

SCHEPP CONNECTIONS

LEOPOLD SCHEPP FOUNDATION FOUNDED IN 1925

85th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE 2010-2011

ON THE COVER

Oil Painting, Mr. Schepp's ship
Schepp Foundation Collection

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*...celebrating
our scholars'
capacity to dream
and their courage
to make
a difference*

WELCOME TO OUR 85TH YEAR

This issue of Schepp Connections reflects the diversity, talent and unselfish dedication of our current and past scholars. Schepp Scholars continue to devote their lives to changing the world through their leadership in public service, medicine, the arts, counseling, and teaching.

The Foundation will celebrate its 85th anniversary on April 10, 2011 in New York City. Invitations are on the way and we hope that you will be able to attend and participate in the fun. Musical performances and art exhibitions by our scholars will create a wonderful backdrop for the lively conversation and generational mixing that will highlight the 85th Anniversary Gala.

Financially, our endowment is recovering - but more slowly than we would like and, as a result, we are still unable to fund as many scholars as we have in past years. This Anniversary Gala is an appropriate milestone for each of us to renew our dedication, energy and commitment to supporting the Foundation's work.

Your generous gifts have made a crucial difference and we—along with our current and future Schepp scholars -- are sincerely grateful.



Cathleen Fitzgerald Barnier

THE CATHLEEN FITZGERALD BARNIER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Through the extraordinary generosity of Cathleen Barnier's family and friends, the Leopold Schepp Foundation established its first endowed scholarship, *The Cathleen Fitzgerald Barnier Scholarship Fund*. This scholarship will honor Cathleen Barnier's life-long service in the field of social work. When fully funded, it will be awarded to a Schepp Foundation Scholar with a preference given to a student pursuing a Master's Degree in Social Work or planning a career in social work.

Cathleen was a Schepp Scholar from 1964 to 1966. In her original application to the Foundation in 1964, Cathleen wrote: "It is a social worker's responsibility to respect the integrity and dignity of those individuals with whom they work, to assist them in attaining their self-fulfillment and personal satisfaction simultaneously advancing the well-being of society." For the next 46 years, Cathleen devoted her energy and career to enhancing the welfare of others and promoting the quality of life for all people.

The following is an excerpt from an article published in the **Press Democrat** on October 23, 2009.

Cathleen Barnier, a retired Goodwill Industries executive who for over a decade helped find stories of needy people for The Press Democrat's yearly Helping Hands holiday appeal, died Thursday at her home outside Santa Rosa. She was 70.

Barnier helped organize the participating nonprofits for the Helping Hand series, which began in 1986. She was then the chief executive officer for the Family Service Agency of Sonoma County. She continued bringing together the agencies and helping find stories of people in need when she became CEO of Goodwill Industries of the Redwood Empire.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Barnier lived most of her childhood in Old Greenwich, Conn., in a subdivision that her husband said was developed by boxing champion James Joseph "Gene" Tunney.

Barnier graduated from the University of Vermont in 1962 and obtained a Master's degree in social work from Smith College in 1966. She later completed the executive management program at Yale School of Organization and Management. While attending the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College, she met her future husband. The couple married in 1970.

Barnier's first job here was as a social worker at the Sonoma Developmental Center in Eldridge. She went on to become a service director for the American Cancer society, then served a decade each at the Family Service Agency and Goodwill.

At retirement, she oversaw an agency with 182 employees serving Sonoma and five other counties. The nonprofit's annual revenues of \$8.7 million had tripled during her tenure.

Her community involvement included the county's Workforce Development Board, Business Education Roundtable, Economic Vitality Project and School to Career program, as well as the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce. She graduated from the chamber's Leadership Santa Rosa program and belonged to the Santa Rosa Rotary.



Sean K. Driscoll

LIFE, UNEDITED

By Sean K. Driscoll, Student, Harvard Law School

The posters were everywhere. In subway cars, on top of taxis, and even on a giant billboard in Times Square: “Join the NYPD: A Front Row Seat to the Greatest Show on Earth.” Although the advertisements weren’t the reason I joined the NYPD in 2006, looking back now on my time as a New York City Police Officer, I must admit that the slogan captures the job well—except that this “show” is not on television or in movie theaters, but simply is life unedited.

At times, it was a drama. There were the urgent 911 calls, driving with flashing lights and blaring sirens, and searches for a fleeing robber or burglar. I will never forget seeing a murder victim for the first time, and can still feel the yellow “POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS” tape unrolling from my hands as I taped off a crime scene. Walking through squalid drug houses, chasing car thieves, reasoning with a suicidal woman, and wrestling a knife-toting man into handcuffs were all in the script too. The smell of gunpowder in the air, the sight of shell casings or drug vials on the ground, and the sound of a fight or screeching tires around the corner—this was our set, something that no one in central casting could capture.

Sometimes, it was a comedy. There was the radio call for a “vicious cat” and a frantic owner who asked us to extricate a kitten from her sofa. Or the van-full of men arrested during a prostitution sting who roundly agreed that jail was not nearly as scary a prospect as the wrath of their bachelorette partiers who refused to believe that I was a real cop, and not part of their evening’s entertainment.

But often, it was a tragedy. I saw the scourge of domestic violence, took away neglected children from parents who could not care less, bristled at the revolving door of the criminal justice system, and wondered what could be done about the vicious circle of drugs and crime in urban America. As my Police Academy instructor warned us, “Nobody calls the police when they’re having a good day.” As a cop, you enter people’s lives at their saddest and most vulnerable moments. It is a window into the smaller tragedies that don’t make the headlines, to a side of life that most jobs don’t show you. Those tragedies sometimes come home, however, to remind you just how real it is, like attending the funeral of a fellow Police Officer. I can still replay it in my mind like the opening scene of a movie: thousands of blue uniforms, neatly in rows, eyes forward and hands snapped to attention, as the bagpipers played the heart wrenching notes of “Going Home.”

It is the actors, however, who make the show. I met a rich cast of characters in my time in the NYPD: victims, criminals, lawyers, witnesses, people in the neighborhood, and of course, cops. You can read about their stories in the newspaper or watch them on the evening news, but I met them and learned how very real their stories are: crime victims who finally feel safe because the police have arrived, the scared teenager arrested for the first time, or the jaded convicted felon who has spent nearly half of his thirty-something years incarcerated. That’s what you’ll never get from television: real people with real stories—not just their typecast role. And foremost among them were my colleagues. They too are often seen as one-dimensional: just cops. But to me, of course, they are Eddie, Maria, Deryk, and dozens more.

They came from Brooklyn and Queens, as well as China and the Dominican Republic. They were soldiers and Marines, teachers and accountants, husbands and wives. They were my colleagues and I was honored to work with them.

Being a cop is a tough job. Not only because of what you see around you, but also for what you go through personally. Together we persevered through long hours, midnight shifts, low pay, missing holidays with our families, dealing with a sometimes-hostile public. Since I left the NYPD to start law school this year, I often stop in disbelief that my “job” is to sit and read in oak-paneled libraries with fireplaces—a far cry from being spit on and called a pig simply because of the uniform I wore. But the NYPD, of course, continues on. Shift after shift, officer after officer, ready to answer people’s calls for help—the glue that helps hold society together.

