

Families are reason for merchants' work

By Colleen Pohlig
Emerald Associate Editor

Although the two merchants are literally worlds apart, they have two things in common: They both sell colorful, imported clothing and they are both doing it for their families.

Rafael Cachiguango, a villager from Ecuador on his third trip to the United States, is currently selling wool clothing and other items in the EMU. His family makes the clothes by hand in their country.

Cachiguango then sends most of the money back to Ecuador, where his wife and seven children live in a small dwelling.

At the table just around the corner in the EMU sits Rob Lamb, an Eastern Oregon businessman who travels to Guatemala frequently to buy items from the villagers and sell them in the United States.

Although he has a store that sells Guatemalan clothing in Joseph, Ore., he is selling at the University this week to raise money for a "new car fund" that will go to his daughter, Melissa, a junior at the University.

Lamb, who spends half the year at his house in Costa Rica and the other half on his Eastern Oregon ranch, said this business has turned into a hobby for him.

Because costs and labor are typically less expensive in Central America, Lamb pays the villagers who hand-make the clothing about a fifth of what he sells them for in the United States. But he said there are many other costs involved in transporting the items, such as shipping, customs duties and storage space.

"I wish a higher percentage of the actual sale price could go to the Guatemalans because they're the neatest people in the world," Lamb said. "It's just a business; it's the way it has to be."

Lamb took his daughter, Melissa, to Guatemala last summer

to experience what he does for his business.

"(The villagers) enjoy what they're doing," Melissa Lamb said. "It's sad they're not getting more money, but it's like that in almost any trade where products are coming from another country."

Further south, in Ecuador, where much the same poverty can be found, Cachiguango's wife and young children hand-weave and make the items every day after school to help support the family. Colorful wool sweaters, rugs, bags, bracelets and paintings are among some of the products he sells.

Cachiguango's 21-year-old son, Cesar, accompanied him to the United States on this trip to help him sell the items. They set up their tables — which overflow with vibrantly colored items — in both Oregon and Washington and said their primary customers are students.

Cachiguango said he plans to return to Ecuador around Christmas to be with his family and work for a few months until he returns to sell more products in the United States.

When he is in the United States, Cachiguango stays with friends. He said he considers himself and his family to be poor, but they have enough to get by.

"I work for my family so I don't have a lot for me," he said.

Cachiguango said he chooses to do his business in the United States because there is too much competition in his country from the markets the various villages set up each week.

Cachiguango said he makes more profit here because there is less competition, and he can charge more.

Although he likes America, he said he is eager to return home because he misses his family. His wife recently had a baby who he was not able to spend much time with before he came to the United States.



Rafael Cachiguango, a villager from Ecuador, sells colorful wool clothing in the EMU.

Photo by Jeff Paslay

Woman sells goods for progress

By Colleen Pohlig
Emerald Associate Editor

Sitting at a small table in the EMU with neatly displayed imported jewelry, silk scarves, books and T-shirts, the Brazilian woman talks to browsing students about the plights of people in developing countries.

Teresa Flaxman, who came to the United States three years ago, brought to the University her passion for helping people in developing countries. More specifically, she brought that passion to her table in the EMU.

Flaxman's recently formed company, Fair Trade, is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of social and economic progress of people in developing countries.

As part of her commitment, Flaxman buys all of the products directly from the Rainforest Action Network and various Alternative Trade Organizations, all of which are non-profit organizations dedicated to helping people in the developing world.

These products are bought by the two organizations directly from the villagers and indigenous people themselves, Flaxman said.

"This is one way the producers can make a living inside their own culture and inside of their own village and still preserve their environment," she said.

The Rainforest Action Network was founded in 1985 and has been working to protect tropical rain forests and the rights of the people living in and around those forests.

The profits that Fair Trade makes go directly to buy more products from the two organizations, she said.

"The more we sell, the more we buy, and the more (people in the developing world) we employ," Flaxman said. "This means more people will have roofs over their heads and food to eat."

Flaxman's job doesn't stop there, however. She said she believes education is important and she tells people about the plights of the producers and explains exactly where the money will go.

Flaxman said she will continue to sell the products at the EMU indefinitely and is trying to reserve the space at least five days a week every week.



Jack Maddex

Right to vote means little unless used

By Mandy Baucum
Emerald Reporter

Lack of voter turnout is a problem that has increased since the turn of the century, said a University history professor Monday.

And few people turned out for the opening night of ASUO's first symposium on the "Historical Impact of Elections."

After giving an overview on the relationship between historical events and voter turnout, history professor Jack Maddex presented a series of eye-opening figures.

"Participating in government was for those who had something to lose in it, a stake in it," he said.

Maddex said during the 16 elections that took place from 1840-1900, the turn-

out of eligible voters never dropped below 69.6 percent, the average being 77 percent.

In the years from 1912 to present, the lowest percentage of eligible voters was in 1924 when turnout was at 48.9 percent. The highest turnout of voters was 64 percent during the Kennedy vs. Nixon election in 1960.

Maddex said the South is often blamed for low voter turnout, but in recent years Mississippi and Louisiana have had higher turnouts than New York, California or Pennsylvania.

Voter turnout has not just been a problem of the 20th century, but it was also a disappointment for women's rights activists.

Jane Conlon, a graduate teaching fellow in women's studies, said very few women actually voted after the passage

of the 15th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote.

Conlon said women were given the opportunity to vote primarily because they seemed to be better able to deal with the human issues that faced the nation during the turn of the century.

"Because women seemed to be moral, they would preserve society," she said.

Conlon said reformers believed the first election women participated in would alter the shape of the nation, but the "reality was sobering for women who had fought for the right to vote."

Coplon ended the evening with an editorial note on the importance of women's issues in the coming election.

"We must begin to think about how women's issues affect all of us, men and women alike," she said.

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