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“Obamacare” and tell us how great our improvements have been is a sign that we are moving towards that vision. To me, the fact that someone took the time to call us doesn't have any direct connection with Portland State, she occasionally picks up the phone and dialed the voicemail number. The message, left by a non-student, was so extremely heartwarming: “Hello, Portland Spectator. P.O. Box 347, Portland, OR 97207. SMUU S.F. Y spectator@gmail.com 503.721.9797 www.portlandspectator.org. The Portland Spectator is published by the Student Publications Board of Portland State University. It is funded through incidental student fees, advertisement revenue, and private donations. All reviews and commentaries herein represent the opinions of the writer and not necessarily the opinions of the staff. We reserve the right to edit material we find obscene, libelous, improper in style or lengthy. We are not obliged to print anything to which we do not consent. Unsolicited material will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Submission constitutes testimony as to the accuracy. Copyright ©2012 The Portland Spectator. All rights reserved.

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The Portland Spectator serves the student body by providing fact-based and well-researched arguments alongside in-depth news coverage of issues important to the student community. We encourage and co-facilitate a diverse marketplace of ideas filled with thought-provoking discussions.

The other day, I went into the Portland Spectator office and noticed that our phone’s “new message” light was blinking. (Trust me, this never happens.) I picked up the phone and dialed the voicemail number. The message, left by a non-student, praised us for our change in direction with the magazine. Although she doesn’t have any direct connection with Portland State, she occasionally picks up copies of each of PSU’s publications to check them out. She told us that the last time she had picked up a copy of the Spectator, years back, it was so extremely right-winged and politically oriented that she had actually given up on reading it. However, the last time she was on campus, she noticed that the January issue looked new and different, and decided to pick up a copy to see what has changed. She was very impressed with our work—in particular with the quality of our articles—and was really happy to see how much we have progressed in such a relatively short period of time.

As editor-in-chief of this wonderful magazine, I have to admit that that was one of the most heartwarming things I have ever heard. Since the beginning of this school year, I have had a vision of a brand new Spectator, and we have been slowly moving towards that vision. To me, the fact that someone took the time to call us and tell us how great our improvements have been is a sign that we are on the right path.

In that vein, you may notice that we have split the magazine into three sections: On Campus, which contains stories about the university and events at PSU; In the City, which showcases everything that’s happening in Portland; and Global Affairs, which discusses national and global issues. Our new art director, Melodie Dudley, has also been spicing up our design, so we hope you find the new look appealing. And on top of that, I’m proud to state that this is our first 28-page issue for the year (and probably not the last). Exciting stuff!

We really hope you enjoy the revamped magazine as much as we enjoy producing it. If not, please write us with any suggestions or concerns you have—we promise we will listen! As always, thank you for reading the Portland Spectator.

Sasha Chedygov
Editor-in-Chief
Safety on campus

DIRECTOR OF CPSO TELLS ABOUT RECENT ASSAULTS AND GIVES TIPS ON STAYING SAFE IN THE CITY

Jake Stein

On November 4, 2011 Campus Public Safety Officers stopped a sexual assault in progress at 10th Avenue and Market Street, on the Portland State University campus. About a month later another sexual assault occurred, on the afternoon of December 20 in the first floor restroom of the Academic and Student Recreation Center. The suspect exposed himself and then assaulted the victim, and was later arrested by a United States Marshals Fugitive Task Force. Then, on January 12, 2012, just less than a month later, another assault occurred on the sidewalk near Shattuck Hall. The victim was grabbed by the suspect, and was only able to break free after fighting back against her attacker. There is still no description of this suspect.

Three assaults in three months on the PSU campus... The situation seemed too unrevealing to ignore, so I went to the director of Public Safety at CPSO, Phillip Zerzan, for more information. I wanted to know if I should have a reason to feel scared on campus, but I also wanted to know why all of these assaults happened so suddenly, and if it means anything.

In short, the answer was no. “There have only been a few in the last three months, and they’re not connected,” explains Zerzan. None of the suspects were connected in any way, he says, that means any fears of large criminal organizations trying to stake their claim at PSU campus or any diabolical serial criminal-plots are out of the question.

However, Zerzan did have something odd about these crimes to point out. "All three of these are stranger crimes, (which is) a little disconcerting... While it isn’t a trend, it is unusual.” And Phillip Zerzan knows his stuff, having worked homicide cases before becoming director at CPSO. He explained how rare it is that crimes like these are not committed by family or friends of the victim.

In other words, it’s not that these three crimes are concentrated into a span of a few months that’s weird; rather, it’s quite dumbfounding that these three assaults in a row have been committed by complete strangers.

With this new knowledge, I then asked Zerzan if students have any reason to heighten their paranoia or be extra worried when walking the streets of a city at night, but perhaps being on a school campus somewhat nullifies that instinctual sense of wariness one might have. Zerzan recommends that students hold onto that sense—Portland State University is in the heart of a city, after all—but still restrain themselves from sinking into anxious paranoia or completely freaking out. As long as you keep your eyes open and senses tuned, you can keep yourself safe. And walking with a buddy doesn’t hurt, either.

Now, what should a student do if he/she is assaulted or harassed, or sees such an incident occurring? "Just call,” instructs Zerzan. “9-1-1, or CPSO.”

Calling the police should be a student’s first reaction to a threat to campus safety, but maybe even more so, students should make sure they do everything in their power to keep their safety from being compromised. In other words, don’t be stupid: Don’t walk home alone in the dark, don’t let non-students or strangers into buildings, and always stay clear of and report any suspicious activity. Remember, Portland is a city, even if it claims to be one of the relatively safe ones.

Of course, sometimes becoming involved in an assault or harassment is out of the victim’s control. However, Phillip Zerzan is completely confident in PSU’s campus security personnel; they have been hiring new officers since the incident in the ASRC, and they are also coordinating more patrols along the borders of the campus and the city, especially at night.

If you do end up in the unfortunate situation of an assault, give CPSO a holler, and they’ll come running. It’s their job to protect us, and it’s our right to feel safe on campus.
Walking the labyrinth

PORTLAND STATE’S “LABYRINTH” PROVIDES A PLACE FOR STUDENTS TO MEDITATE, REGARDLESS OF DENomination

Monty Herron

Labyrinth noun
1. an intricate combination of paths or passages wherein it is difficult to find one’s way or to reach an exit.
2. a maze of paths bordered by high hedges, as in a park or garden, for the amusement of those who search for a way out.
3. a complicated or tortuous arrangement, such as streets or buildings.
4. any confusingly intricate state of things or events; a bewildering complex.

I can say with certainty, none of the above definitions accurately describe what I happened upon a few weeks back. A quiet, cold afternoon, the day was already offering plenty of small moments for introspection. After exchanging pleasantries and visiting ASPSU and the Student Food Pantry, I noticed a sign labeled simply, “Labyrinth,” tucked away in a corner of the 3rd floor in the Smith Memorial Student Union. Never one to pass up an adventure, I stepped inside. The first thing I noticed upon entering was that Room 333 didn’t feel like a banquet room. There was a palpable sense of calm and peace. Then I saw the intricate pattern on a large canvas that covered almost all of the floor. Beautiful, complex, and simple at the same time, this labyrinth had piqued my curiosity.

