

Sales soar as 'the cube' catches on

By MIKE LEE
Of the Emerald

Somewhere in this world, a wicked architect is cackling.

His name is Erno Rubik, the inventor of the "Magic Cube" — a three-dimensional descendent of the old sliding 15-number puzzle.

From its obscure origins six years ago, the cube has grown in popularity worldwide. Locally, sales of the eight-dollar cube are topping 250 monthly at Endgames, a three-store chain that features adult games.

To describe the magic cube is to embody frustration. When bought, each side of the cube is a separate solid color. The six sides are each divided into nine smaller squares called "cubies."

By twisting various rows and faces of the cube, the cubies end up somewhere else on the cube. The trick is to slide the cube *back* into its original state.

That's called "solving the cube." Anything short of that is called "twist and shout."

"It takes about 20 hours to solve it if you're of average intelligence," says Al Villanueva of the downtown Endgames, though many people would consider that optimistic. "It has to do with perseverance."

Rubik, a Hungarian architecture

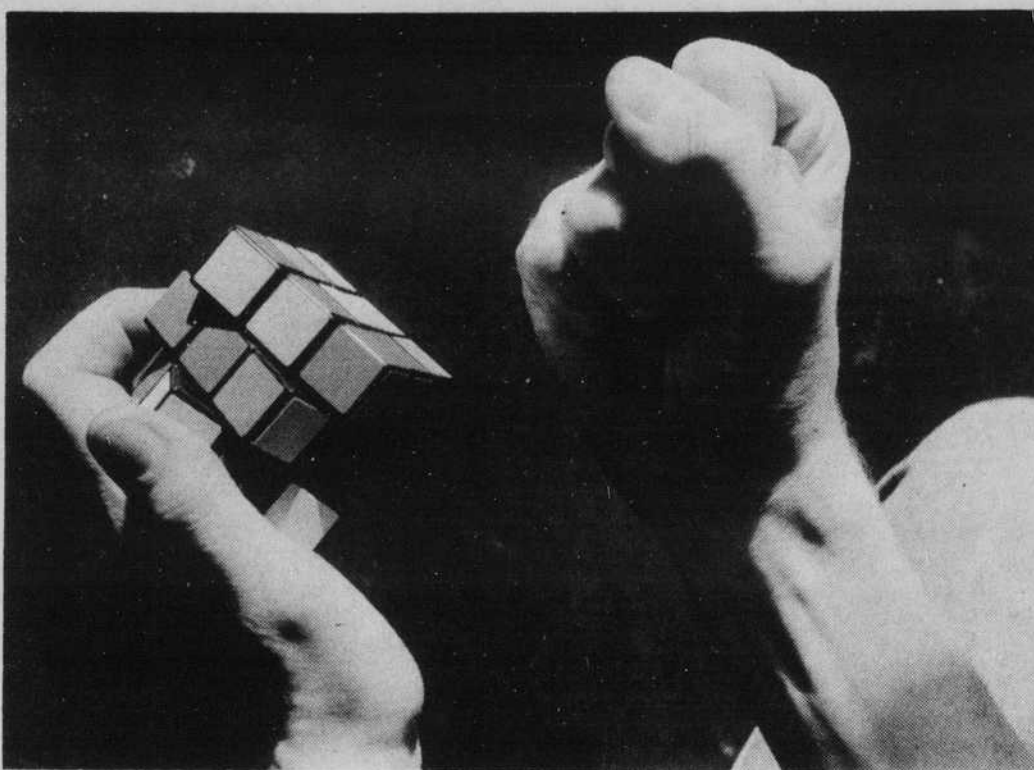


Photo by Erich Boekelheide

The Magic Cube has 40 billion possible combinations, but a person of "average intelligence" should be able to solve it in 10 hours, says a local toystore salesperson.

teacher, invented the object in 1975 to help his students conceptualize three-dimensional objects.

Endgames first stocked the puzzle about two years ago, according to Villanueva. Almost from the start it sold

well — 12 to 20 a month — but "it was pretty much limited to the intellectual-type pursuits," he says.

"Then just at the end of last term some people came in — they'd just been to the lecture, and they had to

have one."

The lecture was an evening presentation given by Douglas Hofstadter, who wrote an 11-page cover article on the Magic Cube for the March 1981 Scientific American.

From Endgames' booming sales, it appears that Hofstadter's lecture piqued more than a few interests.

Besides the merely interested, there are also the obsessed.

"One of the guys who works here just about lost his job because he spent a week working on it," Villanueva says.

"I think it's just because it's hypnotizing. You spend your time turning the faces and watching what's happening. I have two."

