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Travel seminar analyzes security risks for students

■ **Hosteling International** is offering an examination of travel tips and preparation

By Lisa Toth
Oregon Daily Emerald

Suresh Sampath stayed in hostels during her summer 1998 trip through Mexico. But one mistake in Isla de Mujeres left Sampath without any Kodak memories from his six weeks of traveling.

"I got my camera stolen with all the film," he said.

Sampath said he felt safe at the hostels where he stayed, but he recommended that travelers use a locker with a lock to secure their belongings, instead of making his mistake and not safeguarding their possessions.

"It's your fellow tourists that are more likely to rob you," he said.

But the University senior said staying in hostels has a number of benefits — from inexpensive accommodations to meeting fellow travelers and going with them on daily excursions.

The International Resource Center, located in the EMU's International Lounge, will be offering a "World Travel 101 Workshop" for interested novices and experienced travelers alike to learn about safety and travel tips. The presentation, which begins at 7 p.m., will be hosted by volunteers Talbot Wallace and David Schargel with Hostelling Interna-

tional — American Youth Hostels.

Schargel said hostels within the United States are one of the "best kept secrets" in the U.S. travel industry, but he said the presentation will address more than just hostels and what they have to offer.

"The 'Travel 101' workshop is about how to stretch your travel budget," Schargel said, adding that the free workshop will identify the basics about passports and visas, as well as how to pack, what to bring and personal safety.

"It's not just wearing a money belt," said Schargel, 37, who also serves as a historian leading walking tours in Portland.

He said Wallace will supplement the presentation with pictures and equipment he used on a one-year trip around the world, from which he recently returned.

The presenters will address how to reserve a cheap flight and transportation tips such as exchanging money in the United States before heading to a foreign country.

"We'll go over how to be a responsible traveler — how Americans should behave in other countries," he said.

There are more than 4,500 HI-AYH hostels in 34 countries, which all must meet a certified style by providing accommodations such as lockers, private rooms and a shared kitchen.

Schargel said hostels were originally intended to be used by

youths, orientated toward education, but now they house travelers of all ages.

"Reservations are highly recommended during the summer months," he said.

However, travelers should prepare for any surprises, such as off-season festivals. In November while traveling in Germany, Schargel said a traveler could probably find a hostel to stay at without a reservation, but during Oktoberfest in October, it's simply not possible.

International Resource Center Coordinator Anne Williams said a "revolution of travel" has changed with the Internet, and now reservations at hostels can be made completely online.

Larry Neal is a member of the HI-AYH's board of directors as well as an associate professor in the Office of the Provost. Neal said he'll be bringing his "Exploring Leisure" class, in the Human Development Department, to the informal workshop.

"It's a way of alerting students to the expertise in the world of inexpensive, clean travel destinations," he said.

Williams said students can also visit the IRC for more information about traveling and the related international programs offered on campus by visiting <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~irc> or calling 346-0887.

E-mail features reporter Lisa Toth
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Climber's failure leads to success

■ After failing to reach the top of K2, Greg Mortenson has found success building schools in Pakistan

By Robin Weber
Oregon Daily Emerald

When Greg Mortenson set off in 1993 with a group to climb K2, the second largest mountain in the world, he never expected he would make it almost to the top — and then fail to reach the peak.

He never expected two Balti men would help him off the mountain and welcome him to be a member of their village.

And he never expected to start 22 schools in Pakistan while spearheading an effort to educate girls as a result.

Central Asia Institute Executive Director Greg Mortenson shared his experiences at the "Three Cups of Tea: Cross-Cultural Lessons from Pakistan and Afghanistan" slide show with a full house Wednesday night in 100 Willamette. The University of Oregon Outdoor Program hosted the event.

Since his maiden voyage, Mortenson has spent nine years advocating girls' education in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the literacy rate is close to 32 percent.

Mortenson told the crowd that while recovering from the physical and emotional exhaustion of

the climb, he visited a local school and was moved by the conditions he saw. Children were studying in the dirt, and the village couldn't pay for teachers.

"Terrorism is not the problem. The real problem is ignorance, misunderstanding ... unemployment and illiteracy."

Greg Mortenson
executive director,
Central Asia Institute

And the villagers saw him.

Before long, they asked Mortenson to help them build a school. He was also instrumental in building a bridge and getting eye care and a clean drinking water system to the area.

After returning to the United States, Mortenson began looking for potential sponsors to fund the project.

Of the 584 fundraising letters Mortenson sent, he had only one success. All 16 of his grant papers were turned away.

Still loyal to his cause, Mortenson did not give up.

Students in River Falls, Wis., where Mortenson's mother was a principal, started a penny bank to

contribute. That bank of pennies wound up totaling \$623.40. From there, Mortenson sold his belongings for extra cash. Last minute funds from Swiss physicist Dr. Jean Hoerni helped him meet his building budget.

The project is viewed by many as a way to give back.

"The Outdoor Program likes to promote getting out and having accountability and respect for the impact we have on people," Outdoor Program Assistant Director Suzanne Hanlon said. "So many people climb K2 without thinking of the people impacted or the garbage. It's important to give something back," she said.

In light of recent events, Mortenson reminded the crowd that many in Afghanistan are still wanting peace and stability for their country, and encouraged awareness.

"Terrorism is not the problem," he said. "The real problem is ignorance, misunderstanding ... unemployment and illiteracy," he said.

International studies major Kirstin Gunderson came to hear Mortenson for just that reason: to become informed.

"There are a lot of different takes on terrorism," she said. "It has a lot to do with delving into different perspectives to give us a more peripheral view."

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