I met a very warm and welcoming Carol Joy Brendlinger, campus minister and certified spiritual director. Brendlinger works as part of the Spiritual Life Center on campus at Portland State. I had many questions, and Brendlinger was able to answer all of them. One of the oldest ‘meditation labyrinths,’ also known by some as the ‘Road to Jerusalem,’ is in the Chartres Cathedral near Paris, France, and may date back over 4,000 years. There are no blind alleys, no trick paths like the famous minotaur labyrinth in Crete. There is one path that eventually leads to the center of the maze and back out again. It would seem that the ‘meditation labyrinth’ was born of necessity at a time when not every person could afford to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In essence, meditating while moving through the labyrinth’s intricate turns can give one perspective as they journey through life. There are other additional benefits one may experience as they attempt some form of ‘mindfulness’ or meditation. A heightened sense of well-being, tranquility, inspiration, perhaps even a sense of becoming closer to whatever spiritual truth you hold dear, are just some of the “side-effects” one might experience.

It is important to note that although the dominant culture surrounding the labyrinth has been Christianity, the space and offering of PSU’s labyrinth is non-denominational; in fact, Minister Brendlinger explains, “People of all faiths, traditions, and journeys are welcome.” There is no charge, just remember to remove your shoes! The next opportunity that students will have to experience “Walking the Labyrinth” will be February 21, 11am – 4pm.

If you have additional questions feel free to contact Carol Joy Brendlinger via email, caroljoy@pdx.edu, or telephone, 503-348-2182.
The goal of a peace activist is to spread peace through different ways: protests, rallies, the list goes on. But the Portland Rotaract Club decided to approach peace from a new perspective.

On February 4, the Peace through Education Symposium, organized by the Rotary International group, took place at Portland State University in the Smith Ballroom as a presentation to support peace through education.

Several speakers demonstrated their own ways of introducing the meaning of peace and the programs they lead that could help spread awareness in the nation. Each speaker came from a different background and carried a different nationality, and brought his/her own perspective on the spread of peace. “Peace takes time. It doesn’t just happen,” said Al Jubitz, peace-maker of 35 years and former president of the Rotary Club.

He presented 27 possible ways to approach peace. “These are 27 trends that give me hope,” said Jubitz.

Current Rotaract president Lou Radja has been involved in the group for four years and spoke about the education program in Congo that he is the leader of. “I fell in love with global citizens that had the passion,” said Radja.

Radja took another step towards utilizing his education on peace leadership and became the president of the club on July 2011. “Our effort is to make peace and bring peace activists to one place, and to engage members and supporters,” said Radja.

With the help of group member Roger Meyer, invitations were sent out to different speakers who strive to spread peace through education and experience. With nine months of planning and over 200 attendees, the Peace through Education Symposium was successful. “Individuals will take the seed and plant it in their spheres and it will eventually blossom—that’s what this is all about,” said Radja.

Portland Rotaract holds a weekly meeting every Wednesday at 7 PM in the Women’s Resource Center.
EACH MONTH, THE SPECTATOR WILL BE HIGHLIGHTING AND GRADING ASPSU’S ACTIONS, CULMINATING IN A FINAL GRADE AT THE END OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR. AFTER ALL, WE ARE IN AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING, AND THERE ISN’T A PASS/NO PASS OPTION FOR ASPSU.

Jake Stein

Student Outreach: A

ASPSU has struggled with student outreach before, but it looks like that could be about to change; on February 21 there will be a pep rally coordinated by the Portland Education Committee, a coalition between the students of Portland State University, Portland Community College, and Mt. Hood Community College. The rally is being held in the park blocks and the ballroom of Smith. It is being called a “Rally for Education,” its purpose being to help combat and raise awareness of the seemingly ever-increasing costs of tuition. With three schools in alliance on the issue, there’s no doubt that the event will gain momentum, but just how many PSU students will ASPSU be able to muster? In the past, they claimed that they could bring thousands to this rally. While that number still seems a bit lofty, ASPSU is beginning to prove themselves in this area of student outreach; at the beginning of this winter term, they managed to register a record-breaking 985 students to vote in the course of just two days before the deadline in District 1. Already they have begun training new volunteers and students to help organize and maintain this rally. With this kind of devotion and planning, it will be exciting to witness whether ASPSU and the Portland Education Committee have what it takes to simultaneously drive the point home across their three respective student bodies.

Building a strong community and “students for reform” were two major platforms that Rahmlow and his team ran on, and it seems that they are slowly but surely making progress in these areas. Public events are a good way to construct a sense of community within the student body on campus, and the rally on February 21 should be one of the largest student events in a long time. As far as reform for students, Rahmlow and ASPSU claim to want to change the system as much as possible for the students, to hold those who use tuition as a weapon accountable, and to give students a better voice and decision-making power in what will ultimately affect them.

While ASPSU could perhaps be doing more in this area—or at least making students more aware of what they are doing or plan on doing—the rally on the 21st should make a strong case for student rights, and not just at PSU, but across campuses all throughout the Portland area.

Staff Retention: B

Campaign Goals: B+

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Max Bordman

You may know him as the guy on the street by the MAX line selling CDs and rapping, or you may know him from having seen him at one of the multitudes of shows he performs on a regular basis; either way, Randy Grenawalt is developing a name for himself as an artist in the city of Portland. Better known by his rap alias Acheron Flow, the young hip hop enthusiast turned 25 on the 19th of this month and celebrated his birthday with a party and show. The part-show part-birthday party, which also celebrated the release of the up-and-coming rapper’s newest mixtape, took place on February 17 at the Twilight Cafe and Bar in Southeast Portland.

There are plenty of performers and musicians who travel the streets in the hopes of making a name for themselves, trying to earn a quick buck playing near a MAX stop or posting up outside a vintage store. Upon first glance, Grenawalt, a white male standing approximately 5’9”, dressed in baggy clothing, wearing a backpack and headphones around his neck, walking by you on a corner near pioneer square or the park blocks of PSU, wouldn’t be something that necessarily stands out on the streets of our city. That is unless you have the opportunity to meet Grenawalt. Most of his encounters with strangers on the street are made while he works selling his CD’s. Part of this process can, and often does include him rapping to customers a cappella, which, he admits, doesn’t always work out. “I remember rapping on the corner, and just for being a white rapper I got socked in the face,” said Grenawalt as he recalled a trip to Cleveland, Ohio. But this young individual’s personal effort and unique perspective gained through his experiences on the street pursuing a career in hip hop over the past nine years has left him with an attitude that one can only call positive. “Don’t give up, don’t get frustrated, and remember, wherever you are in hip hop, there you are. Don’t rely on others to [help point you where you’ve just always asking other people to do shows],” said Grenawalt. Stepping to reflect, he continued, “I want to openly apologize to anyone who I’ve openly been a dick to on the streets. Just remember there’s been ten more of you being a dick to me.”

