

## Bryan Wright spends six weeks in Bosnia



Bryan Wright

(Editor's note: The following article on Bryan Wright appeared in the Oct. 18, 1996 issue of the Gonzaga Bulletin, the student newspaper for Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA.

Wright is the son of Dean Wright and the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Wright, Heppner.)

By Erin Tillery, staff writer

When Bryan Wright arrived at the Croatian refugee camp that would be his home for the next six weeks, he felt like a ton of bricks had been thrust upon his shoulders.

The buildings were in disarray. They were full of bullet holes and had plaster peeling off the sides. In the back were two artillery cannons, which served as a jungle gym on which kids loved to play.

His bedroom, which he shared with five other student volunteers from around the world, wasn't much different. What had been formerly used as a storage room was cluttered. Behind his pillow was an ant colony, and there was a definite problem with roaches.

The outer condition of the camp was much like that of the people living there. They showed signs of war, but continued to stand strong.

"I wasn't expecting the Hilton, but I wasn't expecting this either," Wright quoted his friend.

The Gonzaga University sophomore did expect to gain information about the conditions in Bosnia.

Wright, who transferred to GU this fall, spent six weeks in Varazdian, Croatia last summer because he didn't feel he had enough information to make a judgement on the situation.

Like most Americans, he considered himself "ignorant of war." Before his trip to Northern Croatia, Wright had not been aware that people were in death camps or being slaughtered.

"It was because I lived so far away," he said.

Wright explained that ignorance of situations like the one

in Bosnia are dangerous because they breed atrocity.

He did not want to be ignorant any longer, so he made the trip to Varazdian.

Despite the hardships he faced during his stay in Croatia, Wright views his experiences there as a turning point in his life.

"Seeing the aftermath of war changes a person's perspective forever," he said.

Wright spent five of his six weeks in Croatia working at the Youth Integration House in Varazdian. The function of the program was to bring refugee teams into the house and integrate the mostly Bosnian Muslim youth who lived in the camps with local Croatian youths. His job was to organize activities such as English and Spanish lessons, music lessons, cultural sharing events and sports.

Wright said that playing sports with the youths in the camp was comical because the rules of volleyball and American football were so foreign to them.

The program also included one-on-one discussions with each refugee.

Two young men who particularly interested Wright were friends Himzo and Adnan. Himzo, a 21-year-old former Bosnian soldier, appeared flagrantly angry with everyone. He was angry not only with his enemies, but with his own people as well.

Wright asked him if he had ever killed anybody. Himzo said that he had, and that it was not a big deal.

"The value of life for them... it's nothing," he commented.

However, he said the people have had no choice in this attitude. He cataloged their sufferings-how their fathers had been murdered, their mothers, sisters and daughters raped, their cities desecrated and their culture and hope destroyed.

"People don't understand the massiveness of what occurred," Wright said.

Adnan, on the other hand, was willing to forgive the past. Though he would not forget what the Serbian government had done, he did not blame the Serbian people for the war. Unlike Himzo, Adnan was willing to move on with his life. He felt the only way to do this was to accept defeat and move on to peace in the future.

Wright also spent one week in Sarajevo, which he described as an emotional roller coaster. The entire 12-hour bus ride from Zagreb to Sarajevo was a culmination for Wright of all the death that had occurred during the war. Seeing every single city, town and house completely destroyed brought people on the bus to tears.

Despite the circumstances, Wright said he felt safe in Sarajevo. Everywhere he went there was a soldier, a tank or a

brigade. There was also an 11 p.m. curfew which increased safety.

A highlight of Wright's trip to Sarajevo was seeing Secretary of State Warren Christopher passing through. Wright introduced himself and explained what he was doing. Christopher told him to keep up the good work.

Through the work that he did, Wright was able to evaluate his own culture. He learned about the United States' faults and how it could improve.

Wright pointed out that our work ethic, compared to theirs, is like "night and day."

In the United States, people feel the need to work for the material goods that will make them happy. In Croatia, the people will work for the things they need but will never sacrifice their families, culture or nation.

In Croatia they have a saying about America-it is a great place to make money, but is a horrible place to live.

The best things about going to Croatia for Wright were being able to help, the personal growth he experienced, and his new-found ability to evaluate his own country. He also added as a minor point that he was able to gain international experience.

Wright learned an invaluable amount about the causes and effects of the war simply by talking to the youth.

"The world was my classroom and the people were my teachers," he said. "There was no way I could fail that class."