If not the greatest show on earth, the NYPD is certainly the most raw and unedited: happy, sad, funny, tragic, uplifting, and depressing—everything is there somewhere. Life as an NYPD cop had all the elements of the most gripping television programming, but with the reality that no movie could ever capture. I remember wearing that blue uniform with pride. I remember the cold nights on lonely street corners, eerily lit with an unearthly orange glow of the street lamps. I remember the many good days too—finding a missing child, working in Times Square on New Year’s Eve, or eating a makeshift Christmas dinner during our shift. But above all, the people are what I’ll never forget.



Donald Fowler

A LIFE DEVOTED TO PUBLIC SERVICE

By Donald Fowler, retired

I was an eighth grade student living in Elk Point, South Dakota when I was accepted as an applicant for a Leopold Schepp Foundation scholarship in 1924, near the time the Foundation was founded. The scholarship money was disbursed after completing high school and was to be used for a university education.

Each scholar had an appointed local sponsor, during the four years of his secondary education, who vouched for the moral and intellectual status of the applicant and generally supervised his activities and progress. My sponsor was a member of my church and the wife of the Sheriff of Union County.

The award was the grand sum of \$200, a much larger amount than it would seem today. It would cover tuition for the first year of college and some of the living expenses but the remaining three years would have to be financed by me. The Foundation's grant supplied me with the strong incentive to attend college, the first in my family to go. I am the eldest of seven children and my father, the sole bread-winner, was a rural mail carrier, so money for a college education was out of the question.

In 1930, on the advice of my sponsor, I traveled 600 miles by bus to Evanston, Illinois to enroll as a freshman at Northwestern University. A fond memory of this trip was attending a Chicago White Sox/New York Yankees baseball game at Comiskey Park and witnessing the great Babe Ruth hit a home run!

My first several weeks in Evanston, I attempted to find work in the city to support myself but jobs were at a premium and those with families were understandably given priority. The Orrington Hotel, still in business, hired me as a bus-boy. The pay was not sufficient to provide my support and pay for my education. Ultimately, I was forced to return to my hometown in South Dakota and my former high school job as clerk in the Council Oak Store, a grocery store chain. Fortunately, the chain had a store in Vermillion, the home of the University of South Dakota. My employers transferred me to that store and I became a student in 1931.

Employment provisions within the National Recovery Act soon robbed me of my job in favor of a man with a family. I scrounged up other work—house work in exchange for a room, service station attendant, dishwasher in a hotel cafeteria for food, etc. Where there is a will, there is a way and people were generous with their support. When the Supreme Court of the United States declared the NRA unconstitutional, I returned to my job with the Council Oak Store. Five years later, working as an assistant in the University's departments of history and political science, I graduated from the University of South Dakota with a Bachelor and Master's degree in both Political Science and History and membership in Phi Beta Kappa.

I continued my education at the Syracuse School of Public Affairs with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation. After two years and the completion of my thesis on City Manager Government in Watertown, NY, I received a Master of Science Degree in Public Administration. I was on my way to real

employment and a career in public service.

My career began in 1938 in Albany, New York in the State Civil Service Department. Within five months, I accepted a position as a Personnel Intern and Officer with the Tennessee Valley Authority in Knoxville, Tennessee. For four years I worked in all divisions of the Personnel Department specializing in Personnel Classification. It was an early and exciting period in the life of this important New Deal development.

I was a first Lieutenant in the Army Reserves and a few weeks after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, I was called to active duty in World War II. Fortunately for me, my four years of active duty were in Army posts within the United States. I supervised as many as twenty Psychiatric Social Workers and attended to the problems of hundreds of soldiers as well as testing and recommending applicants for officer candidate schools. I was awarded the Army Commendation Ribbon and retired from Military service as a Colonel in 1972.

In 1946, I was released from active duty in the Army and joined the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in Washington, DC. This multi-national agency was responsible for displaced-person operations in the war ravaged countries of the world. I was a personnel policy officer in the Washington Office under the direction of former Governor Herbert Lehman and Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, successively.

I assisted in the closing of the UNRRA offices in late 1946 and joined the newly created International Bank

for Reconstruction and Development, known since its founding as the World Bank, the sister of the International Monetary Fund. For the next thirty-one years, I worked as the Chief of the Organization and Planning Division, the Personnel Director, and the Deputy Director of the Corporate Secretary's Department. In a new and untried international organization, loosely allied to the United Nations, it was a most interesting career experience. As one of the Bank's earliest employees, I was a participant in the institutions development and expansion (about thirty employees in 1946 and some 12 thousand today), explored new ideas and methods of international administration, met many interesting and important persons of various nationalities, and traveled to countries all over the world.

Retirement from the World Bank was also the beginning of a new and more relaxing career. I was employed on a part-time basis for about twenty years with a contract agent of the United States Department of Labor. Under the Older Americans Act, I was a Regional Program Representative, traveling to all parts of the country to supervise the operation of employment programs for senior citizens needing to work in their later years. In this capacity, I learned about the services provided for the elderly in political jurisdictions throughout the United States. It was a satisfying opportunity to become acquainted with all parts of our country and the variety of people who inhabit it.

Interspersed with my service as Regional Program Representative, I engaged from time to time in consulting services for institutions associated with the World Bank. The

West African Common Market, with headquarters in Togo, was advised by me on its initial organization, operations and procedures. Similarly, in the Ivory Coast, a study was made of the organization of the African Development Bank, an institution with regional functions similar to those of the World Bank. My report was the basis for organizational changes. In the course of my Bank employment and thereafter, I traveled to Africa, Latin American and the Far East in a business capacity.

I have attempted to give support and assistance to the excellent community in which I live. I was a member and one-time chair of the Alexandria Transportation Board. During my tenure, a new bus system was created and financed by the City that eased transport problems for local residents. For more than ten years, I have been a member and several times chair of the Alexandria Commission on Aging, an advocacy agency for senior citizens. The members of both volunteer agencies are appointed by the Alexandria City Council. Also during this period, I was a member of the Joint Arlington County and Alexandria City Work Force Investment Board, responsible for administering the employment services and personnel training for residents of the two jurisdictions. In addition, I am serving on committees of the Cosmos Club in Washington and the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Alexandria.

I have written three books that are available in the Library of Congress: *the Westward Migration of the Fowler Family, 1570 -1979*, *The Archers – An Old Virginia Family* and a memoir— *A Life in the Public Service*.



Linda McKean

**LINDA MCKEAN – TRUSTEE,
LEOPOLD SCHEPP FOUNDATION**

By Bruno Quinson, Trustee

Linda McKean is young, young, young. Young in spirit, young physically, young mentally, and young in her outlook on life. She is buoyant and belies her 82 years by facing life with a smile and joy in her heart ready to take on any challenges that might come her way.

She was born in New York City where she still owns an apartment but lives in Rumson, NJ where she and her late husband, Shaw, raised their daughter and two sons. She met Shaw while he was attending Columbia University Law School. She graduated from Bennington College, Class of 1950, where she studied theater. To this day she is an avid theater goer and teacher.