The Beaverton native has been rapping since a friend asked him to start a group when he was 16, and now spends most of his days out and about throughout Portland, selling his CDs. When he’s not hitting the streets to sell his material and rap a cappella, he’s at home in the house that his mother and him attained through Habitat for Humanity, recording, editing, producing, and releasing his tracks via one of the numerous social media sites he takes part in, or packaging them to sell on the street. All the work and effort that goes into this process is his own. “Don’t be afraid to hustle your CD’s out in the streets, don’t get angry when people are dicks to you,” Grenawalt cautioned. He then continued with some encouragement for other up-and-comers in the business: “I figure the combination of your CD sales on the streets, with the YouTube and the Twitter and the Facebook combination and constantly traveling and finding different venues in other cites, I don’t think you’ll have a problem getting anywhere. That’s my plan.”

His strong emphasis on work ethic and self production is reflected in his lyrics. Sighting Immortal Technique as one of his main influences, Grenawalt, under his alias Acheron Flow, is quickly becoming part of the growing ‘conscious rap’ scene, defined as rap or hip hop music that goes beyond the normal expansion of egotistical blabber and aims to acknowledge and touch upon real world issues. “Immortal Technique has highly influenced my life. I think he has highly influenced this whole revolutionary movement that’s going on right now in general... I think he may even have triggered some things that are going on right now in people’s minds,” Grenawalt explained. Immortal Technique has become one of the leading innovators in this movement, and while taste in music is unavoidably subjective, it is undeniable that Immortal Technique was one of the first modern day “new school” rappers to really start incorporating a perspective on world issues into his rhymes. While his influence may not be nearly as great as Immortal Technique’s, or even some of the other well known rappers in Portland, Grenawalt’s music speaks for itself. Displaying a complex rhythmic scheme mixed tastefully over well developed beats, it’s his lyrics that ultimately set him apart from other rappers in the local scene. Displaying insight and wisdom beyond his years, his flow of words touch on important moral and social issues while still remaining undeniably relevant to Portlanders in a way that rap connoisseurs in PDX would be hard pressed to find elsewhere. That is not to say he is the best; as Grenawalt himself points out, “I think that Illmaculate is the best battle rapper in Portland.” He places a large emphasis on the difference between hip hop and rap, though ultimately striving to mix the different aspects of each into a coalescence of styles that is his own. “I’d say I definitely put both in together, but for the most part I like to stay on the hip hop spectrum.”

The intricacies of the different styles, forms, and methodologies that go into both rap and hip-hop could have an article in this magazine all to themselves, but for the most part, what goes into the composition of spoken word over a beat, whether it be qualified as hip hop or ‘rap’, falls into those main subdivisions of skill sets: freestyling, battle rapping, and writing and composing. Grenawalt admits, “when it comes to business I am a writer. There is a time and a place for freestyling.” However, he never hesitates to dabble in the other art forms that make up the world of rap and hip hop. “I’m actually a better battle rapper than I am a freestyler,” he explains, a distinction that, for those unfamiliar with the scene, is an important one to make when showcasing your talents as a developing artist. Battle rapping, a subdivision of freestyling, has been emerging as a large part of Portland’s ever-developing hip-hop/rap scene. For those who may have seen the movie 8-Mile, the parts where Eminem chokes on stage repeatedly only to come out victorious in the end is an example of what could be considered battle rapping. As far as this type of music is concerned, Illmaculate, winner of major rap battles since he was 17 in 2004, has long been considered one of Portland’s best on the scene and is high up in the ranks of the northwest battle rapping league. As far as battle rapping goes, however, Grenawalt will be sticking to the development and release of his written material for now, although he did briefly mention his desire to further his skills in the field of battling later. As this 24-year-old’s birthday quickly passes by, the plans for the future seem simple. “My goal? I just wanna be able to eat and live comfortably off

The Beaverton native has been rapping since a friend asked him to start a group when he was 16, and now spends most of his days out and about throughout Portland, selling his CDs. When he’s not hitting the streets to sell his material and rap a cappella, he’s at home in the house that his mother and him attained through Habitat for Humanity, recording, editing, producing, and releasing his tracks via one of the numerous social media sites he takes part in, or packaging them to sell on the street. All the work and effort that goes into this process is his own. “Don’t be afraid to hustle your CD’s out in the streets, don’t get angry when people are dicks to you,” Grenawalt cautioned. He then continued with some encouragement for other up-and-comers in the business: “I figure the combination of your CD sales on the streets, with the YouTube and the Twitter and the Facebook combination and constantly traveling and finding different venues in other cities, I don’t think you’ll have a problem getting anywhere. That’s my plan.”
For the young guns (all ages):

February 25 @ 7:30 p.m.
$6 at the door
At Backspace Cafe (115 NW 5th Ave.)
Bands: 48 Thrills, 800 Octane, Burnside Heroes, Mourning Bed Head

If you’re not familiar with the Backspace Cafe, you’re under the age of 21, and you live in the city of Portland, then you’re doing something wrong. This awesome venue is all ages all the time, and with an affordable cover fee (in this case only $6 measly dollars), anyone can meander on over there this Saturday to catch a show that is well worth the money. Featuring a wide variety of music genres, new bands perform every night of the week. On the 25th they will be showcasing the talent of 48 Thrills, 800 Octane, Burnside Heroes, and Mourning Bed Head. The night is sure to be an electrifying extravaganza of different local punk-based rock bands. From seasoned veterans to new up-and-comers, this Saturday will see a variety of styles from the local scene that will be sure to get you on your feet, moshing or not. The venue serves alcohol as well as Stumptown coffee, so you can bring all your friends, even the ones you can’t legally drink with, and expect to have a great time.

February 25 @ Noon – 4 p.m.
Free Admission, Tasting Trays $10
At Lompoc’s Fifth Quadrant (3901 N Williams St.)
Event: Sixth Annual Chowder Challenge

This Saturday marks the 6th annual Chowder Challenge, a competition that has set out for the past six years to determine which eatery in Portland’s restaurant community makes the best clam chowder. This year’s challenge features a wide range of competitors from across the city, including but not limited to Cascade Brewing Barrel House, Columbia River Brewing, J’s Bar, Deschutes Brewery, EAT, El Gaucho, Fifth Quadrant, New Old Lompoc, Rogue, Salty’s, and Trebol. So far the New Old Lompoc has claimed the title as the city’s best clam chowder. The price is only $10 for a tasting tray, and all proceeds go towards Portland’s Community Transitional School, a school for children that are homeless or otherwise struggling with staying in school. So if choosing down on some of the best chowders the city has to offer to support a good cause sounds like a good time to you, then stop by Lompoc’s Fifth Quadrant on the 25th right around lunch time. Just make sure you can handle a day of chowder-chuggin if you’re planning on enjoying a night out on the town Saturday evening.

