

Inspirational 'Roadtrip' delivers message of untraditional success

'Roadtrip Nation' compiles stories of people who defined their own path in life

Book review

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Pulse Editor

Graduation is nearing once again, and seniors everywhere are quaking in their Skechers, cringing at the vast expanse that is life after June. I have a suggestion for these soon-to-be-graduates: "Roadtrip Nation: A Guide to Discovering Your Path in Life." We need this recently released book by Mike Marriner and Nathan Gebhard, with the help of Joanne Gordan.

"Roadtrip Nation" is more than just a book; it's a compilation of inspiration, it's a film documentary, a Web site — and most of all, it's an inspirational, generational movement.

Pepperdine University juniors Gebhard and Marriner started out confused. Marriner, a biology major, and Gebhard, a business major, were disappointed with what they saw as "noise" — society's prescript advice and job descriptions. A few years and two road trips later, the best friends have graduated and created an impressive collection of interviews with leaders and a generous smattering of other notable people — whose roads to success weren't always paved with tradition. Some never went to college; some barely graduated. But ultimately, all the subjects found their niche in jobs that defy the "noise."

The book offers several standout stories, such as costume designer and styl-

ist-to-the-stars Arianne Phillips, who started her career with a move to New York, a makeshift portfolio, several cold calls and a lot of courage. The 247-page work also includes hilarious snippets from the authors' trips, such as when their RV trailer fell off on the streets of San Francisco.

Now, Marriner and Gebhard are on a third trip, this time to promote the new book. I caught up with them when they made a pit stop (their third engagement on the tour) at the University Bookstore. The duo's personality and message is as inspiring as the book itself, and the two prove college students don't have to be jaded to be cool.

"We really wanted to help our generation explore the world," Marriner said, adding that most college students are so focused on studies that they don't often have the opportunity to explore all options.

"A lot of the time, we see our generation is overly focused, and sometimes that traps them," he said. "It's really hard to differentiate between what is yours and what is society's."

Both Gebhard and Marriner said their "Roadtrip Nation" experience transformed their outlook on society and beyond.

"I think it thwacked us on the head," Marriner said.

Gebhard agreed.

"The world you were just walking through before can become this fountain of knowledge," he said.

Gebhard and Marriner's story is as motivational as the tales of the people they interviewed. Before creating "Roadtrip Nation," Gebhard said the



Courtesy

only things he had ever written were "bad essays in English classes."

All this adds up to a project that promises to wash over hard-working students like a breath of fresh air. It reassures us that life is piecemeal, nothing is for certain and you never, ever have to stay inside the lines.

As Gebhard and Marriner say in their "Roadtrip Nation Manifesto," "Define your own road in life instead of traveling down someone else's. Listen to yourself. Your road is the Open Road. Find it. Find the Open Road."

Graduation, here we come.

"Roadtrip Nation" is available in book stores now. For more information, visit www.roadtripnation.com.

Contact the Pulse editor at jacquelynlewis@dailymerald.com.

she reads from his or her work and acts as one of two final judges.

Schiff and Harlan-Ferlo said the benefits of the program can pay off in many ways. Each year, scholarships are awarded to especially talented students within the tutorials. At the end of each fall term, Kidd tutors nominate students who demonstrate serious potential in the many facets of the program.

Schiff said the program's year-long duration is what ultimately makes it beneficial to novice writers.

"We're able to share a journey that you just can't get in 10 weeks. That's what makes the difference," Schiff said.

Contact the senior Pulse reporter at ryanbornheimer@dailymerald.com.

Kidd

continued from page 5

program. The first round of the 2002-03 competition took place on April 15. Schiff said the open competition is an important outgrowth of the tutorials.

"It's one way the Kidd Program influences the community," Schiff said.

The Program in Creative Writing also brings a nationally known poet or fiction writer to the University for the final prize announcement. He or

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Today's crossword solution

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What is the reuse-a-shoe project?
Reuse-A-Shoe is an effort being launched in our community through a partnership with Campus Recycling, National Recycling Coalition (NRC), and NIKE Corporation. Shoes will be recycled into a material that will be used for athletic surfaces within our community. The goal is to collect 5,000 pairs of shoes starting April 1, 2003.
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Starting April 1 at locations in the EMU and REC Center. Special Collection will be at Earthday and Folk Festival.

STUDENT ADVISORS WANTED

Need committed and creative student volunteers to advise the University Health Center regarding programs, services, finances, and health insurance.

Student advisors will spend about 1-2 hours per week as members of the evolving Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) and will guide the University Health Center in promoting a healthy campus through the storm of health care reform.

Successful participants will gain an in-depth understanding of health care delivery and its financing, will learn about the health issues of college students, and will develop interpersonal skills and confidence.

Routine meetings are scheduled at 3 p.m. Fridays, allowing members to plan their class schedules accordingly.


Applications can be picked up at the University Health Center front desk.

Completed applications should be submitted to the University Health Center Director's office by May 2.

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