Linda aspired to an acting career ever since she went to The Brearley School in Manhattan. She was raised with her brother on East 72nd Street between 1st and 2nd Avenue. It was a predominantly Czech neighborhood and from her apartment, she could see her neighbors grow corn and train pigeons on their roofs. At Brearley, her teacher, Mildred Dunning, introduced her to the theater. Her father, who had always dreamed of being Fred Astaire, encouraged her to follow her passion. During her college years, she performed in summer stock going to California one summer and spending another at Niagara-on-the-Lake in Canada where William Hurt performed at the same time. During a Bennington winter break, Linda joined a traveling Shakespeare Company.

They performed *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Romeo and Juliet*. The Company travelled around the Gulf and put on shows in small and large towns. Linda was paid \$35 a week and had to cover all of her living expenses with that small amount. She loved every minute of it. After college she joined the Neighborhood Playhouse and first appeared Off Broadway in a Howard Fast play with James Earl Jones. She was bitten by the acting bug and even though she didn't follow an acting career, she has stayed involved in different facets of the theater to this day.

Linda met her husband to be, Q. A. Shaw McKean, Jr., at a mutual friend's party where every law student host was asked to prepare a dish for supper. Shaw brought Irish coffee. Even though he didn't show any culinary prowess, Shaw caught Linda's eye and on their first date, they went to Asti in the Village on West 13th Street. Asti's was famous for its waiters who were all aspiring opera singers and every evening was a treat for dinner guests as they were regaled by the staff. It must have been true love because Shaw didn't particularly enjoy opera but nonetheless proposed marriage soon after. He served in the paratroopers during WWII and in 1951, he was recruited by the CIA and sent to Paris undercover as a lawyer for Leon, Weil and Maloney.

Their wedding took place on a beautiful, sunny Memorial Day weekend at Linda's family home in Rumson. Linda and Shaw spent two years in Paris where they befriended George Plimpton among other well-known writers and government representatives. George would occasionally barge in on them at their ground floor town house apartment totally

unannounced, so totally unannounced that he sometimes caught them in embarrassing situations. They attended many Embassy parties and spent several excellent years abroad as they travelled throughout France. One mode of transportation was a "fold boat," a small canoe that came all folded up and was easy to carry under your arm. They canoed up and down the Seine and the Loire, visiting chateaux and vineyards.

When they returned to the USA, they moved to Greenwich Village and lived on 11th Street. Linda was involved with the Civil Rights movement and worked with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. In the 1950's they moved their family to New Jersey. Linda had always been a devoted and enthusiastic fly fisherman. She and Shaw travelled to exotic places for fishing and through these trips, he learned to love it as well. To this day Linda still goes fly fishing every chance she gets.

While raising their family in NJ, they hosted an American Field Service student from Austria. He lived with the McKean family for one year and has remained a family friend to this day. During his first stay, Linda introduced him to William Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* because he had no knowledge of the holocaust or of the other atrocities of the war. He and his wife now have five children, four of whom have become exchange students; he is a member of the Austrian parliament and he and his wife run a major pharmaceutical firm.

When Linda's three children became full-time students,

she decided to teach. She was inspired after reading *The Feminine Mystique* and returned to school, received her teaching certificate, and continued to earn her Masters degree in teaching at the Bank Street School. She worked under the provisions of Title I, improving the academic achievements of the disadvantaged and for over 20 years she taught whatever was asked of her in public schools but concentrated on topics involved with the theater.

When Shaw retired from Davis, Polk & Wardwell, Linda decided to be a full time grandmother to her 6 grandchildren while devoting her spare time to taking care of the mentally ill. Shaw was a board member of Fountain House which prepared their constituents to reenter society by finding them housing and transitional employment. Linda devised a theater program to facilitate the message of Fountain House to its community.

Today Linda has created another theater program for Venture House whose mission includes helping mentally impaired people, who feel isolated, connect with other people in the community. Through their public reading of poetry, short stories or plays, the participants connect with each other in a non-aggressive warm and friendly atmosphere. Linda stated that at VH there is no friction between people when it comes to race, religion or sexual orientation. The house she visits is in Queens but there are some 350 other houses all around the world.

Linda is also involved with a Women's Prison Association and has become a mentor to women in prisons in Westchester

and upstate NY. When appointed as a mentor to a particular inmate, Linda stays with that inmate until she is released back to society after her sentence has been served. Her assignment is to counsel and prepare inmates for reentry.

Last but not least, Linda's great uncle started a foundation whose mission is to help families and children in need. She serves as a trustee along with 3 other family members and 4 outside members. As a trustee she makes site visits to evaluate programs and to report her findings back to the Board.

As if all of this weren't enough, she is about to become a Big Sister.

Linda McKean became a trustee of the Schepp Foundation in 1989 and boy are we lucky to have her wise advice and counsel.



ALOHA
by Daniel Quirk
graduate of
Pratt Institute



ROOF TOP GUNNER
by Daniel Quirk
graduate of
Pratt Institute



Jim Henderson with legal team in Cambodia

COMBATING THE COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN CAMBODIA

By Jim Henderson, student, University of Denver
Sturm College of Law

On a hot and humid Cambodian morning last October, police officials conducted a rescue operation at a karaoke bar after receiving a report from a human rights agency that young girls were held captive and prostituted inside the bar. During the operation, police discovered 12 girls, aged 14 to 24, locked in a small, dirty room in the back of the bar. The police arrested three perpetrators, including the brothel owner.

A human rights organization called International Justice Mission (IJM) had alerted police to the horrific situation at the karaoke bar. Since 2000, IJM has been combating commercial sexual exploitation of children in Cambodia where, like other countries in Southeast Asia, government officials face the daunting task of confronting widespread human trafficking. Cambodians are especially susceptible to trafficking because of the extreme poverty within the country. Approximately one third of all Cambodians live below the poverty line and 36% of adult women in Cambodia are illiterate. The situation among the Vietnamese living in Cambodia is particularly dire: one study found that nearly 35% of families in Vietnamese-majority communities have sold a child into the commercial sex industry.

The karaoke bar case was the second case I worked on last summer while interning for IJM in Phnom Penh. The

organization had first learned that minors were being exploited at the karaoke bar when an unexpected source contacted an IJM operative in September, reporting that approximately a dozen girls, many of whom were minors, worked at the bar and were badly treated by the owner. After receiving the lead, IJM investigators obtained compelling evidence confirming that minors were held on the premises and submitted a report to the Cambodian police who quickly acquired search warrants for the facility, precipitating a police operation rescuing the young girls.

As the girls shared with the police and social workers their experiences, it became clear that they had been subjected to unimaginable cruelty. These young women were forced to sleep with local patrons and foreign pedophiles. They were locked in the same windowless room everyday, only permitted to leave during the mornings when they cleaned the bar and in the evenings when they ‘entertained’ customers. Their cramped room contained five mats that functioned as beds for 12 girls. In lieu of a bathroom, the girls were forced to use a chamber pot during the night, as the brothel owner padlocked the door from the outside. The girls were hungry. They were given only one meal per day and a few were beaten with rattan sticks when they attempted to sneak food from the kitchen. Some of the girls endured this abuse for years.