For the geezers (21+):

February 24 @ 9 p.m.
$6 at the door
At Ash Street Saloon (225 SW Ash St.)
Bands: Hounds & Harlots, Shock Troops, The Israelites, Guest

This show should be one for the books, books being used in this case to record the number of people injured in the mosh pit. That may be a little too harsh, but Ash Street Saloon’s show on the 24th of this month will most definitely bring a rip-earying good time. Featuring the bands Hounds & Harlots, Shock Troops, The Israelites, and Guest, you can expect to be yelling “oi” and jumping up and down more than once during this gig. But it’s not all ‘oi’s’, with The Israelites in the lineup there is sure to be some nice steady ska sound to keep the good vibes going. With only a six dollar entry fee there should be enough cash left in that wallet chained to your studded leather jacket to keep those good vibes going till the next time NOFX comes to town. If punk rock with a dash of ska thrown in is your thing, be sure to stop by the Ash Street Saloon on the 24th of this month.

February 25 @ 9 p.m.
$6 at the door before 10pm, $10 after
At Holocene (1001 SE Morrison St.)
Event: Jai Ho! Bollywood Disco Costume Dance Party, DJ Brett Bell opening act

If Bollywood disco themed costumes, dancing, live performances, and authentic/crossover Indian dance music is something you’re into, then this Saturday at Holocene will be right up your alley; and if that combination of festivities isn’t something you already enjoy, be honest, you’ve at the very least intrigued. Stop by Holocene this Saturday to bear witness to the Jai Ho! Bollywood Disco Costume Dance Party. With dance lessons starting at 10 p.m., this Bollywood Disco themed costume party is sure to be both an exhilarating cultural event as well as a great excuse for you to get those wallflower friends of yours out onto the dance floor. DJ Brett Bell will perform the opening act for the night, and with a cover fee of only five dollars at the door before 10 p.m., forget about pregaming at the sports bar and watching the Blazers—grab some neon and head on over to Holocene for a night of Indian inspired disco dancing fun! (Yeah, we thought that sounded a little cheesy too...)
16 days of film

THE 35TH ANNUAL PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL DELIVERS CULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FILM

Max Bordman

With the bustle of the middle of this term passing by, the good majority of us on campus are experiencing the stress associated with midterms—whether that includes some sort of examination, project, or large paper that is soon due or past its due date. After the many hours of both preparation and procrastination that undoubtedly go into this time of year, we all need a break.

Luckily the 9th of this month marked the start of the 35th Portland International Film Festival. So while putting in all the work that goes into the celebration of the end of midterms, you can at least enjoy the company of good people and a nice late-night Norwegian Grindhouse thriller.

At 7:30 p.m. on the 9th, a throng of film enthusiasts helped kicked off the event. Guests experienced a special opening night presentation of Salmon Fishing in the Yemen, a documentary film by CBS, as well as an after party hosted by Nel Centro, Hotel Modera, and The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation at Nel Centro in the restaurant and courtyard.

Supporters of the event, admirers of international film, paid $25 to partake in the festivities. The opening night extravaganza was complete with beverages sponsored by pyramid breweries, Firesteed Winery, New Deal Vodka, and Steven Smith Tea, adding the metaphorical cherry to the top of the night’s hot international film Sunday.

On the 9th of this month the NW Film Center started its annual presentation of international film with its 35th Portland International Film Festival ending the 25th. The month long cultural event will be showcasing a total of 146 films, 93 features and 46 shorts, from 36 different countries over the course of 16 days of planned screenings.

Opening night shenanigans aside, the NW Film Center’s 35th PIFF this year should be like no other with the manifestation of international film in Portland. “Every festival brings with it a new mix of films from around the world,” explained Jessica Lyness, the Northwest Film Center’s public relations and marketing manager, who played a crucial role in the preparation for this year’s festival. “Specifically for the festival this year, we’re really excited that we’re expanding. We’ve been expanding in the preparation for this year’s festival. “Specifically for the festival this year, we’re really happy that we’re expanding. We’ve been expanding in the past couple of years the films tend to be horror films, maybe grindhouse style, a little more edgy or dark than some of the latter films in the festival,” explained Jessica. “PIFF After Dark is going to appeal to younger people...it’s a fun cinema experience to have.” The screenings are part the NW Film Center’s attempts to incorporate education into their festival. Encouraging high school students to come to these free Global Classroom events, kids from all around Portland can gain an international perspective and appreciation for different cultures through the enjoyment of diverse films.

In addition to the Global Classroom events, the 35th PIFF also has PIFF After Dark screenings scheduled. “The PIFF after dark films, we started that last year actually. The past couple of years the films tend to be horror flicks, maybe grindhouse style, a little more edgy or dark than some of the other films in the festival,” explained Jessica. “PIFF After Dark is going to appeal to younger people...it’s a fun cinema experience to have.” The screenings are part the NW Film Center’s attempts to incorporate education into their festival. Encouraging high school students to come to these free Global Classroom events, kids from all around Portland can gain an international perspective and appreciation for different cultures through the enjoyment of diverse films.

With free screenings offered at special weekday times, the Global Classroom screenings are part the NW Film Center’s attempts to incorporate education into their festival. Encouraging high school students to come to these free Global Classroom events, kids from all around Portland can gain an international perspective and appreciation for different cultures through the enjoyment of diverse films.

Whether you’re an avid connosuer of Film or just have an appreciation for the visual arts, the 35th PIFF will not soon be forgotten. Portland is filled with a variety of events from museums to music festivals, and the NW Film Center is one of the many cultural happening that will not soon be forgotten. February, there will be no excuse for not asking that attractive girl in your philosophy class out on a date.

In addition to the fun and the young offered at this year’s festival, the PIFF will also offer a look at 11 of the year’s Oscar nominees in addition to an allstar lineup of international award winning films from Austria, Argentina, and everywhere in between. Locations for the festival’s screenings include the Film Center’s WhitSELL Auditorium inside the Portland Art Museum, the Regal Pioneer Place, and the World Trade Center Theater, to name a few.

Tickets are priced at $10 for General admission, $9 for Portland Art Museum members, students, and seniors, and $7 for Silver Screen Club members. Tickets are available for purchase by phone (503-278-4700) or in person at the Film Center’s Advance Ticket Outlet, located in the lobby of the Portland Art Museum’s Mark Building, or on the NW Film Center’s website at www.nwfilm.org. For a complete list of all of the screening locations, movies playing, movie times, and all other information regarding the festival visit the NW Film Center’s website for details. In addition to the Portland International Film Festival, the Film Center produces the annual Northwest Filmmakers’ Festival, Portland Jewish Film Festival, and a variety of other year-round film and video exhibitions, as well as educational and informational programs serving Oregon and residents of the Northwest. Whether you’re an avid connosuer of film or just have an open schedule for the rest of the month, stop by the NW Film Center’s 35th International Film Festival to experience a cultural happening that will not soon be forgotten.

Max Bordman

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Max Bordman
Jazz up your month

THE 9TH ANNUAL PORTLAND JAZZ FESTIVAL WILL FEATURE A VARIETY OF SNAZZY TUNES TO FLOAT ANY MUSIC LOVER’S BOAT

Gavin McCordle

Brassy trumpet fills the air as drums beat out a rhythmically scattered beat, a piano twangs away as you bob your head along with the smooth aroma of sound, and a crystal clear voice lulls you in like a siren; these are but a few of the intricacies that make up the composition of jazz, intricacies that Portlanders will have access to this month.

