPSU, Forsthye began to repair his peers' devices, originally charging \$75 per phone fix. It became so popular that Forsthye brought in help from his friend Anthony Martin, who was so supportive of Forsthye's promising proposal that he sold his peer-to-peer textbook rental business in order to help fund and create iCracked.

From its humble beginnings in 2010, iCracked has grown into an innovative and successful business. According to Mashable, during 2014 alone, iCracked brought in \$25.2 million in revenue. iCracked employs technicians nicknamed 'iTechs' who can be called anytime a customer needs a device repair. iCracked has become known by the public as the "Uber for fixing devices" because the technician travels to you at a place and time of your choosing, and you can even watch as they complete the repair on site.

iCracked's amenities are offered in cities around America and Europe and include repairs for cracked screens, water damage, and battery replacement, as

well as dysfunctional audio, battery, microphone, camera, charging port, buttons, and mute switch issues on all iPhone models from the iPhone 4 to the 6S, iPads, iPods, and Samsung devices.

iTechs charge a fixed rate of \$25 after completing any kind of repair your device is in need of. Each time you get a repair, you receive a free month's trial of what iCracked calls their "Advantage Plan". The Advantage Plan is \$7 per month, offering lifetime warranty on all damages and malfunctions, the ability to insure as many devices as you desire, and assurance that if a device can't be fixed, it will be replaced.

Tanner Torres is a technician working in and around Portland with iCracked – who was excited to find a job allowing him to work independently in the field he plans to grow a business in.

"My favorite part about working for a startup like iCracked is that we all look after each other," Torres explained to The Pacific Sentinel. "If I need replacement parts within a day or so I can easily call one of my local iTechs and they will gladly help me out."

Torres mentioned that most of what he does within iCracked consists of iPhone screen replacements, noting that it usually takes only 30 minutes to an hour to have the phone in complete working condition again.

As with any on-call service, some interestingly timed or located requests will be made. An iCracked employee named Taha Jami commented to Mashable that he's "even fixed smartphones in bars at 10pm after someone has drunkenly dropped a device on the floor".

When Torres was asked where the most random place he's ever been called to fix a device at, he said that it



was actually his last call – where “a family had me come over to their apartment, sit on their couch and do the repair while they all watched in anticipation.”

There are two iCracked stores in the Portland area, one in Clackamas and one in Wilsonville. Portland iTechnicians can be reached at 503-444-8487 and more information can be found on <https://www.icracked.com>.

# AND NOW INTRODUCING

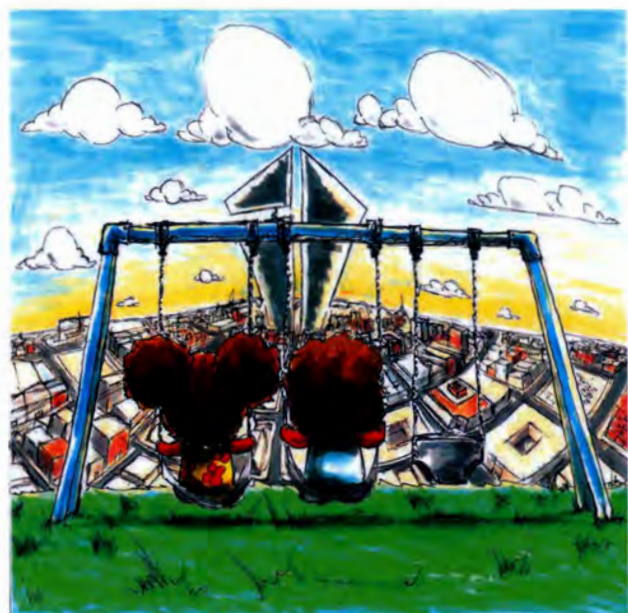
SELECTIONS FROM THE PSU COMICS CLUB

!



CAREER OPTIONS IN COMICS

Robert Hulshof-Schmidt



THE WORLD MAY BE BIG, BUT IT ISN'T LONELY.

Steven Christian

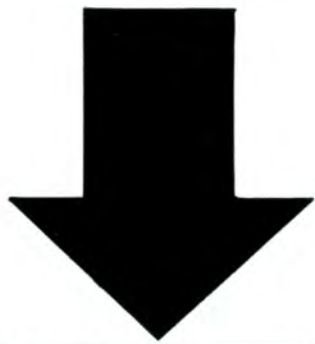




### Solitary Student

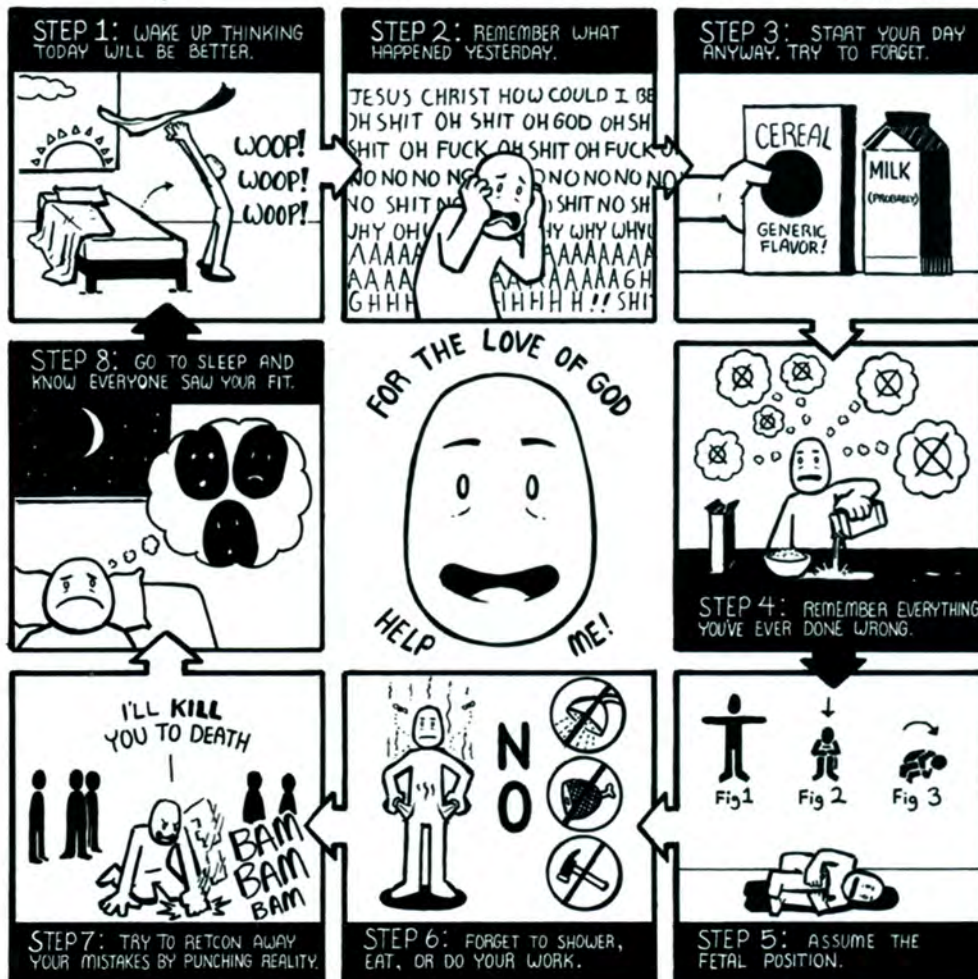
**J Olinger 2016**

Jay Olinger



# HOW TO: GET TRAPPED IN A SPIRAL ~~OF~~ SHAME

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BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE + GENEROUS +  
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