Several of the victims elected to have an IJM attorney represent them at the trial that took place last July. Before the trial we met with the girls to review prior statements they had given to the police and the Investigating Judge and to answer their questions regarding court proceedings.

We asked whether they wanted the court to provide a screen so that they would not have to face the perpetrators while testifying. They all declined. Would they prefer a public or private trial? Without delay, each answered, “Public” – they wanted the world to know the wrongs committed against them. I was amazed and humbled by the courage of these young women.

During the two-day trial, the girls boldly testified, one after another. The three perpetrators also testified. Without a trace of remorse or sympathy for the girls, the brothel owner denied any wrongdoing. When the prosecutor asked her why she locked the girls in the back room, she initially responded that the door was never locked. However, over the course of the trial her story changed. The door was locked so that no one would bother the girls while they rested. Or perhaps she locked the door to keep the girls from venturing into the community where they would no doubt buy drugs and disturb the neighbors. Or she locked the door because the girls were “afraid of ghosts.”

The court announced the verdict one week after the trial. The brothel owner was convicted of illegal detention, an offense carrying a mandatory punishment of 5 to 10 years imprisonment. She was sentenced to three. No explanation was given for the abbreviated sentence, nor did the court defend its decision to ignore the more serious crimes of procurement of child prostitution (7 to 15 years) or receipt of trafficked minors (15 to 20 years). The defendant was unquestionably guilty of these crimes – the judges had admitted as much during the trial – but she was inexplicably

convicted of only the lightest possible offense.

Faulty rulings like the one issued in this case are common in Cambodia for two reasons: there is pervasive corruption throughout the public justice system and fewer than 50% of the judges in Cambodia have any formal legal education. Consequently, many perpetrators are acquitted and others are convicted under the incorrect article of the law. This happens all the time. In this particular case, however, there was a silver lining: the prosecutor, unsatisfied with the court's ruling, decided to simultaneously appeal the sentence and open a new investigation based on the more serious charges.

The good news for Cambodia is that the situation does appear to be improving – albeit slowly. In the 2005 Trafficking in Persons Report, the US Department of State identified Cambodia as a “Tier 3” country, the lowest possible grade a country can receive. One function of the report's tiered ranking system is to identify the countries that are performing so poorly in the fight against sexual exploitation and forced labor as to merit economic sanctions or the withholding of non-humanitarian aid. The Cambodian government, to its credit, took the threat of sanctions seriously and was elevated to the “Tier 2 Watch List” in 2006. Since that time, the government has taken several additional steps in the right direction, such as passing the Law on the Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in 2008. This year, despite the fact the Cambodian Government “does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, the TIP Report classified Cambodia to Tier 2.

My time in Cambodia has taught me a few invaluable lessons about development and the rule of law. First, creating positive structural change in impoverished, developing countries is incredibly difficult. There is a constant battle between criminals and corruption on the one side and those working on behalf of the poor and the vulnerable on the other. It is difficult to determine which side is winning at any given moment. Moreover, this experience has reinforced my conviction that we all have a responsibility to protect the interests of the most vulnerable and underrepresented. Everyone deserves justice; everyone deserves their day in court. And, as difficult and frustrating as it can be to work within a public justice system as flawed as Cambodia's, today 12 girls who were trapped and abused in the back of a filthy karaoke bar are free. For organizations like International Justice Mission, that makes it all worthwhile.

FOOTNOTE:

All the girls mentioned in the article are doing well. They were placed in a couple of ‘after-care facilities’ where they live with social workers and other caregivers, and where they are learning various trade skills to help them become economically self-sufficient in the future. I am told that the change that has taken place in them from the time of the police raid, before I met them, until the trial was amazing. To me, they all seemed like happy, kind young girls - it was clear that they had been through hell, but now they have people around them who really care and they have become remarkably well adjusted.



Jim Henderson teaching legal aid in Cambodia



HAND
Woodcut by
Tammy Wofsey



HANDROOT
Woodcut by
Tammy Wofsey



Mary Freericks, poet, artist and former teacher at the California Poet-in-the-Schools program and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and is the recipient of the Allen Ginsberg Poetry Prize, the N.J. State Council on the Arts Fellowship in Poetry Award, Alex Manoogian Poetry Award, among others.

BLUE WATERMELON a poem by by Mary Freericks

Pistons chug, rods push,
pull away Papa and his promise
of blue watermelon,
leave black smoke,
Mama alone on the platform.
As her belly rises
Gasha and Simon comfort her.
She knows her allegiance.
The Soviets will not stamp her passport,
will not, will not, will not, will.
Sing Mama on the train
Moskva, Rostov, and Don River,
The Black Sea, Casucasus.
His son moves in her belly
to the turn of wheels, Erivan,
the dazzling sky,
Mt. Alavand, Tabriz,
Khosrov, Voski, plums,
pomegranates and Papa's arms.
She watches him carry
each new watermelon. Her young eyes
expect the blue slice shining on her plate,
as he serves; yet, another red,
the sweet pulp, the seeds. Papa winks.
Between births, her breasts filling,
sing of blue mosques in Persian sun,
and blue ponds in gardens,
goldfish brimming.
When Papa teases and his knife cuts,
she hurls her high heels.
Papa catches her and she
becomes his ballerina. He chants,

"Moia zhen, moia zhen, my wife,"
lips on her ears, her neck,
the deep husband kiss:
another son;
a daughter.
Night comes, Papa ill,
and the sky
turns black.
The Atlantic slams its ink
against her Victory Ship.
Mama bargains in broken English,
holds my hand at Macy's
the price firm.
At the A. & P. cut halves
she counts the change.
Past the Sunday bachelor
she holds on to Papa's photo,
releases each child
with curved fingers.
Under the swing set
sing of watermelon ripening from seed
as her grandsons ride over it.
The sugar baby splits to my knife,
glistening twin suns of the yellow watermelon,
an alchemy.
Mama holds her breath.
Chest shaking, her mouth pops laughter
unstoppable, eyes over brim.
I serve Mama a slice of sun.
Papa's eyes
shine from our faces,
his wink.



Shaun Lally in Nepal



Shaun Lally in Nepal

A JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

By Shaun Lally, Master of Arts in Transformative Leadership, California Institute of Integral Studies

“Leaders are not born they are awakened! They are the ones who act when their time is called and do what they know in their heart they must do; they follow their calling.”

Journal entry, June 22, 2010

As if waking from a long dream where I had forgotten where I was, I awoke one morning to find myself in a land far from my own. I was in Chitwan, Nepal, a place where people acknowledge each other with a bow of their heads in sacred recognition, “Namaste,” (the divine in me recognizes the divine in you). Never before had I witnessed such a culture. Poor by Western standards, the families I lived with earned less than \$2/day, yet by their standards, they possessed a kind of wealth we in the West might long to have. They had the richness of trust, mutual support, compassion and respect for their fellow community. They shared and supported one another, greeted each other by name, and looked out for the well-being of their neighbors.