Yes, two. One for solving, and the other as a "helper," to see the results of various moves.

Cubemeisters — as the addicts are called — find many ways of spending their money. Not only can they buy more cubes, but they can buy a 60-page answer key for \$5.95 at the University Bookstore.

Hofstadter, by the way, says it took him 50 hours to solve the cube, which has "40 billion billion" possible combinations. Those who want a *real* goal to aim for might consider 18-year-old Nicholas Hammond from England.

Hammond can solve the cube in 30 seconds.

Officials arrest, jail two with expired visas

By MIKE RUST
Of the Emerald

Two "revolutionary internationalists" are in the Lane County Jail after being arrested by immigration officers last week.

Immigration officials say Ismet Guchan and Turkan Erden were arrested late Friday on charges of violating the immigration and naturalization act. However, friends of the two say their arrest was politically motivated.

Carl Houseman of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service says Guchan arrived in New York City on Jan. 3,

1979, with a student visa good for a period of two months but didn't reapply when the visa expired.

Erden, Guchan's wife, had a visa good from September of 1979 to August of last year, Houseman says.

However, Nancy Whitley, a member of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade, says Guchan and Erden applied for renewal of their visas two months ago but hadn't received an answer at the time of their arrest. Most visa violations bring no more than a notice in the mail, Whitley says.

Guchan was arrested on charges of hindering prosecution after he allegedly

attacked police as they took Whitley and RCYB member John Kaiser into custody following a ribbon-burning incident during ex-hostage Victor Tomseth's appearance at the University in February.

Guchan was arrested on the EMU Terrace two days after Tomseth's visit. Whitley says he "was arrested for talking."

"We (the RCYB) think they're just trying to get them on something."

If Guchan is deported to Turkey, he will face a "certain prison sentence and possibly death," Whitley says. In Turkey, Guchan was associated with the leftist newspaper "Partizan."

Erden, a Fullbright Scholar, received a

masters degree from the psychology department last term. Guchan was not a student at the time of his arrest.

A hearing for the two will be held in Portland within two weeks. Whitley says bond has been set for \$5,000. The pair will depend on contributions and loans to raise the money, she says.

However, jail officials say bail has not been set for Guchan and Erden. Bail is not generally available in immigration cases, the officials say.

Portland attorney Ann Whit is representing the two free of charge, according to Whitley.

The University of Oregon Bookstore, Inc., will hold its ANNUAL MEETING on Thursday, April 16, 1981 3:30 p.m., Room 101, EMU

The purpose of the annual meeting shall be to receive annual reports of officers of the corporation, receive recommendations or proposals to the Board of Directors as the members may deem advisable and to receive nominations for membership on the Board of Directors.

Positions on the Board of Directors open for nomination are:

- One (1) freshman position for a two (2) year term
- Two (2) sophomore positions for two (2) year terms
- One (1) graduate position for a two (2) year term*
- One (1) graduate position for a one (1) year term**
- One (1) faculty position for a two (2) year term

*Graduate student receiving highest number of votes fills two year graduate position

**Graduate student receiving second highest number of votes fills one year graduate position.

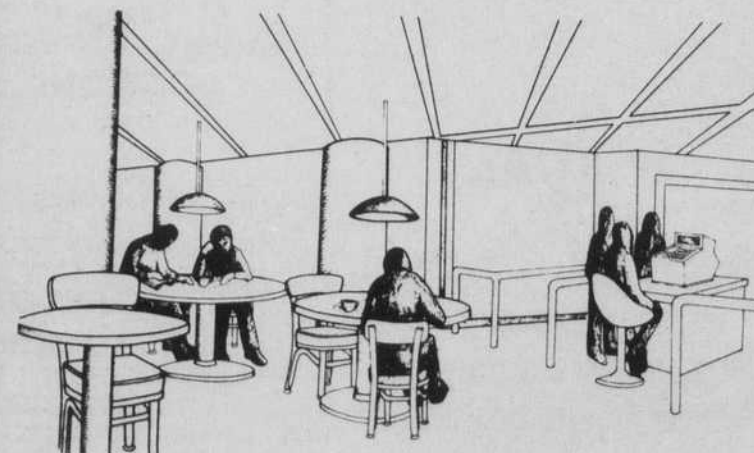
The meeting is open to all registered students of the University of Oregon, all faculty members employed on the Eugene campus and all classified staff members holding a full-time University position.

Coffee and donuts will be served.

To encourage your participation in this year's annual meeting, the Bookstore is offering gift certificates totalling \$100 in a drawing following the meeting.

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