The 9th annual Portland Jazz Festival is here, and with 100 scheduled events on the bill there is soon to be plenty of opportunity to fill your live music fix. Between February 17 and 26, jazz music will be spread out across Portland, mainly in the downtown area. For the Portlanders who may not live in the immediate confines of the downtown area, this year’s festival will also be reaching out into different bars and hotels in the suburbs.

The main venues for the festival will be the Newmark Theater, the Crystal Ballroom, the Mission Theater, and Jimmy Mak’s in the Pearl District, for PSU students who may not feel like traveling out and about to one of these fine venues, or any of the other fine venues that the festival will also be reaching out into different bars and hotels in the suburbs.

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The main venues for the festival will be the Newmark Theater, the Crystal Ballroom, the Mission Theater, and Jimmy Mak’s in the Pearl District, for PSU students who may not feel like traveling out and about to one of these fine venues, or any of the other fine venues that the festival has in store, don’t fret, there will also be a handful of shows that take place on the PSU campus towards the end of the festival.

Last year, the Portland Jazz Festival went off beautifully, there were plenty of opportunities to for you to find the time to see the band you’re most interested in.

Don Lucoff is the Managing Director and Artistic Director of the Portland Jazz Festival and fittingly has his hands in everything revolving around the festival. Working with a program committee, there was a solid collaboration that went into the choice of artists and Lucoff is at the head of it all. Striving for a better selection of Portland based jazz musicians, Lucoff is enthused with the line-up that they have chosen. “I think the fact that we’re integrating local artists with our headliners is something we didn’t do last year and we’re excited; I’m really excited about that,” explains Lucoff.

“I like all the bands for different reasons,” Lucoff says, and there are a few shows that he thinks are perfect for a college crowd. One such show is the PDX Afrobeat Breakdown at the Crystal Ballroom, taking place Saturday, February 26th, from 9:30 pm till 1:00 am. Charlie Hunter is headlining the show and it will feature three Portland based bands. Ben Darwis – Commotion, is a “Parliament-Funkadelic take on jazz,” as well as Jujuba who “plays afrobeat in the tradition of King Sunny Ade, with a full blown horn section,” and lastly, Scott Pemberton, “who is a well known guitar player in Portland and a jam band guitarist” (hey Sasha all these quotes in this sentence were from Lucoff, I wasn’t sure how to go about editing them or attributing them to him without screwing up the composition of the paragraph). They will be following Charlie Hunter, who will be opening with a solo set. “A lot of people are gonna show up. They’re gonna want to dance and swing and groove to that music,” elaborated Lucoff.

The Vijay Iyer Trio or Tirtha, “which is kind of a collaboration of East Indian music and jazz” (said by Lucoff) will be playing on Saturday, February 25th, at 9:00 pm, at the Crystal Ballroom.

For any Beatles fans, Bill Frisell will be playing the music of John Lennon, Friday, February 24th, at 9:30 pm, also at the Crystal Ballroom. But these gigs are a very small selection of the shows Festival goers can look forward to in the coming month.

If you’re not 21, there’s nothing to worry about. Many of the shows take place either during the afternoon, or early enough in the evening, that people under 21 should still be able to get into the bars. The Crystal Ballroom shows will be all ages, but will certainly still be serving drinks to those who indulge in a designated drinking area.

If you’re strapped for cash and don’t think you can afford to be paying for shows, you may be surprised by the number of shows on the bill that are the friendliest price; free. If you’ve got that extra little bit of money and you’re looking for something to do this February, be sure to check out one of the 14 main ticketed events or any of the partnered events for an exciting evening of live music. To find out more about the Portland Jazz Festival, be sure to check out the festival’s website, pxdjazz.com, for a full list of shows, ticket prices, band information, and video links to help you make your decision of which shows will be the best choice for you.

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A new lifestyle

A STUDENT AND PERSONAL TRAINER TURNS HER LIFE AROUND BY REPLACING BAD HABITS WITH STRONG SELF-DISCIPLINE

Fatima Jaber

We all have that little voice that speaks to us when we consume food that we know is unhealthy. We tell ourselves, “I will go to the gym tomorrow.” But at what point do we realize that our body needs some serious physical and mental discipline?

Student Nicole Buth, 25, studying exercise science at Portland State University, used to struggle with her body image and eating habits. Although her mother would start the day with a morning jog, she never inspired Buth to do the same.

“In sixth grade, I would hang out with the popular girls but would be considered the ‘chubby one’ in the group,” said Buth. One day Buth’s mother found her lying on the floor crying. Starting with this day, with her mother’s motivation, Buth began taking steps to change her life.

Buth’s exercises started becoming more consistent, and she joined the volleyball team in middle school. Throughout the upcoming years, she decided to continue taking steps to alter her body image and decided to join a gym. However, her eating habits were still unhealthy. “I used to leave the gym and get Taco Bell. I never had control over food and I would always eat,” said Buth.

She began observing one of the trainers at her gym and noticed that the trainer would bring home cooked meals that were high in protein and placed in Tupperware containers, which inspired Buth to slowly start changing her eating habits. Along with changing her eating habits, she exchanged her unhealthy relationship with her ex-boyfriend for an addiction to the gym. “I replaced a negative with a positive,” said Buth. “I started working out more and fell in love with the gym.”

After noticing slight physical and mental results, Buth began working out with a trainer. After rapid body transformation, she decided to study health and fitness. She received her personal training certification at 22. With only a small amount of body fat left, she decided to do more with her body and entered a body competition at age 23.

Her training program lasted 18 weeks and consisted of a high protein, low calorie diet, weight lifting, and lots of cardio. She worked towards a body that eventually allowed her to step on stage. “The feeling of being on stage is incredible. I used to look at magazines and see girls in shape and say to myself, ‘that will never happen to me,’ and then to see that I’m obtaining that—it’s amazing,” said Buth.

Some bodybuilders and competitors go the unhealthy route and consider crash dieting, which consists of only protein and vegetables, as a way to get their body into shape. “The feeling of being on stage is incredible. I used to look at magazines and see girls in shape and say to myself, ‘that will never happen to me,’ and then to see that I’m obtaining that—it’s amazing,” said Buth.

With the supporting friends she has, Buth realized that there are still ways for her to live her new healthy lifestyle and keep her metabolism going. “I put Tupperware in my purse wherever I go out, even when I go clubbing; I take them out and start eating,” she said.

Buth concluded that she wanted to take an even bigger step into fitness and help others set plans to achieve their weight loss goals. At 24, she became a personalized fitness trainer and began personal training at 24 Hour Fitness. “I love helping others, so I turned my passion into my job,” said Buth.