One day late in the afternoon, just as the day’s heat was beginning to wane, a very thin, older man made a turn from the main road to walk the path toward our house. Draped in a traditional Indian Dhoti that exposed one shoulder, he was carrying a sack with one hand while leaning on a large walking stick gripped by the other. It was obvious he was a stranger to the family and by the looks of it very poor and

hungry. Because I had never seen him before, I assumed he was a traveler, making his way across the country on some sort of Hindi pilgrimage. As he approached, he was confronted by the stern and focused Nepali woman of the house who didn’t seem to have time in her busy day for the welfare of strangers. To my surprise the man was welcomed with a smile and undivided attention. She offered him food, water and anything else he might need. His needs were small and he accepted the donations with gratitude. As soon as he came, he was gone. She went back to her work as if there had been no interruption, but for me that moment still lingers on.

Seeing things from the perspective of others has been undervalued in my culture. However, as I traveled to different parts of the world, I can say with certainty, it is very important. Not only does it help us understand why other people are the way they are, it also reveals elements of our own potential that we might otherwise overlook. Transformation occurs as we awaken to the unknown; as I ventured on a journey beyond the shores of my cultural security, I was awakened to an approach to life I never knew existed. Witnessing the interaction that warm day in Nepal, I realize now, I was seeing for the first time within the context of my life, my existence as an American, my values and my assumptions. I had accepted certain things to be “human nature,” such as violence, depravity and domination by the strong over the weak, however, if these actions are our nature, they are not our greatest potential and instead elements of our nature to which there is an opposite, equivalent nature.

Throughout my journey I was exposed to several examples of transformational social change. In China, students and future leaders discuss new potentials of globalization, envisioning futuristic innovations and intelligent development systems that not only incorporate ancient wisdom, but transcend and include them with new understandings of sustainability and ecological harmony between humanity and nature. In South Africa, residual power from the Truth and Reconciliation process, which paved a new road in conflict resolution and community organization, continues to support South Africans' dreams and the work they inspire. Education and literacy programs, domestic violence and HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns and many other local initiatives work together toward the fulfillment of the democratic promise: social equality, economic prosperity and human rights. The story is the same in Guatemala, where dozens of NGOs' like Los Patojos (The Little Ones) are stepping up to do what they can to share the societal load. These organizations, dedicated to change, have opened educational centers, women's empowerment programs and other unconventional community partnerships. They help thousands of local people receive quality education, free nutrition, medical services and provide the motivation needed to become "social change agents" working for a better future. Circumstances differed along every part of my journey, yet common to it all was the commitment of individuals and communities toward collaborative and creative social enrichment.

Inspired individuals worldwide are changing the world for the better. Sustainable development requires working together, thinking differently about our challenges and

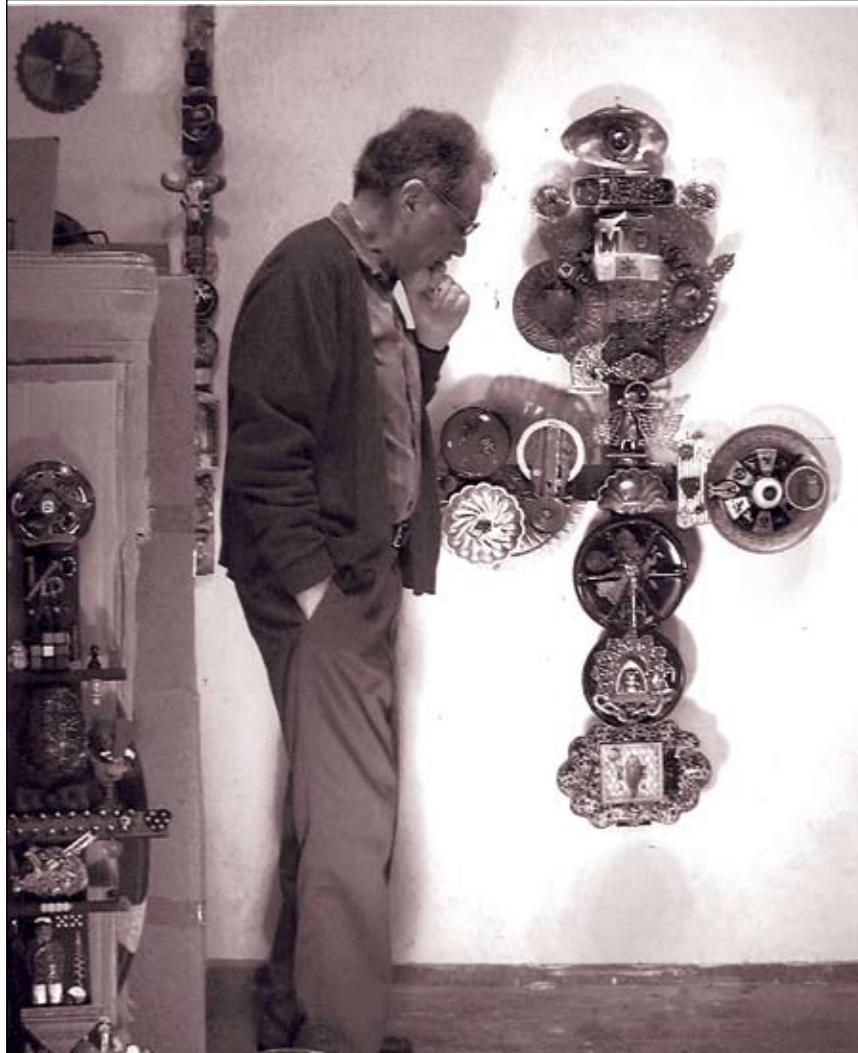
using them as opportunities to propel us in a new direction. The dedicated people I have met along my journey are transformational leaders. They are the ones with the courage and commitment to follow their faith and to take action for the benefit of all people. They demonstrate that leadership is not an individualized activity, but is done in community and cooperation with ethical standards that translate in every language, culture, and country.

My journey has taught me that each of us is a leader on a voyage of self-growth and discovery. I can envision a world that works for everyone; a world where each person can reach their greatest potential.

Leaders with vision are needed now more than ever to move society toward a new partnership paradigm. Some are calling our time the "movement of all movements," and a worldwide shift in interconnected consciousness is opening our eyes to the realization of our true potential. Each of us has the creative power to make the world a better place. The time is NOW! Namaste!



Shaun Lally



Ivan Majdrakoff with his piece INTENSE CIRCLE TOTEM

PIECE BY PIECE

By Ivan Majdrakoff, Artist and Professor Emeritus of Painting and Drawing at the San Francisco Art Institute with exhibits at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, MOMA, M.I.T Art Gallery,

People often ask me how and where I find my vast collection of found objects. They are from everywhere, appearing at my feet when walking, or perhaps during that moment when one gets in or out of a car. Also, sometimes people bring gifts, odd or precious things. One morning, a clear five-gallon jug silently awaited me at my studio door, anonymously offered. Goodwill and thrift stores are on my route. Street gutters are scanned and garbage dumps pillaged. This collecting time span of mine now stretches over fifty years.

