

South of the Border

Down Mexico way

With our financial futures ever less clear, many gays and lesbians are becoming increasingly concerned about retirement. But what if you could find a place where the cost of living was so low you would need only \$25,000 a year? Where a fine meal, including wine, costs about \$10 a person, a massage about the same and a men's haircut only \$4?

In the quest for affordable living, more and more gay and lesbian Americans are finding their way to the sunny lands of Mexico. Included among the migrants is Portlander **Edd Samuelson**. You might remember him from his volunteer work with Love Makes a Family, Basic Rights Oregon and The Adventure Group.



Edd Samuelson relocated to the ancient town of Chapala for the blue skies, warm weather and stunning views.

Blue skies, temperatures in the 70s and a stunning view drove Edd to Chapala, "where the weather is said to be the second best in the world." Located close to Guadalajara, the ancient town, and its sister village of Ajijic, are steeped in pre-Columbian history. Each has a thriving gay community with monthly potlucks. I recently chatted with Edd via e-mail about his progress toward paradise.

Floyd Sklaver: How did you choose Chapala?

Edd Samuelson: Through [Portland Community College] I took Spanish classes, cooking and dance at the Falcon Institute in Guanajuato. When my study was complete, my ex-wife (the mother of my children) and her male partner invited me to spend a week in Ajijic. It was on that adventure that I met a real estate person who showed me homes. I purchased my first home in Ajijic in 2005 and sold it the same year.

FS: Why did you decide to leave the United States?

ES: It's not that I left my country, so much as I was looking for a new adventure. I realized that I was aging [and] I was bored looking for work. So, I attended [Portland's] Center for

Sacred Leadership, focusing on being more in touch with the divine: dancing, chanting, doing art, experiential healing and creativity. During my adventure [there], I decided, "If I couldn't, God could," which means I would learn to trust myself and all of my decisions. So my journey into Mexico has been a spiritual journey of personal development. My objectives were: a) develop property, b) learn the culture and the language, c) work on a Ph.D. with the University of Sedona in metaphysics. And I am doing all of that.

FS: What do you miss most living abroad?

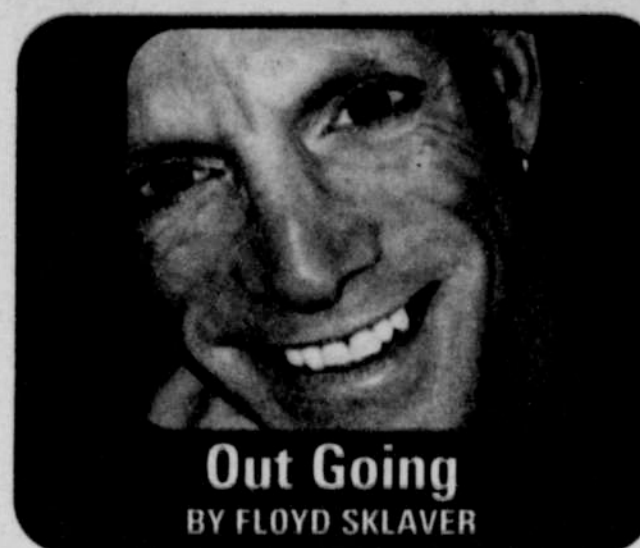
ES: [Besides] my family and friends, I miss the convenience of the restaurants I know, and the pubs. I miss the convenience of being in a consumer-driven society where I can have anything I can pay for.

FS: What's the biggest challenge?

ES: Understanding the culture is No. 1. Learning the language is No. 2. Third, the perception that I am a rich American. But being single has probably been my greatest challenge.

FS: Speaking of which, how is your social life?

ES: I have friends and am included in any number of activities. Many include food. Since I am single, I go out to the [bars] to enjoy the music, dance and cervesa. I get to practice my grow-



Out Going
BY FLOYD SKLAVER

ing Spanish, though conversations are simple. This weekend, I will go to Guadalajara for a few days, where there are 39 gay clubs in the *centro historico*, and totally enjoy being in a sea of young Mexicans. Mexicans have a great respect for all people. So being over 50 in Mexico is a joy, as I am considered exotic and desirable.