Feeling nervous with her first client, the experience opened Buth’s eyes. She realized that she was not only changing body images but also mental images as well. “I felt like I didn’t know what to do at first. I felt like I was a rock for that person. There are other struggles that come along such as injuries they have had in the past or their mental battles. I get to help them inside and out and I get to wake up every day and help that person be a little better,” said Buth.

Buth understands that working with her clients is also about the experience. “Everybody is so different in what they want and what they need,” she said.

Buth has developed healthy personal relationships with her clients—some of her clients even refer to her as a “second mom.” Personal training does not end at the gym; clients can contact Buth through text messaging and phone calls if any inquiries regarding their diet or workouts come up. “When I am not working, I am still here. It is hard to live a lifestyle like this but it’s well worth it— anybody can do this,” said Buth.

Personal training can be a challenge at times since a lot of people use unhealthy food as a stress reliever, which can make training sessions slightly challenging. “Some of my clients eat something that they shouldn’t have eaten which leads to them lying to me about it because they feel embarrassed, which can make the training more difficult. But then you learn to fall and then you get back up,” said Buth.

With Buth’s famous slogan that she gives to her clients—“Don’t give up”—she is currently in the process of using her own advice as she recovers from tendinitis in her Achilles. “It hurts during the motion of walking when I lift my heel, which has caused other pains in my knee and foot from overcompensating as I walk,” says Buth. However, her injury has not gotten in the way of working out; she knows the limits of how much cardio and weights her body can currently handle. Buth is also on a mission of helping her mother stay in shape and maintain a healthy lifestyle. “It’s cool to be that person for my mom when she was the one doing that for me,” said Buth.
When making judgments on things, people don’t always have the same views. The sound of music, the feel of comfortable clothing, the attractiveness of a person—and apparently, the taste of the best wine at this year’s Seafood and Wine Festival.

“I have no idea why this wine won,” said Barking Frog Winery proprietor Ron Helling of his Best-in-Show 2008 Reserve Syrah. “What if I were to tell you that this same exact wine didn’t place at all last year? There seems to be no rhyme or reason as to why this bottle won the top medal this year.”

While this was a good year for Barking Frog—they took down four medals this year—judges didn’t enjoy Noble Estate’s 2010 Muscat (silver winner) as well as they enjoyed last year’s vintage, a gold medal winner. This didn’t keep owner Mark Jurasevich down, as he felt his winery had an exceptional festival with three medals.

“It’s been just fabulous this year,” Jurasevich said with a chuckle. “We’ve sold out of our Merlot (bronze winner), and our Passion and Muscat have again been huge hits. It’s a great time and I love coming to events and we’ve been getting more and more people every time, and they’ve been getting rarer and rarer. And that’s not necessarily a bad thing.”

Perhaps no winery has been as creative since last year’s festival as Crater Lake Cellars, who has taken some different approaches in creation of their wines.

“This year we decided to try a hand-picked Merlot, where we picked the grapes by hand to make sure there were no stems in the press,” said owner Steve Gardiner. “It took me about three days to finish those barrels, which is ridiculous, but obviously the end result is a wine that is pure grapes and skin rather than plants and stems. Where most merlots are very oaky and deep, with this merlot you get the depth and smoothness without any lingering tastes of stem. It’s just a cleaner finish.”

Gardiner also uses what he terms “maddle rot” for use in his dessert wines, a process where the grapes age longer on the stems, resulting in a more sugary, silky flavor—perhaps a large reason why Crater Lake’s Candy in a Bottle won a silver medal.

“Candy in a Bottle is a real nice wine mostly because of how smooth and unique the taste is,” said Gardiner. “I’m not sure why our wines tend to be so smooth—maybe it’s because of our location in southern Oregon—but it gives us the opportunity to create some truly unique wines and experiment with things that a lot of other wineries can’t experiment with. The end result is that we offer a wine for any type of experience a person wants to have, and that is a big part of the reason this is so fun to do.”

In the waning weeks of May 2011, as Portland State seniors excitedly anticipated graduation, a small collection of students, teachers, and locals gathered at the Santa Fe Taqueria on NW 23rd. The event marked the graduation of Portland State student Alexander Villarreal. What drew docket level communications professors to his party wasn’t his overwhelming love of quantitative research, nor his burning desire to knock back beers with former instructors, Alex’s friends, family, co-workers, and teachers came out simply to support him in his accomplishment; Alexander Villarreal beat the odds.

Born in Adrian, Michigan, in 1979, Villarreal found himself committed to the foster system at the age of 2 after suffering severe mental, physical, and sexual abuse in his biological household. Before the age of 4, when he was finally adopted, he had already been bounced around between seven foster homes, where he often continued being abused.

Though now building the relationship with his adopted family, his initial transfer into the home was a notably tumultuous time in his life. “Growing up, I became very angry,” he admitted. “I was still dealing with a lot of issues.” After his adoption his family continuously drove around the United States, adopting four more children. Though he was now free from physical abuse, the unabashedly psychological issues which had plagued him for years were once again taking their toll.

Before the age of 15, Alexander had already been sent to several boarding schools, as well as a military academy, but was equally resistant and angry with each of these arrangements. “Everywhere I went, I would stage a hunger strike,” he said. “I just wouldn’t eat.”

Shortly after his stint in the military academy, Alex was transferred back into the Oregon foster care system, though his time there was short lived as well. Just weeks after re-entering the system, Alex ran away from his foster family, beginning a life on the streets at just sixteen years old.

“It was obviously a really dark time in my life. It all seems like a blur now,” said a well dressed, well spoken Villarreal, offering no obvious indication he was once a homeless youth.

Sitting in a window booth in the Santa Fe, Alex recounts all the trials and tribulations of his life on the street. Dining in the very same restaurant which held his graduation party only months before, he shared a story that truly illustrates how far he has come, how he has truly beaten the odds.

The night of his graduation celebration, as the party goers sipped Coronas and mingled with hers de’ceivers in hand, a teary eyed woman approached him. She reminded him of the time he had saved her from prostitution after the doors to the shelter had been locked tight for the night.

“It was so easy for street kids to get caught up in that lifestyle,” he said, “the shelter doors would get locked at 9:30. If you weren’t in the shelter, you were on the street.” While the option of taking refuge under a bridge for the night was always available, many underage street youth turned to prostitution for the simple reason of having a hotel room to sleep in for the night. Admittedly, Alex was no stranger to the practice himself.

“That girl told me that I had gone out one night when we were kids and worked the streets so she didn’t have to,” he said. “I got a hotel room, and she stayed with me. Sadly, I didn’t even recall this story until she reminded me.”

In the early 90’s, when Madonna still occupied the top of the charts, SW Stark Street had a much steadier reputation. Known colloquially as “Vaseline Alley,” the avenue was a haven for prostitution and underage sex workers alike. It was here that Villarreal and his companions would scrounge to make a living. “A lot of the kids I worked with had drug issues; they were working to get their fix. Most of us just needed money to eat.”

Seating the dangers that his companions on the street were subjected too, daily, Alex was the first to suggest that they begin writing down the license plate numbers of the cars the prostitutes left in. If they didn’t return within a few hours, they were prepared to notify the police. “We had to take care of each other,” he said. “No one else was going to do it.”