The lifelong journey of any object is curious and complex. Tracing and trying to understand an item is an intimate and serious business. In addition, there are the wonders of the organic world. But more often the object is man-made, produced, sold, and used—finally to be discarded, dumped, tossed, lost or destroyed. In this world, I have come upon some strange and puzzling finds in places that have no limits with parameters that seem to have no constraints. Just keep looking. One gets into the habit of regularly checking-out certain fertile thrift stores. These places seem to arbitrarily shift over the years, going from good to bad and reverse. Seeking comes in spurts and waves. I have also found things in garages, doctors' offices, exhibition spaces, dumps, auditoriums, churches, and even museums. Never mind the obvious basements, beaches, etc., etc., everywhere!

Once while traveling in Maine, I decided to check-out a recently graded town dump. I drove into a bulldozed area. The flattened tan earth was surrounded by disturbed raucous crows where I noticed a small pile in the otherwise barren center. Curiosity brought me to the 'find.' It was a scattering of cracked egg shells in which nestled a perfect, complete upper denture. Why oh why, these teeth on top of a recently compacted area? Why, when, where? A small interior voice, after a while said, "Don't ask. It's a gift."

But there are three special instances of rather mysterious items that I recall gathering from these rich years of collecting. This trio of puzzle worthy items still causes me to speculate, ruminate, and even to sigh.

The first surprise was in a small Marin County thrift store. There in the jumble was a cast metal golden bas-relief plaque. It was a sculptured Academy Award Oscar. It seemed genuine, but without inscription. It felt hefty and I was seriously stunned. Later, I mounted it along with other objects on a three-foot square backing that I covered with gold velvet. Mainly, I was caught up by the thought that the trophy was really genuine. How did it get into my hands? Amazing to find it discarded, to rescue and then recycle it. Could the winner have been a Marin based Hollywood artist who later found himself blacklisted? (These were the sixties, after all.) Did the person honored, or someone else throw it out? I re-birthed it, awarding it to myself. The complex art piece including the Oscar was eventually acquired by Henry Weinstein. We both chuckled while pondering the mystery, convinced that this Oscar had a passionate history. Henry, a

brilliant theatre director, was himself involved in Hollywood production. The work was hung in his New York City Park Avenue apartment. That golden Oscar plaque continues its award journey elsewhere—somewhere.

The second startling piece was found in another Marin County thrift shop. It was a simple ceramic three-inch long reclining figure. I blinked, grabbed it immediately, recognizing it as a possible Egyptian figurine. Years later, I placed it reclining in the company of many objects in a wooden, latched, all white artist's paint box. Most of the objects within were also whitish. How do I know that it wasn't a trinket, or cast reproduction, but genuinely Egyptian? Answer—a museum accession number was inked on its side. This number I chose to hide and ignore as I sealed it in the confines of its new chamber. Only the new artist-owner and I know that the secret numbering is there. Incidentally, at its best, the figure seemed very minor. But, never mind. I choose to think of its multi-thousand year origin, its later discovery, and its institutional acquisition. How did it get into my hands? Was it stolen and then accidentally or convulsively cast back into our own contemporary world? Today, it is still around, traveling onwards in its own special, oblivious destiny.

The last piece was equally astounding. It was a small manipulation game; a metal box, glassed over, designated to be hand held. There were two punched out holes in the cardboard backing. Inside one sees a large free-rolling gelatin capsule, containing a loose lead ball. This capsule shifts erratically and tumbles as one's hand tilts its course.

The idea was to make the loaded capsule land in one hole and then in the other. That was it. Designed and manufactured, most likely, in a large American city. The image on the playing board was a map of Japan. The two holes—targets—were identified as Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Eventually, I mounted this box on a hinge, and placed it with a larger piece which I later cannibalized. I still have this decrepit game box. Even today, I gasp and wonder at the workings of American minds that allowed this hideous thing to be produced—to be made into a game, an object, a toy, created for profit.

So much of the object world contains puzzlement. There are stories, histories, extrapolations, and all within one's grasp. One just needs eyes to spot and claim them. They are available to the creative pulse—to be used in endless combination.



INTENSE CIRCLE TOTEM
by Ivan Majdrakoff



Gabriela Reardon, Elementary Teacher and Freelance Journalist

A LONG WALK FROM HONDURAS TO ESCAPE GANG VENGEANCE

By Gabriela Reardon

The following is an article written by Gabriela Reardon and published in City Limits. Gabriela won the National Council on Crime and Delinquency PASS Award which is awarded to writer's "who focus America's attention on our criminal justice system, juvenile justice, and child welfare systems in a thoughtful and considerate manner."

East Harlem — At 16, Daniel Sierra Cruz admired the 18th Street gang that controlled his hillside neighborhood in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Their fashionable clothes, flashy phones and cars made gang members the envy of the younger crowd. He knew some gang members from the neighborhood and others from school, and after a year of tagging along with them, they asked him to help with a few tasks. His first mission: to deliver drugs to high-ranking members incarcerated outside the city. Soon enough, he was regularly serving as a scout during drug sales in parks and dance clubs.

"Life is just easier when you're with them. They told us that with them we could earn in one day what we would earn in one week after finishing school and finding a regular job," Daniel, now 19, said while sitting on bench in Bryant Park one recent day in Manhattan, where he now lives with an uncle and his family.

Once when gang members solicited volunteers for a robbery,

Daniel dodged the call. But when the proposition resurfaced weeks later, he left Tegucigalpa and traveled alone to his grandparents' house outside the capital. He hoped the two months he stayed there would ease the pressure he felt to participate in the crimes. Shortly after he returned, while sitting on the front step of a corner house the gang inhabited, other gang rookies relayed stories of the bloody fate of recruits who had refused gang dictates or simply failed to inform the gang of their whereabouts. The stories, Daniel knew, were warnings.

"When you start to run with the gang you learn that you have to obey when they tell you to go somewhere or do something. They make it clear that if you don't you will face the consequences. You do what you're told for fear they will hurt you or your family," Daniel said. At dawn on March 12, 2006, Daniel and four friends –who were not fleeing gangs– left for the United States on a six-week journey by foot, train and raft across the mountainous terrain and rivers of Central America and Mexico.

Daniel is among a growing number of Salvadoran, Honduran and Guatemalan youth – many of them minors – running from gangs and seeking asylum in the United States, a noticeable trend that's developed over the past three years, according to attorneys and researchers. Such claims pose new challenges for federal asylum law and are compelling judges to consider the petitioners' official status as children. While he waits for his asylum hearing next month, Daniel shadows his uncle, a superintendent for the Morningside Heights building where they live, and helps with cleaning,

plumbing and painting around the building.

Not far from his new residence, walking on a patch of grass along a bike path sandwiched between the Hudson River and the Henry Hudson Parkway at around 120th Street, Daniel says he likes the United States and hopes the judge will allow him to stay. "I like to come to the park and think. I don't have to worry about getting robbed," Daniel said, enjoying the peaceful sight of a 20-something man sitting on a rock, absorbed in a book.

He's made a few acquaintances but no real friends in New York. "It's hard to know who to trust," Daniel said. He prefers to stay home watching music videos or wrestling matches, in part because he fears being caught for any small infraction, like jaywalking, could compromise his chance of staying in the U.S. "At first he didn't want to go out at all," said Joel Zepeda, Daniel's uncle. "I told him he should greet neighbors and familiarize himself with his surroundings. Not to isolate himself. It's not healthy," he said.