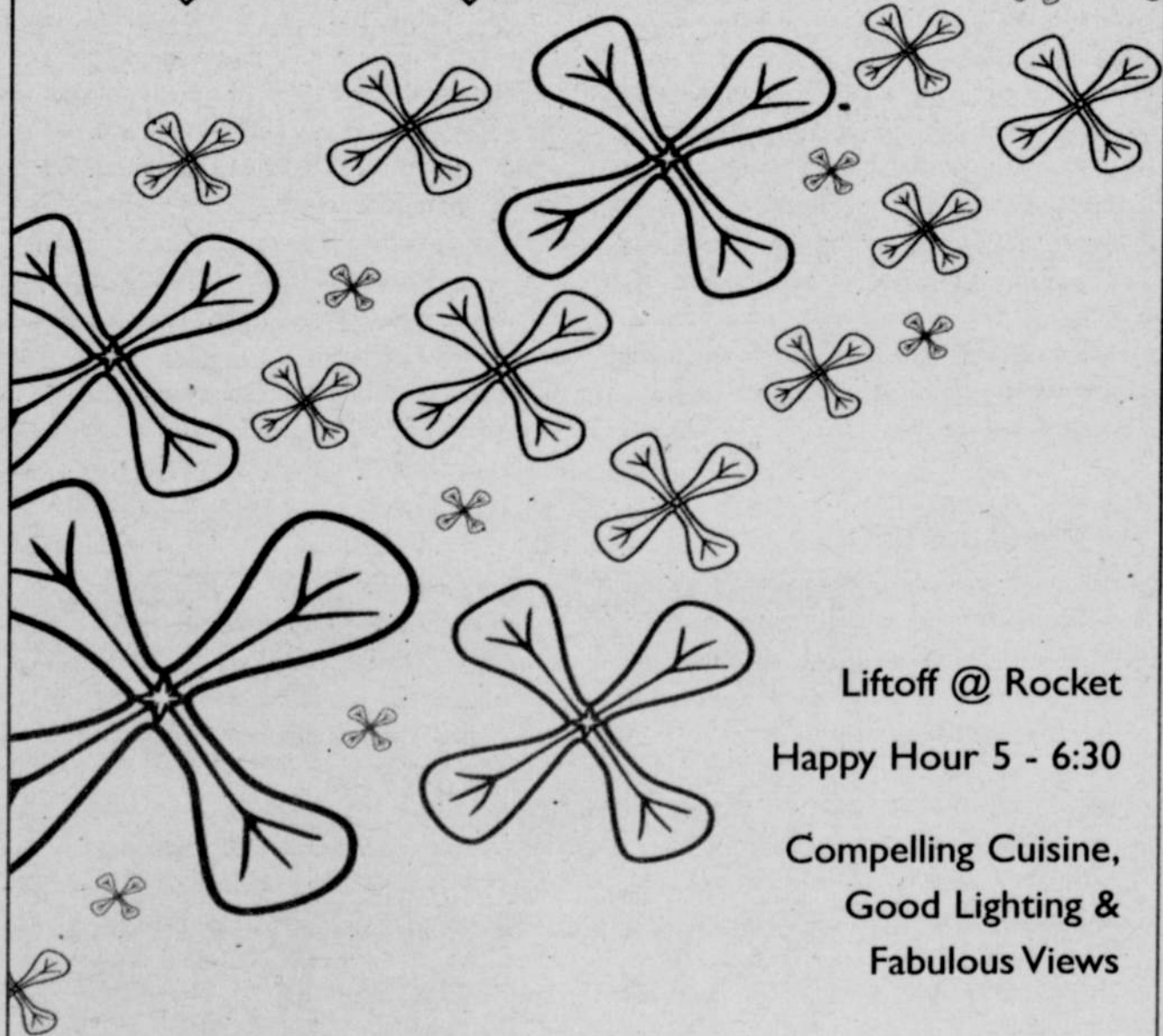
FS: Do you anticipate ever returning?

ES: I love my country, and I love my people. As I am a European American, I do plan to return soon. But I do not have a clear picture of what that looks like at this moment. I love Mexico. It is easy to live here, as no one cares what I wear, what I drive, where I live...there is no pressure to live the American theme: "Nothing is good enough."

Beautiful weather, good food and a reasonable cost of living: What more does one need to be Out Going? **to**

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8 p.m., Friday & Saturday, June 6 & 7
Milagro Theatre, 525 SE Stark St.
Tickets: \$28 (\$22 students/seniors)
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Presented in partnership with Portland Latino Gay Pride 2008 with support from Equity Foundation, El Hispanic News, Unity Project of Oregon and Mark Spencer Hotel. Discover all Portland Latino Gay Pride events at latinogaypridepdx.com.

SPECIAL FILM EVENT

Join Dan for a free screening of *Lalo Guerrero: The Original Chicano*, an award-winning documentary about his late father and legendary Chicano music icon, at the opening reception of Papis y Chicas Portland Latino Gay Pride 2008, beginning at 7 p.m., Thursday, June 5 at the Jupiter Hotel (800 E. Burnside, Portland).