

## Clackamas Print editor and international student subject of KATU Channel Two News story; inability to acquire green card the focus

SALENA DE LA CRUZ  
Opinion Editor

KATU Channel Two News was on campus Jan. 29 interviewing Maggie Jirasek, editor-in-chief of *The Clackamas Print*.

She has a story she wants the world to hear, but especially other international students who might have problems the same as herself: getting their green cards so they can stay in the United States.

Jirasek has been in the United States for a little more than four years and has been waiting for her green card for more than 12 years. Her father had to apply for the entire family. That is, until Jirasek turned 21, which she did on Dec. 5.

She now has to file separately for herself and the process will start all over again. After the Sept. 11 attacks, things changed, and whether the process slowed primarily or partly because of this is still being looked at.

"It's just so confusing," said Jirasek. "I don't know why it's taking so long. It could partly be because of Sept. 11, but I'm not sure."

It began 13 years ago when Jirasek's dad came to the United States and visited his brother. According to Jirasek, someone has to sponsor you so you can get a green card issued. Jirasek's uncle agreed to sponsor her family. So the process began and they have been waiting ever since. They have been writing letters to the American Embassy in Frankfurt and to the U. S. government and yet no one seems to know what is going on.

"My dad keeps calling them (the Embassy) and they tell him to call the United States," she said.

Jirasek has been attending Clackamas for nearly three years and hopes to get her associate's degree and transfer to a university. Her primary choice at this point is the University of Oregon in Eugene, but with a light in her eyes she says she'd like to maybe try Hawaii. But if she doesn't get her green card, she will be unable to

continue her education here.

In Germany, Jirasek would be able to get her education for free. Still, she wishes to stay in the United States.

"I really like it here. I don't want to go back to Germany," she said. "The United States has good educational offerings."

Jirasek's tuition at Clackamas typically costs her about \$2,000 a term for 12 credit hours. A typical Oregon resident would pay about \$600 for a 12-credit term. She will be unable to transfer to a university until she gets her green card because her family won't be able to afford it.

"My family is not rich. It (education) is kind of expensive," said Jirasek.

With a green card she can also start working in United States and have income other than what her family sends her. Currently, she is only allowed to work on campus.

"I can't work. I can't even apply for any type of scholarship or loan," said Jirasek. "I would like to get a job, get my degree and work for a newspaper or maybe write for the National Geographic."

KATU received an e-mail and phone call from one of Jirasek's friends hoping that it would help her get her green card faster.

"We received an e-mail or maybe phone tip, either way we followed up on it," said Bob Heye, the KATU reporter on campus. "Some of the best stories come from people coming forward," he added.

The story will tell of Jirasek's problem and how she wishes to stay in the United States. The story should air sometime the week of Feb. 4, but a definite date has not been set.

"It (the story) is centered on her and whether she is being scrutinized because of Sept. 11," said Heyes.

When asked what advice she would give other international students in her same situation, she said, "Never give up. Fight for your dreams. The only way to get going is to stick one foot forward."



Above: Clackamas Print Editor-in-Chief Maggie Jirasek works on the layout of the paper while KATU photojournalist Don Stapleton films her. News Editor Frank Jordan looks on, and Opinion Editor Salena De La Cruz talks with KATU reporter Bob Heye behind them. KATU sent Heye and Stapleton to Clackamas to cover Jirasek's problems with the Immigration and Naturalization Service and her inability to get a green card to stay in the United States to finish her education. Although a definite date has not been set to air this story on Channel Two News, the story should air soon.



Right: KATU reporter Heye is shown talking to Clackamas Print staff on the story that he is covering.

## Budget: Clackamas looking in better shape than other community colleges

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of community college officials last week and came away surprised and dismayed at how some of the other schools in the state system planned to deal with this budget crisis.

"The issue is being addressed by all of the community colleges in widely varying manners. Some of the community colleges are planning to absorb all of their state cuts at once, while others, like Clackamas, are planning to

spread it out over a period of time.

"We at Clackamas have been so fortunate that we have been able to plan for something like this for the last several years. We are definitely not in the same boat as some of our community college brethren."

Johnson wanted to reiterate that although there will be some pain handed out by the Legislature this weekend, Clackamas Community College is ready to deal with the reality that may occur.

"Our main priorities are to protect students, programs and staff: To maintain all of our programs at the same level that they are currently and to get ready to expand our school. We want our students to come to Clackamas to get the education that they want and to move on to bigger and better things with their lives. The college will get through this crisis, and I might add, a whole lot better off than some of our fellow institutions. Stability is the key."

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