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## Ecotones: The Heartbeat of Huxley, 2001, Issue 10

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# ECOTONES

The Heartbeat of Huxley

Issue 10

December 3, 2001

## Huxley senior speaks on urban agriculture

Jessi Loerch

After spending 12 weeks in the summer as an intern with the P-Patch community garden project in Seattle, Ryan Orth, a Huxley senior, presented his knowledge and opinions on urban agriculture Thursday, to a group of students and community members in the Huxley auditorium.

Using a slideshow, a PowerPoint demonstration and discussion, Orth talked about the strategies, challenges and benefits of sustaining urban agriculture.

Since Orth's interest is in planning – he will graduate this quarter with a degree in Planning and Environmental policy – he discussed many different aspects of planning for urban agriculture. Urban agriculture is simply growing

plants for food in urban areas.

Developers would like to fill in empty lots, he said. So, to keep certain spaces available for urban agriculture requires careful planning.

Also, he said that food sites should be as close as possible to where people live. In Whatcom County the majority of the urban gardens are actually outside of the city limits.

"We haven't planned for food," Orth said. "It's something that touches every life, every day."

Planners need to look carefully at many factors such as where people need food most, what land is available and where money is available to help the community.

"The purpose of planning is to balance community goals with envi-



Photo courtesy of Ryan Orth

Gardeners work at the Jackson Park P-Patch.

ronmental, social and economic factors," Orth said.

One example of planning for urban agriculture is P-Patch. This community project began in Seattle in 1973 with one garden. There are now 60 gardens and over 4,500 gardeners are involved. P-Patch provides residents a plot of land

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Photo courtesy of Ryan Orth  
Flowers bloom at the University P-Patch.

### Thank you...

The staff of Ecotones would like to thank Dean Bradley Smith and all of Huxley's faculty and staff for support over this past quarter and all the quarters before. You all are a great help to us with your ideas, comments and criticisms.

We also want to extend a "thank you" to Dr. Lyle Harris, Carol Brach and the rest of the journalism department for all of your guidance.

It's been an amazing quarter, thank you to all who made it possible.

### Ecotones Staff

- Editor: Kate Koch
- Layout Editor: Laura Thoren
- Web Editor: Tennyson Ketcham
- Writers: Jessi Loerch, Carla Mingione
- Photographer: Lee Laney
- Adviser: Scott Brennan



## Urban agriculture (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

where they can grow fruits, vegetables and herbs.

"It's not just about food," Orth said.

People come for many reasons beyond growing food. They come for the beauty of the garden, to learn from their neighbors and simply to hang out, Orth said.

"It creates a real sense of community...among people who never had a reason to know each other," Orth said.

He showed slides of many of the P-Patch gardens, demonstrating the creativity and variety present in the projects. Many of the gardens are in spaces that are forgotten or avoided, Orth said.

He showed a photo of a Beacon Hill garden underneath a series of tall power lines. A series of photos showed a mass of blackberry bushes and discarded furniture being cleared away to make room for a garden.



Photo courtesy of Ryan Orth.

Flags wave in the breeze at the Interbay P-Patch in Seattle. For more information on the P-Patch project check online at: <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/don/ppatch/>

Two other photos offered a before and after perspective of a very steep hill. The contrast was enough to draw gasps from the audience. Where there once was a strip of asphalt and some brown grass, P-Patch members created a productive, beautifully terraced garden.

Many of the spaces that become available for gardens need reclamation work. The gardeners do most of the work. Orth said the gardens are in a continual state of construction: water lines need to be set up, tool sheds need to be

built and beds need to be made.

"There's no lack of resources in the community," Orth said.

They even sometimes have gardeners who build houses, build the sheds.

But creating and maintaining a garden is not easy, Orth said.

"You need a lot of people who are really committed, who are dedicated and who want to be there," he said. "It's worth it because of the connection you make to other people, real working connections, and you get to know your ecosystem." ☀

## Reducing holiday consumption

Carla Mingione

During the five weeks of the holiday season, the United States creates about five million tons of additional garbage, according to the Environmental Media Services Web page. Currently there are local and national efforts to reduce holiday consumption.

The Community Food Co-Op will put up a bulletin board this year to encourage customers to use less during the holidays. Titled The Season of Sustainability, the board will suggest simple holiday decorations and illustrate how to wrap gifts, reusing materials. The information will also encourage people to buy batteries that

are rechargeable and to support local stores.

Kirsten Eikum is an outreach volunteer at the Community Food Co-Op who helped create the board.

"It is our way of inspiring other people," she said. "We want to give them some ideas on how to reuse and reduce."

Many other sources also suggest decorating with scrap paper and reused materials. According to the EMS Web site, a third of all US trash is packaging and containers, making 72.4 tons of waste annually.

There is potential to reduce the holiday's toll on the environment.

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For ways to reduce your holiday consumption, check out [www.ems.org](http://www.ems.org)



## Consumption (continued)

*(Continued from page 2)*

According to the EMS Web site, if each person wrapped three gifts with reused paper instead of new, the amount of paper saved would cover 45,000 football fields.

In addition to minimal packaging, many environmental groups suggest buying a living tree. Instead of lights, they recommend decorating with more traditional

strands of popcorn and cranberries.

With their tree-recycling program, the Boy Scouts of America contribute to holiday waste reduction. The Whatcom Solid Waste division is putting tags on Christmas trees to inform buyers that they can recycle their tree after the holidays. For a donation, Boy Scouts will pick up the tree, and it will be chipped and used as mulch in city parks.