In the evenings, he heads to a local public school where Columbia University and Community Impact, an independent nonprofit, jointly offer ESL classes Monday through Thursday. The outlook for Daniel is not clear. Attorneys who represent asylum seekers in New York City and nationwide agree that the number of gang-related asylum claims have increased rapidly and are very difficult to win. Then again, "it's an uphill battle to win asylum in every case," says Georgetown Law professor Philip G. Schrag, who co-authored a study revealing the wide disparity in asylum adjudication across the U.S.

Refuge in New York

According to Alexandra Goncalves of Central American Legal Assistance (CALA), a nonprofit legal service provider in Williamsburg, her small office of four staff attorneys is currently handling 25 to 30 active gang-related asylum cases, or around one-third of CALA's entire caseload. It has won asylum in just four cases during the past three years. "The law is very strict, but is also developing in many ways," Goncalves said. As attorneys present claims and judges accept or reject them, setting small precedents, failed arguments are shed and successful ones preserved. While few courts have granted asylum in gang-related cases, most judges are reluctant to accept that gang recruits are not simply victims of generalized violence, something asylum law does not protect.

Like Daniel, a majority of asylum-seekers escaping gangs flee because they refuse to join the ranks of the region's two most powerful gangs. Ironically enough, the growth of these gangs – the 18th Street gang and the Mara Salvatrucha (or MS-13), known in the region as "maras" – in Central America in the late 1990s is generally attributed to the enactment of two laws in the U.S. in 1996.

The Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act along with the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act increased the federal government's ability to deport immigrants convicted of various felonies. Thus a mass exportation of felons and gang members from North to Central America began. Where deportation based on criminal conviction previously had been limited to violent offenses

and mostly exempted immigrants with permanent resident status, the 1996 laws rendered a larger number of people deportable. They also stripped judges of some discretionary power to make exemptions. Some 2,449 Central Americans were deported from the U.S. in 1996, compared with an average of 6,600 annually in subsequent years, according to Department of Homeland Security figures.

Many of the young Central American deportees belonged to one of these two rival gangs, both of which had formed in Los Angeles a decade earlier. They were largely the children of Central American families who had fled the region's military conflicts in the 1980s, settled in Los Angeles and later came of age on the gang-ridden streets of L.A.'s Pico Union neighborhood. The result was the transplanting of U.S. gang culture to Central America, where the residual effects of armed conflicts combined with poor social conditions turned gangs, which had been only a marginal problem since the 1970s, into one of the region's most acute social ills.

Government officials, scholars and researchers estimate current gang membership throughout Central America to be anywhere from 25,000 to 300,000, depending on the operative definition of a gang. The Congressional Research Service estimates the combined membership of MS-13 and 18th Street gangs in the United States to be approximately 40,000, while East Coast Gang Investigator's Association deputy director Lou Savelli estimates some 2,500 Central American gang members are in New York City.

Salvadoran, Guatemalan and Honduran leaders have

responded to the gang proliferation by passing anti-mara laws that grant police the latitude to arrest youth who fit the gang profile, based primarily on the presence of tattoos, the maras' signature trait. Critics say the policy is short-sighted and unwittingly pushes maras underground, where they develop strategies to circumvent authorities. New members, for example, no longer get gang-affiliating tattoos and many veteran members are having their tattoos removed, according to the U.S. Agency for International Development. The Central American University Institute for Public Opinion suggests that the maras' response to the crackdown has been to intensify recruitment of new members among the younger generation, often forcefully.

Brooklyn lawyer Zachary Sanders represents a 19-year-old man from Honduras picked up by Immigration and Customs Enforcement during a September raid in New Brunswick, N.J. "He was recruited by the gang and when he refused to join, they attacked him with gasoline. His thigh and upper leg are badly burned and he has a nasty scar," Sanders said. These recruitment efforts may account for the upsurge in asylum petitions filed in U.S. courts by young Central Americans who say they fled north to escape the pressure. Attorneys in the U.S. corroborate that they hear asylum petitions are on the rise.

The odds of asylum

Petitioning for asylum is one thing; winning it is another.

U.S. law strictly limits asylum protection to people clearly pursued for their nationality, race, religion, political opinion

or membership in a particular social group. Petitioners must prove their persecutor is motivated by one of the five specified categories. Attorneys agree that a majority of gang persecution victims who petition for asylum are, like Daniel, fleeing gang recruitment. They argue the recruitment is rooted in their clients' political opposition to the gangs and the gang's desire to control them, and/or their membership in a particular social group, usually defined as young men of recruitment age, which is between 15 and 18 years old.

According to Christopher Nugent, an asylum expert and pro bono counsel with the Community Services Team at the Holland & Knight law firm in Washington D.C., the biggest challenge for attorneys pursuing these claims is that "gangs do not articulate the basis for persecution and clients do not voice their opposition to the gangs." While there is no explicit government policy opposing gang-based claims, Nugent said, government lawyers vigorously challenge such claims for fear of opening the floodgates to hundreds of Central Americans with similar stories.

Neither the text of asylum rulings, nor statistics broken down by type of asylum case, is available to the public, but according to lawyers and legal scholars, courts across the country have mostly denied asylum to gang-persecution victims. And as with many areas of the law, parties involved say the room for individual discretion that asylum law grants the judge plays an important part in the ruling. (The Justice Department reports that in fiscal year 2006, asylum was granted in 13,340 cases and denied in 16,556 cases.) The outcome "depends on the judge's discretion. Sometimes there is no

legal support for a case, but a judge grants asylum. Other times there is legal support, but a judge denies asylum,” said Goncalves of Brooklyn’s Central American Legal Assistance. This disparity in rulings across immigration courts should end when the Board of Immigration Review, which reviews appeals from the nation’s immigration courts, rules on a precedent-setting case. Asylum lawyers feel such a ruling must be imminent.

Gang-related asylum cases are also complicated by the fact that many petitioners are minors. Asylum law makes no distinction between children and adult petitioners, but the Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed but not ratified by the United States, calls on its signatories to consider the child’s best interest above all else. That means putting child status ahead of immigration status. According to a Harvard University study, the U.S. has worked toward applying the norms of the Convention. As part of those efforts, some advocates say, judges use their discretion to include consideration of the child-status of asylum petitioners, especially in the case of youth who joined or engaged in gang activity as minors.

The 2006 Harvard study says judges are sometimes quick to see children as “Young criminals in the making rather than young victims in distress... The distinction between delinquency and criminality is recognition that offenses by minors can result from poor judgment, an inability to foresee the consequences of one’s actions, and the role of adults in directing and supervising a youth’s behavior.” Since the rise of gang persecution claims in the last three years, legal

advocates and Latin America interest groups have worked to develop tools for asylum attorneys working on gang asylum cases and scholars have also written a handful of law review articles. “Our members requested that we pull together some resources to address people accused of being gang members and others who are fleeing gangs,” said Paromita Shah, associate director of the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers’ Guild. Shah organized this year’s “Gangs and Immigration” panel for the annual National Lawyers’ Guild Convention, held a few weeks ago in Washington. The central question is how people can connect the asylum cases with the bigger picture of anti-gang policies in Central America and enforcement strategies targeting kids, she said.