Despite his circumstances, Alex knew that this wasn’t the life he wanted for himself. “I was always very good at hunting down resources. I looked into programs for rehabilitation. I was trying to get my life together,” he said.

In the mid 90’s Alex entered the Outside in program. Outside in provided him with an apartment and counseling services on the condition that he remained drug free and employed. “Drugs were never a problem for me, I was lucky,” he said. Newley, Villarreal began to settle into the life of a normal twenty-something-year-old. With an apartment, a job, and a steady income, things had obviously improved since his time on the street, but he was still lacking an education.

“At the time, I was working at a coffee shop that was frequented by Councilman Dan Salzman,” he said. “And after hearing my story he mentioned in passing that if I got my degree I might, one day, be able to work with him.”

Though the road was long and arduous, he completed his degree in Communication, also earning an induction into the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society. He completed his degree in the Spring of 2011, and in so doing Councilman Salzman kept his word. Currently working with Salzman, Villarreal now praises the sense of community that PSU and the city of Portland have provided; without it, he admits, he would still be on the streets.

Could I have another glass?
PORTLAND’S ANNUAL SEAFOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL HAD SOME ODD WINNERS THIS YEAR, BUT WAS OTHERWISE A HUGE SUCCESS
Ron J. Rambo Jr.

Beating the odds
YOUNG ALEXANDER VILLARREAL ESCAPES COMPLETE POVERTY, DESPITE TRULY ADVERSE CONDITIONS
Jesse Hansen

PHOTO BY CHRISTINA KANE

SPECTATOR
The issue of healthcare has been an on-going discussion in the United States and is one of the issues all Republican candidates are vowing to repeal if elected, keeping America the only first world country without some sort of a national healthcare plan. President Obama, however, has been the first to be able to come up with a bill and get it passed. It’s important to remember that discussions on issues like this are not about what we would like to have happen, but rather what can feasibly get passed in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and of course what is realistic and sustainable. Let’s start by explaining what the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act intends to do.

First, the PPACA, informally known as Obamacare, will ban limits on healthcare—both lifetime limits and annual limits. Before the reform, insurance companies could place either an annual limit or a lifetime limit—or both—limiting the amount of coverage each enrollee could receive. So if a patient were diagnosed with cancer, or had a bad year with regards to health, that patient would likely hit their limit on their health insurance coverage. Every healthy year the patient had before while paying for health insurance is money lost, because they have now hit their cap and must pay all hospital visits and treatments out-of-pocket.

Second, the law will ban insurance companies’ ability to drop coverage due to small mistakes made on applications. In the past, the minute a patient started costing an insurance company any money, they had the right to try to find a way out of covering that patient.

Third, it will allow young adults to stay on their parents’ plan until the age of 26. Students and young adults now have the choice to stay on their parents’ health insurance plan while they finish their education and move to separate residences. It will enhance our everyday healthcare and cover millions of people who previously couldn’t afford healthcare or weren’t eligible.

The plan will enhance our everyday healthcare and cover millions of people who previously couldn’t afford healthcare or weren’t eligible.

President Obama's healthcare solution is part of the problem. With the Affordable Care and Patient Protection Act—better known as Obamacare—set to go into full swing in 2013 (as long as the Supreme Court does not rule it unconstitutional), more and more evidence is becoming available that should make supporters of the bill think twice about whether it is truly the answer. This goes beyond what all Republican presidential candidates have suggested they would do if elected, which is repeal the bill. The Republican brand is corporatism, and corporatism threatens the free market in all cases, yet the free market is the best way to combat insane increases in the healthcare costs that have become a yearly punch to the wallets of Americans. Corporatist politicians were sure to remove the public option from Obamacare, voiding an excellent chance to increase price competitiveness.

While campaigning for national healthcare coverage in 2009, Obama and other Democrats pointed toward a Congressional Budget Office report that a national healthcare plan would end up saving money in the long run—$18 billion in deficit reduction over the course of 10 years, and an additional $1.2 trillion in savings in the following decade. Similar statements have been made in regard to state healthcare plans, and the results have been troubling. In 1994, Tennessee tried covering all its residents through TennCare, and succeeded in covering 94 percent of its population. In only a decade, however, costs had increased from $2.6 billion to an out-of-control projection of $12.8 billion by 2008 if the system were not fixed. In 2007, the program was effectively shut down. President Bush considered it a failure, but it remains in place for those without health insurance. Since then, 10 other states have tried similar programs with their statewide coverage.

Aside from the uncertainty surrounding whether the program will truly save the country any money whatsoever, the idea behind such a program would be ensuring better quality care for Americans, right? Once again, if history is any indication, quality of care is not necessarily improved upon, and waiting times are increasing. In Massachusetts, avoidable emergency room visits have increased, and patients are waiting on average a week longer in 2011 than the year prior to see an ORS/SVN. The only such study performed on having insurance vs. having no insurance (done in Oregon) revealed that there was no difference in mortality rate among those insured and those not. If there is one caveat where Obamacare provides a benefit, it would be covering all Americans from catastrophic accidents that are impossible to predict or prevent.

But perhaps the biggest issue yet is how tied up in medical dollars Obama appears to be. In 2008, Medicare spending was $391 billion. In 2011, spending is projected to be $534 billion. Weeks ago, in a town hall style Q&A session, Obama conveniently ignored the top user-rated question about legalization of marijuana, something over half of all Americans approve of. If marijuana were legalized, it would instantly be regarded as a cheaper, more effective way to self medicate than many drugs could provide, taking a lot of money from the companies who have become a yearly punch to the wallets of Americans. Corporatist politicians were sure to remove the public option from Obamacare, voiding an excellent chance to increase price competitiveness.

While campaigning for national healthcare coverage in 2009, Obama and other Democrats pointed toward a Congressional Budget Office report that a national healthcare plan would end up saving money in the long run—$18 billion in deficit reduction over the course of 10 years, and an additional $1.2 trillion in savings in the following decade. Similar statements have been made in regard to state healthcare plans, and the results have been troubling. In 1994, Tennessee tried covering all its residents through TennCare, and succeeded in covering 94 percent of its population. In only a decade, however, costs had increased from $2.6 billion to an out-of-control projection of $12.8 billion by 2008 if the system were not fixed. In 2007, the program was effectively shut down. President Bush considered it a failure, but it remains in place for those without health insurance. Since then, 10 other states have tried similar programs with their statewide coverage.

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The future of piracy laws

FROM THE ASHES OF SOPA RISES AN OREGON SENATOR’S SOLUTION TO ONLINE PIRACY

Elliot Daggett

As is usually the case in American politics, while the rest of the nation busies itself making an enormous mess of things, Oregon gets it right. So it goes with the controversial issue of online piracy legislation. Back in December, as the online community rose up in protest against the much maligned “Stop Online Piracy Act” and “Protect IP Acts” (SOPA and PIPA), Oregon Senator Ron Wyden introduced a bill of his own. Its acronym spelled neither the Spanish word for soup, nor a Chinese four-stringed guitar (look it up). He called it OPEN. And it was wonderful. Whereas SOPA and PIPA drew the unified ire of online web giants, Wyden’s bill, The Online Protection and Enforcement of Digital Trade Act, received the official blessing of Google, Facebook, and 8 other major websites in a letter to his Washington office. In theory, his bill would accomplish the same goal as SOPA/PIPA: limiting the dissemination of copyright protected material on the Internet.