The Surfrider Foundation has been trying to create an effective

can and bottle-recycling program at the Mount Baker Ski Area for the past two years. They haven't been successful yet, but members are still working on the program.

To learn more about how you can reduce holiday waste, check out the Environmental Media Services Web site, [www.ems.org](http://www.ems.org). Other websites with information about products less harmful to the environment include [www.redjellyfish.com](http://www.redjellyfish.com), [www.ecomall.com](http://www.ecomall.com), [www.realgoods.com](http://www.realgoods.com) and [www.responsibleshopper.org](http://www.responsibleshopper.org). ☼

## The man behind the camera

*It's not necessarily as difficult as you may think to access a completely untouched old-growth stand. The Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest features a stand at milepost 44 on Mt. Baker highway, which lies in our own backyard.*

This week, Ecotones Online features a photo essay by Lee Laney, our photographer.

Originally from Honolulu, Hawaii, Laney is in his last quarter at Huxley College and will graduate with a degree in Environmental Science and an emphasis in terrestrial ecology. He spends most of his free time enjoying all sorts of outdoor activities, but his main passions include sailing, surfing, hiking, music, and photography.

At this point, he says he has no firm plans for after graduation. But Laney hopes to save enough money to travel to Thailand, Indonesia, and Australia within the next couple of years while trying to determine which path to take with his degree.

Though a career in photography is a long-held dream, he currently pursues it only as a hobby with the simple goals of continuing to improve his skills and making his pictures available on a small scale for others to enjoy. ☼



Photos by Lee Laney

**Check out more of Lee's photo essay, "Backyard Old Growth" on the Ecotones Web site.**

**[www.wvu.edu/~ecotones](http://www.wvu.edu/~ecotones)**



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**Mission Statement:**

*Ecotones is a student publication devoted to providing a voice for the Huxley community and reporting on current events and issues affecting everyone.*

## What's Up?

### December 3

Steve House

7 pm, Fraser 4, \$3.

Come check out a film on climber Steve House, who Patagonia calls "one of the most respected young alpinists in the world today." Proceeds will go to benefit the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Fund. Call 650-3112 for more information.

### December 4

Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour

8 pm, WWU Performing Arts Center. If you're a mountain enthusiast, surely you know what it is and don't want to miss it. These are the world's best mountain films and videos - no explanation needed. Tickets are available at the PAC box office, Community Food Co-op, Village Books, REI, and Base Camp.

### December 5

Winona LaDuke

7 pm, PAC Main Stage

Free admission (but tickets needed). Environmentalist, indigenous rights activist, author of "Last Standing Woman" and "All Our Relations," and Green Party V.P. candidate for '96 & 2000, Winona LaDuke will be here to speak to the Western community. Tickets are available at the PAC box office (Tues, 12-4 & Wed-Sat, 12-9).

"The Forbidden Towers Expedition"

7 pm, Fraser 4, \$3.

This multimedia slideshow covers the story of four American climbers and their adventure into the Kondus Valley. Near the war-torn border of Pakistan, the area had been closed to Western-

ers for 20 years, and with no information, the team had no expectations. They documented their entire journey, which culminated with the ascent of the Tahir Tower, an unclimbed 3500' granite spire. Call 650-3112 for more information.

Bike clinic

Students, staff, & alumni - \$15; Non-students - \$25.

This is your last chance of the quarter to learn the inner workings of your bike from the experienced bike mechanics at the Outdoor Center. You'll gain the skills you need to efficiently maintain your bike with your own two hands. Call 650-3112 for more information.

### December 7

"Belize: Ecotourism & the Environment"

6 pm, Fairhaven College Auditorium. Come learn about the ecotourism industry of Belize, as well as its environment, culture, and music at this presentation by senior, Kymin Kretschmar. He will present slides and information for your interest and enjoyment. Whistler Ski Trip  
Pre-trip meeting today at 7 pm!  
See "Coming up" section for a full description of the trip.

### December 8

Indoor Rock Climbing

Cascade Crags in Everett, \$8 for all. Keep your climbing muscles in shape while staying warm and dry. This is the last trip this quarter by the Outdoor Center. They'll provide you with a ride to the gym and gear, if you don't already have your own. Call 650-3112 for more information.

### December 9

Mt. Baker Snowshoeing

Students, staff, & alumni - \$30; Non-students - \$40.

You could probably use a relaxing break from studying for finals. Join the Outdoor Center for a day of snowshoeing, and let the cold, quiet mountain air cleanse you and put your stresses in perspective. Call 650-3112 for more information.

### Coming up...

December 13-23: Wilderness First Responder

\$485 for all.

This 80-hour course is the industry standard for outdoor leaders and guides. It will be held at WWU and will be taught by the Wilderness Medicine Institute of the National Outdoor Leadership School (WMI of NOLS). Register by calling toll free (866)419-1991.

December 15-18: Whistler Ski Trip

Students, staff, & alumni - \$130; Non-students - \$173.

(Lift tickets not included, but cost \$30-45 U.S.)

Pre-trip meeting: Dec 7, 7 pm.

Whatever snow gear you employ, this premier ski resort will leave you wishing you had more time to explore its enormity. You'll enjoy the comforts of a ski in/ski out lodge with a kitchen for your own gourmet meals (breakfast provided) or select from a variety of the village's culinary offerings. After a full day on the mountain, you can treat your muscles to soak or steam in the hot tub or sauna, so bring your swim suit.