The Washington Office on Latin America, an organization focused on U.S. policy toward the region, said its staff had to stop appearing as expert witnesses at gang-related asylum hearings because the demand was too great. Instead, it now educates attorneys who represent Central American youth seeking asylum.

Waiting and wondering

Marissa Kim, an attorney with the major law firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom in Manhattan, represents Daniel pro bono. According to Kim, as Daniel got closer to the gang his involvement became involuntary. “He didn’t really have a choice, and no one really has a choice. Most of Daniel’s peers have joined the gangs, been killed or fled the country,” Kim said.

Daniel recently learned from his family in Honduras that

members of the 18th Street gang killed his 23-year-old cousin – a member since the age of 14 – who had been trying to distance himself from the gang. His sister has also told him gang members from the neighborhood occasionally question her about his whereabouts. Here in New York, Daniel says he feels safely out of the gang’s reach. Although he has heard of the maras’ presence in New Jersey and Long Island, he has never seen anyone resembling a gang member and dismisses the possibility that the 18th Street members would track him down here. (He and attorney Kim felt uncomfortable enough, however, to use a pseudonym here – Daniel is not his real name – and to request a degree of distance in the accompanying photos.

While the NYPD declined to provide figures regarding the presence of gang members in the city, its former Gang Unit commander, Lou Savelli, estimates there are some 2,500 Mexican and Central American gang members throughout the five boroughs. Arrested gang members are classified not by nationality but by gang affiliation, and both the MS-13 and the 18th Street gangs have a presence in Mexico, Savelli said. According to Savelli, who worked on gang enforcement for the NYPD from 1996 to 2001 and now leads the East Coast Gang Investigators Association, the Mexican and Central American gangs are concentrated in Brooklyn’s East Flatbush and Sunset Park neighborhoods; the Upper West Side and East Harlem in Manhattan; Queens’ Jackson Heights; the South Bronx; and the Richmond Terrace section of Staten Island. They engage mostly in drug trafficking, he said. “The NYPD has been very aggressive with gangs, and gang members are very careful with being overt about

who they are. In other cities gang members are not afraid of the police. In New York, they are,” he said. Joel says his nephew is anxious about his approaching asylum hearing, which is scheduled for mid-December. “He asks me what I think will happen and I tell him that it is up to the judge and the lawyer. But that he will need to accept the decision,” Joel said.

Asylum claims like Daniel’s are unlikely to wane. In fact, attorneys say the volume is growing because immigrants –and their lawyers– are recognizing the viability of the gang-persecution argument. Meanwhile, news reports of renegade recruits or recent U.S. deportees killed by the gangs in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador – which are often criticized as sensationalist – lend some credibility to attorneys’ claims that their clients will be killed if asylum is denied. “Asylum law is weird because terrible things happen to people,” says Washington lawyer Jeffrey Corsetti, who authored a Georgetown Immigration Law Journal article last year titled, “Marked for Death: the Maras of Central America and Those Who Flee Their Wrath.”

“The more instances of people deported and then brutally killed, the harder it is for immigration judges to resist the argument that [a petitioner] won’t be killed in a similar fashion,” Corsetti said.

Daniel, an evangelical Christian, says he is not nervous about his fate. “I am leaving it in the hands of God. Only he knows what is best for me,” he said.

Daniel Cruz is a pseudonym used to protect the subject’s identity.



Megan Sullivan, Operations Associate, American Corporate Partners

NO BREAD IN FRANCE. NO PASTA IN ITALY

By Megan Sullivan

This was not the graduation trip I expected. After four years of hard work, I left Tufts University with a diploma in hand. My plans included finding a job in the non-profit sector but before I joined the workforce, I also planned to celebrate my graduation by spending a month enjoying the gastronomical delights of Europe.

Through an organization called World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF), I arranged to stay on a small organic farm in the French Pyrenees, working the land, learning about sustainable living, and eating French home cooking. This 40 year-old organization offers the opportunity for travelers to connect with host farms, which provide accommodation and food in exchange for work on the farm. Cooking and eating are special interests of mine and I could not wait to taste real French cooking.

However, my plans did not include being diagnosed with a lifestyle-altering autoimmune disease. Several months before graduation, I was diagnosed with Celiac Disease. Suddenly, I had to permanently eliminate gluten from my diet. No bread. No pasta. No crepes. No croissants. Gluten, a protein that is found in wheat, barley, and rye, is in nearly every processed food. It hides in soups and sauces, lingering on dishes and utensils. Suddenly my trip to France and Italy elicited more anxiety and less appetite.

Although difficult and tiresome at times, my time in Europe

was thoroughly enjoyable. Staying with the French-Austrian couple who owned the family farm where I 'wwoof-ed' was the highlight of my four-week trip. Their patience with my work as an unpracticed farm hand could only be surpassed by their concern for my health and well-being. After hours of weeding the garden, moving firewood, and feeding the chickens, I eagerly made my way to the farmhouse for a large lunch and afternoon nap. My hostess was more than accommodating, double-checking every ingredient with me as she cooked my meals. I scrupulously took notes on every recipe, hoping to recreate them in my American kitchen.

I found some unlikely allies off the farm, as well. Unbeknownst to me, Italy has a very high prevalence of the Celiac Disease. About 1 in every 250 Italians must adhere to the same strict gluten-free diet that I was just beginning to master. Glutine and Celiachia quickly became part of my limited Italian vocabulary, allowing me to communicate my dietary needs even easier than at home, where many Americans don't know what gluten is. From market stalls in Florence to family style restaurants in Venice, I was greeted with understanding smiles and a generous serving of gluten-free pasta. I never wanted to leave.

But leave, I did. I reluctantly returned to the United States to begin my job search and my career in the non-profit sector. With determination and numerous resumes, I landed a position with American Corporate Partners (ACP), a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting veterans with their transition to the civilian sector. Through a nationwide mentoring program that focuses on professional development,

ACP matches high-level employees from 28 participating institutions (some of the nation's largest corporations and universities) with recent veterans providing one-on-one mentorships. Over a 12-month period, ACP works with veterans developing valuable relationships, key skills, and action plans needed for success in private enterprise.

Helping veterans is especially close to my heart. With two active-duty servicemen and four veterans in my family, I have always been proud of my family's service to this country. I grew up with my grandfather, who was a Korean War veteran, and I stood by proudly as one cousin enlisted in the Marines and another in the Army. My family's commitment to military service and sense of duty to country has had a significant impact on the way I view the world. They have made huge sacrifices. But no sacrifice was greater than that of John, my uncle and godfather, a Marine whose life was taken while serving in the Philippines just two years after I was born. His loss made an indelible mark on my family and has enriched my work with ACP as I help those who have given so much to this country.

Working for ACP as an Operations Associate is a personal mission for me. As I create and monitor matches between veteran and mentor, every day I learn first-hand about the military experiences and sacrifices of our veterans. I follow their journeys through their mentoring relationships, facilitate those connections and witness the positive impact the mentoring program has on a veteran's future. In serving those who have unselfishly served our country, I am representing myself, my family and my country.

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