SOPA/PIPA went about this in four ways:

• Force service providers to block access to websites which illegally peddle copyrighted material.
• Give service providers the job of policing all uploaded content for copyrighted material (including every mindless tweet and YouTube video).
• Mandate American web companies like PayPal and Google cease doing business with foreign piracy sites.
• Make search engines filter offending sites from their results.

Web companies disliked the added responsibility of sifting through uploaded content and bristled at the thought of their sites being shut down with little notice. Likewise, Internet users were offended by the idea of being blocked off from large swatches of the Internet. Their combined opposition to SOPA and PIPA is the reason that these bills will likely never advance from their current position, languishing at the bottom of some congressional committees.

Wyden’s plan would give the responsibility of taking down piracy sites to the International Trade Commission (ITC). Their jurisdiction would cover only foreign-based companies, so Facebook is off the hook. In fact, OPEN would apply only to websites that “willfully” promote copyright violation—torrent host The Pirate Bay being an example. Instead of the heavy handed SOPA approach, OPEN would simply target the sites’ sources of cash, banning online advertisers and PayPal from working with the site in question. Without the cash incentive, the sites should shut down on their own.

As an added plus, the slow ruminations of the ITC’s bureaucratic process would provide plenty of time for input from the sides of affected parties. At the end there would even be a process for appeals. SOPA and PIPA, in contrast, would have struck much quicker, allowing content owners to take down an entire website, even if just one page on it carried copyrighted material. This would have happened based only on accusations, not a Justice Department conviction.

In a November letter to editor of the New York Times, the US Chamber of Commerce argued that “Rogue sites steal America’s innovative and creative products, attract more than 53 billion visits a year, and threaten more than 19 million Americans.” Clearly enforcement of copyright law should be a high priority for Congress, but not at the expense of the Internet’s capacity to foster the creative exchange of art and information. The OPEN legislation strikes that balance. In December, Senator Ron Wyden and his Republican counterpart Representative Darrell Issa introduced OPEN legislation in both the House and Senate. It is now only a matter of time before the rest of the nation gets on board.

What is so clear to Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney can be difficult to digest for many Americans. Are corporations really people? Among the differences recently mentioned by Stephen Colbert, corporations, unlike people, “are born in a lawyer’s office, have no souls, and can never die.” Even so, there is a measure of truth to Romney’s words. Like people, corporations come in all shapes and sizes. Some burden student loan holders with high interest payments (Sally Mae). Others prefer to fill the golf coast with crude oil (BP). But a select few manage to pull in a profit while working to improve society and the environment—almost like real people.

To recognize these good Samaritans, a new kind of corporate classification has emerged. And the brave few who opt in are far more than merely some corporations: they’re the B corporations.

From the grayish hills of Vermont to the sandy beaches of Hawaii, a wave of states have recently passed legislation granting companies the right to register as benefit corporations. In doing so, a company’s CEO takes on the legal responsibility to create a material positive impact on society. Whereas current corporate law makes the CEO responsible primarily for the maximization of profit (failure to do so opens him/her up to shareholder litigation), a B corporation’s CEO has to take into account a broader set of goals. These include conscientious treatment of employees, their community, and the environment. The legislation also obligates a B corporation to account for what they claim by reporting to a credible third party standard.

This provision comes in response to the widespread corporate practice of “greenwashing,” where a company attempts to disingenuously market themselves as eco-friendly. Enter B Lab, a Philadelphia-based non-profit and the nation’s first B-corp advocacy and auditing organization. Each year, B Lab performs audits on 10% of the companies they’ve granted B certifications. This is done to verify that certified companies continue to meet B-corp criteria and haven’t returned to their slovenly ways. The product: an easy to read impact report resembling the nutritional facts on a box of cereal. In turn, qualified companies support B Lab by paying a fee based on their size.

One advantage of gaining B-corp status is that it can help a company while raising capital. According to Stephanie Ryan from the B Lab community development team, “When a company is certified by B Lab, it gains the capacity to attract a certain kind of capital. Many investors want to know that they will not only make a return on investment, but also make a positive impact on society and the environment. It’s called impact capital.”

So what sort of companies have registered so far? According to Ryan, over 320 companies in North America from 60 different industries have signed on with B Lab. Among the 14 Portland-based B-corps are Cavauna, a wind powered web hosting company, Ecozoom, a manufacturer of high-efficiency cooking stoves for developing countries, and B-Line Urban Deliveries, a trike-powered delivery company.

Frankis Jones, the CEO and founder of B-Line, gained B-corporation status for his company in 2010. His fleet of trailer-equipped, locally-produced tricycles zip around town, delivering goods to and from Portland’s more ecologically conscious organizations. This helps decrease urban congestion and harmful emissions. Among their clients is Portland State University, with large supply orders from Office Depot and Portland Roasting Coffee. In a phone interview with the Spectator, Jones said, “I’ve been a huge supporter of the B-corp mission since I got to know the founders of B Lab four or five years ago while living in the bay area. Being a part of the B-corp community has been great for connecting with like-minded businesses. And having official recognition allows us to go out the world and say, Hey, this isn’t just marketing, we’re doing our part for the community.”

To broaden this community, B Lab has been actively working with legislators across the country, presenting testimony and organizing support. B Lab’s Ryan explained, “We’ve had a great legislative track record so far. It’s generally our policy to get cosponsors for a bill from both the Democratic and Republican sides. By doing this, we’ve been able to get near unanimous votes of approval each time.”

Talks on B corp tax incentives are in the works at the municipal level in Portland and San Francisco, but the city of Philadelphia (home of B Lab) was first to act, granting a 4,000 tax break to the first 25 B-corporations to register in the city. Another idea floating around is to grant preferential treatment to B-corps when bidding for government contracts.

While Oregon has not officially passed B-corp legislation, in 2007 the Oregon legislature passed House bill 2826, which permitted a company to add to its corporate charter a “Provisions authorizing or directing the corporation to conduct the business of the corporation in a manner that is environmentally and socially responsible.” This, in effect, makes Oregon a B-corp state, without actually using the term. A bill currently at committee level would have Oregon officially join the other states with B-corp status, but given the Oregon Legislature’s short February session, there may not be enough time for it to get a vote on the floor.

Whether Oregon is in or not, the B-corps movement has the potential to profoundly reshape American corporate culture. By shifting corporate ‘s primary concern from the value of their stock to their service to the community, the private sector gains the power to join government and non-profits in solving social and environmental problems.

According to B Lab, “Today, we stand on the brink of a sweeping movement for B corporations across the US that represents a vital step in transforming the commerce of today into the thriving green economy of tomorrow.”