Now that Wright is back at home, he is focusing his attention on organizing a way for other students to have the same opportunity he was provided by the University of Denver.

Through an organization called Global Action Program (GAP), he hopes to find enough funding to send 10 Gonzaga students to Croatia for four weeks next summer, including free air fare and \$300-\$400 for extra expenses. Gonzaga Volunteer Services will be sponsoring this project.

Though Wright's world was turned upside down by witnessing the aftermath of war, he said he would do it all again.

He described the experience as vital, and encouraged students of all majors to consider making the trip themselves.

Wright is reminded daily of his experiences. Sitting in the COG (the Gonzaga cafeteria), it dawned on him how overwhelmed and thankful the people in the refugee camp would be with the quality, variety and abundance of food. Though he complains about COG food sometimes, he sees it as a reality check.

"God is making me have these reminders," he says. "God is telling me, 'Remember where you've been.'"

### Bowling League

#### Thursday Nite Mixers

week of November 7

	W	L
Lancer Lanes	23	9
Wright's Century	16	16
R & W	14	18
Skagg's Auto Clinic	11	17
High games: Phyllis Piper 186, John Breidenbach 185.		
High series: John Breidenbach 543, Dianna Hoeft 517.		
Splits converted: Rene Devin 4-5, Marvin Steinbruck 5-10.		

#### Dime A Dozen

	W	L
Penland House	24	8
D-Don's	23	9
Pin Dodgers	20	12
BM's	18	14
Bunn Horseshoeing	10	22
Our Gang	4	28
High games: John Breidenbach 218, Peggy Michel 174.		
High series: John Breidenbach 510, Dianna Hoeft 496.		

#### Blue Mountain

	W	L
Beecher's	17	11
Who Knows	16 1/2	11 1/2
Willow Lanes	15 1/2	12 1/2
Misfits	13 1/2	14 1/2
Team 2	11 1/2	16 1/2
Young Guns	10	10
High games: Bob Hubbard 194, Rick Pettyjohn 187.		
High series: Bob Hubbard 503, John Breidenbach 479.		

#### Koffee Kup Keglers

week of Nov. 14

	W	L
The BJ's	26	10
M.C.G.G.	23	13
No Pin Hitters	23	13
The Dregs	19	17
The Alley Cats	15	21
High series: Linda Schultz 481.		
High game: Bunnie Lindsay 180.		
Splits converted: Linda Schultz 4-5-7.		

## St. Patrick's Senior Center Bulletin Board

There were 86 people present for the senior meal Nov. 13 and three meals were home delivered. Members of the Catholic Church served. Ralph Struthers won the free meal ticket.

The menu for the birthday dinner, Wednesday, Nov. 27 will be cheese sandwiches, soup, coleslaw with pineapple, vegetable tray, cupcakes and ice cream. Members of the Baptist Church will serve.

The Senior Center Board met following the meal. Pete Schwarzin was elected chairman and Rose Marie Buschke, treasurer, to replace Helen Crawford and Howard Gillingham, whose terms of office are ending at the end of December. Howard retired early. Both Helen and Howard put in many years of devoted service on the board.

Daisy Collins and Maxine Gray started a new quilt Wednesday afternoon.

One table of cards was in play Friday afternoon. Ten seniors watched the John Wayne movie, "Hondo" Sunday evening.

About 50 people enjoyed the guitar recital Sunday afternoon. The students of Carl Oakes are doing well. The audience sang along on several Christmas songs. The seniors look forward to the next recital in the spring.

The senior bus was filled for the trip to the Columbia Basin Electric Co-op meeting and dinner in Fossil Thursday evening. The small bus was also filled for the trip from Lone to Fossil. Many of the local people received door prizes.

Dates to remember: Tuesday and Thursday exercise, 10 a.m.; Wednesday blood pressure clinic, 11 a.m., senior meal, 12 noon; Friday cards, 2 p.m.; Sunday movie, 7 p.m.

Share Thanksgiving with family across the miles by sending a Thanksgiving Bouquet.

Thanksgiving  
A time for family and flowers



Look for Country Rose Bouquets and Bud Vases at the Ione Market, starting Thursday, Nov. 14.

Silk Wreath Swags and Poinsettias are in.

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35.1/50R-16	E	107.72
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**30<sup>49</sup>**

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P185/65R-14	78.22
P185/65R-15	81.60
P195/65R-15	77.65
P205/65R-15	87.59
P185/60R-14	78.76
P185/60R-14	82.49

**37<sup>43</sup>**

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