

Fruitful trip inspires love letter to Granada, Spain

By Elizabeth Corson
TECHNEWS WRITER

When I think of Granada, I remember oranges.

Oranges on the trees lining the roads, scattered in the parks, floating in the fountains, ripening in the early morning light. Granada, Spain is best known for the Alhambra, an incredible Moorish palace from the 14th century, but even my best memories of that citadel on a hill overlooking the city are through the leaves of an orange tree.

I arrived at the Granada bus stop at four in the morning early in December, after an 11-hour trip from Oviedo on the north coast of Spain. It was a long weekend in the country to celebrate Constitution Day and Immaculate Conception.

Public transportation wouldn't start circulating until 7:00 a.m., so I grabbed an espresso with steamed milk at the cafeteria and waited. I caught the first city bus in the still-dark morning and started towards my hostel. I had to switch to a smaller bus to get into the Albaicín quarter, climbing through the winding streets of the old Moorish neighborhood – the UNESCO World Heritage Site – the place I would be sleeping for the next night.

It was still dusk when I walked through the empty streets to the Makuto Backpackers Hostel, but it was closed until nine. I began exploring the silent and somewhat eerie, but also peaceful, roads. It was then that I realized that most of the trees had oranges growing on them, even in December. I couldn't remember the last time I had seen an orange tree, but it certainly wasn't in Chicago.

I came to a small park where I was inspired to begin photographing the oranges in every



Photo by Elizabeth Corson

possible location and in all stages of life. It was there, peering through the lush leaves at a hidden fruit with my camera, that I caught my first glimpse of the Alhambra, illuminated from behind by the rising sun.

The sunrise in Granada was gradual, and I felt no rush. Looking out over the city at the tight streets and closely pressed buildings spread out below the palace, I saw the influence of thou-

sands of years of different civilizations.

As my gaze traveled northward, I imagined the rest of Spain with its miraculously intact Roman ruins, Stonehenge in England left from the Bronze Age, and cave paintings in France from 17,000 years ago. Europe is ancient, and the seams are bursting with history.

But as I felt on that hill, overlooking Granada in the early morning sunlight, there's no rush

to cram it all in. If I had tried to see every bit of the European past in five months, I would have missed the oranges and the sunrise and the cultural exchange. You should attempt to see as much as you can, but be careful not to overlook the details in the sheer volume of worthy destinations. Otherwise, you might miss your own unforgettable view of the Alhambra through the orange leaves.

Vis-à-vis: Organizing like women

By Vlada Gaisina
OPINION EDITOR

After Scott Walker's one-man crusade against organized labor, "union" has once again become a buzz word.

It seems that anything together with the word "union" is polarizing: civil unions, labor unions, activist unions... most of which elicit a negative reaction from the individualist Right. Compared with the '60s and '70s, the culture of uniting for a cause is slowly withering away, now aided by political effort. Even in light of the protests against Walker's legislation in Madison, the American public is losing the ability to organize itself for a common initiative. The Tea Party movement is possibly the only good recent example to the contrary; at least when it comes to maintaining a cohesive public image and the willingness of different groups to band together. But where is similar action in the liberal camp, especially at a time when so much is at stake? Though the conservatives may currently have an upper hand on the political arena, there is still a fair amount of dissent among the public: on the blogs, in the media, on social networking sites, on the streets. Unfortunately, there also seems to be an attitude of bitter resignation, consistent with the harsh economic times, paralyzing any potential collective initiative on the Democratic Left.

The disillusionment with President Obama experienced by many after the excitement of 2008 elections does not help either. Perhaps, the distraught and civically conscious liberals can look back a few generations for inspiration, learning from the activist groups of the hippie and disco eras.

One particularly relevant example was the Chicago Women's Liberation Union (CWLU), formed in 1969 – the first women's liberation union in the country. At a time when the Vietnam War was still raging on, abortion was illegal, wage discrimination prevalent, and women were still underrepresented in or barred from certain professions, they faced po-

litical and social climates as adverse as they are nowadays for liberal thinkers.

Between the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, anti-choice legislation, and proposed cuts to funding childcare and public health programs (which would force women out of the workforce), the parallels are uncanny.

Besides tackling a variety of issues, from abortion counseling to employment rights to health education, CWLU is impressive for how effective its operation was. It acted as an umbrella organization to unite different feminist groups (or chapters), and assign and monitor tasks in a structured manner. Work groups would be created to tackle an issue, with the leaders reporting regularly to the Steering Committee, headed by two elected co-chairs. Moreover, the members were held accountable for their work and received feedback, which probably helped weed out those not sufficiently committed to the cause. At its peak, CWLU had about 500 dues-paying members – small compared to a national organization, but sizable for a regional activist group. In spite, or perhaps because, of its small numbers, this women's liberation union was efficient and productive. Their model was to combine education, service, and direct action in areas like popular culture, employment, and healthcare. As a result, among numerous other achievements, CWLU won a major sex discrimination wage case, provided countless women with healthcare counseling, organized softball and volleyball teams, and spawned a Women's Liberation Rock Band.

CWLU's accomplishments may seem overwhelming, even when considered over a period of 8 years that they've been active. It took great commitment on the part of those involved, but the beauty of the organization's structure was that it allowed members to focus on projects they were most passionate about, making it easier to develop and maintain a strong membership. Liberals may not agree on priorities, course of action, or general direction of the party, but providing a small dedicated group with a manageable project to work on can go a long way, as demonstrated by CWLU. All it takes is a little structure.

Childhood dreams open up possibilities for future

By Ariel True
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The first time it hits is when you have high hopes and you know no bounds.

By the next time, you have learned some life lessons, and everything is black and white. The time after that, you've probably had a couple of reality checks, but you're still aiming a little high. On the inside, you're unsure of your answer. Then comes the confusion, the complete lack of knowledge and a realization that you know absolutely nothing and no longer have a confident response.

Of course, I'm talking about that age-old question we are first asked when we are barely a toddler: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" The President. A fire fighter. An astronaut. A lawyer. A doctor. I want to help people. I want to do this and that to make the world a better place.

What happened to our 3-year-old selves that had such high hopes for us? Where did that kid go? That kid got pushed to the wayside and told "no" one too many times. Maybe your journey was a little different than mine, but how many of us still want to be a fire fighter or President of the United States? When did that glass ceiling show up and stop us from achieving our dreams?

When I was 7, I wanted to be a doctor. High school came and I wanted to be a psychiatrist. College attacked, and I realized that

med school just wasn't for me.

Now I'm a senior about to graduate, and once again it is time for that question: "What are you going to do after college?" "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Am I supposed to know? Everyone asks like I am. Like I should have not only my 5-year plan, but also a 50-year plan until the day I retire.

I don't know about you, but I just want to live today. I don't want to have to worry about whether or not I'm going to get the "job of my dreams," since I don't even know what that is. I want to live today like I might not have tomorrow or a next week. Can I try to live a little right now while I still have legs to take me places, eyes to see the world, and ears to hear the sounds we make? Where did our lives go?

One second I'm eating a popsicle on my front porch, and the next I'm searching for some job that I'll probably not like and won't get paid enough for. And people have to keep reminding me. I think that the simpler days when there were no glass ceilings were easier.

We always had belief in ourselves and never had worries, unless a crayon was missing. When did crayons turn into 10-page papers on cell regeneration? When did we stop living in the moment and start taking for granted everything we have available to us?

So, my question to you is: what are you going to do when you realize we never grow up?

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