

## 2 Message from the Editor:

Happy New Year!

Well, kiss that year goodbye. Next please. Once again we usher in the new year with a fresh new load of BARF, this time featuring international origami celebrities. But first, speaking of international origami, the end of the year for me was celebrated with a voyage to Colombia to attend an origami convention! It was a big trip for me... my first time out of the U.S. in twelve years! I went all the way to South America just to fold paper? That's right. You wouldn't think Origami would be big in Colombia, and indeed it's not, but they sure put on one heck of a convention!...

Seventy people converged on Cali, Colombia November 28-30, for the "Primer Encuentro de Origamistas Colombianos." The convention, which was modeled after the Origami USA conventions, was highlighted by an impressive exhibition, a treasure hunt, an origami pinata, and national T.V. coverage, (which I got on demonstrating my models while trying to speak Spanish). All attendees received the convention publication, convention poster, convention stickers, convention button, laminated name tag, address list, several packets of origami paper, and finally, a certificate of participation, which was handed out in a graduation-like ceremony. On sale were Origami T-shirts, paper, and professionally-taken convention photographs.

During the convention and for the week that followed, I stayed at the home of Jose Arley Moreno, whom I befriended at the Origami USA Convention two years ago. Since I was their honored guest -- the only one from outside Colombia -- I spent most of my convention time teaching. The high point of my teaching was my Origami Creativity class in which, together, we designed a person on a motorcycle doing a wheelie... out of a square of typing paper no less! Other than

that, I didn't learn many new origami models, but I certainly learned a whole lot more Spanish. In my classes, I was the origami teacher, but, from my point of view, I was getting a private Spanish lesson with 20 teachers!

Although folding and improving my Spanish were my main objectives of the trip, it was also to get out and see the world. That's why I spent three

weeks after the convention sight-seeing around Colombia and Ecuador. One of those weeks I spent traveling alone by bus through Ecuador, which was an adventure I'll never forget. Some of my most memorable moments were giving impromptu juggling shows in Quito and Tulcan, reaching the summit of a mountain I hiked in Otavalo, and being escorted all around Tulcán by a group of about ten school girls - I was like their mascot or something.

My final 5 days were spent in Bogotá with Misae Ono, whom I met at the Cali convention. There I was treated to gourmet Japanese food at her two Benihana-style restaurants. She also treated me to lodging at a fancy hotel and took me sight-seeing all around Bogotá.

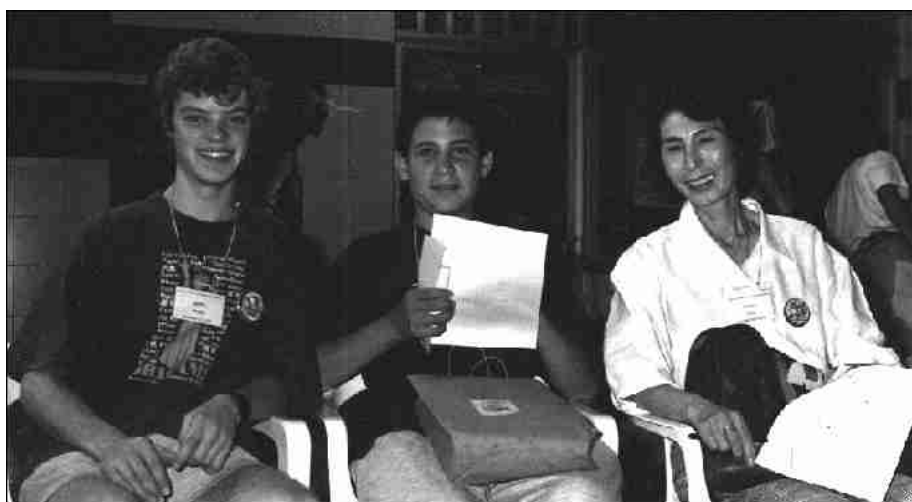
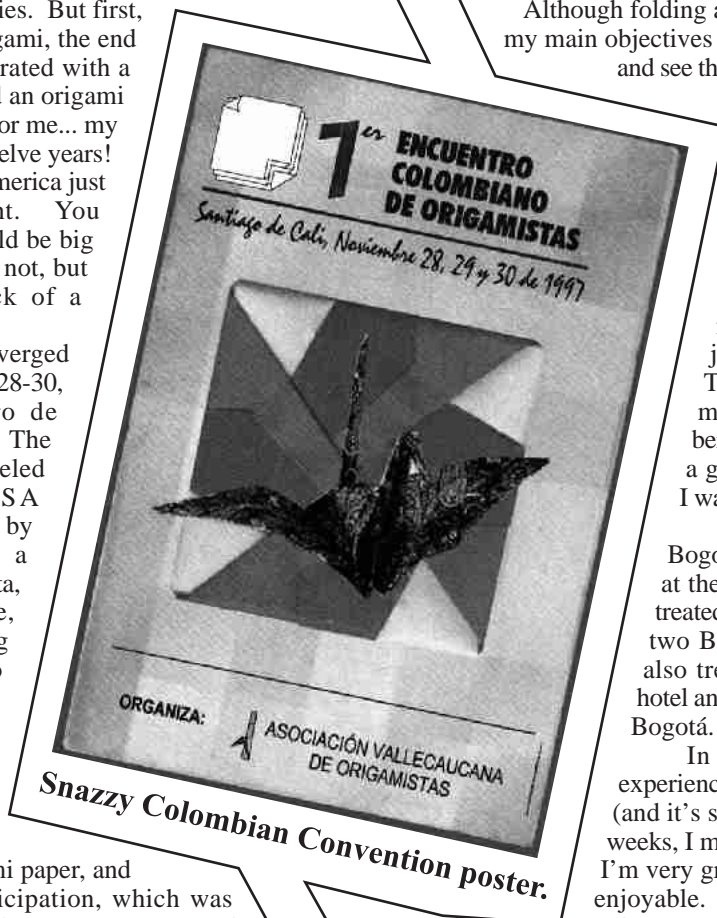
In all, the trip was a fantastic experience, well worth the long plane ride (and it's subsequent cost). Over the three weeks, I made scores of new friends whom I'm very grateful to for making my stay so enjoyable. I definitely plan on going back and encourage all of you to go as well -- the

Cali convention will be an annual event.

As if my trip to South America wasn't enough, right after coming home, I headed off on a 3-day Royal

Caribbean cruise to Mexico with my family to celebrate my grandparents' 60th anniversary. The cruise ship, which went from L.A. to Ensenada (and back, of course!), was definitely not my natural habitat, but I adapted very well. I ate, danced, played ping pong, did Karaoke, and gave a full juggling/origami performance at the guest talent show -- they should have paid me!

Back on the home front, as you all know, a couple



1er. ENCUENTRO COLOMBIANO DE ORIGAMISTAS  
ASOCIACION VALLECAUCANA DE ORIGAMISTAS  
SANTIAGO DE CALI, COLOMBIA, NOVIEMBRE 28, 29 Y 30 DE 1997 - COLEGIO LEON DE GREIFF

**Professional photograph of Encuentro Colombiano attendees.  
That's me with Andrés Fernando Velásques, and Misae Ono.**

Back on the home front, as you all know, a couple of months ago, San Francisco hosted the very first PCOC -- Pacific Coast Origami Conference. Being the first full fledged convention on the west coast, PCOC was a milestone event for us west coasters, as well as for Origami USA, which for the first time sponsored a convention outside of New York.

This folding bash, once we finally agreed on when and where to have it, went forward without a hitch. The registration limit of 200 completely filled up and, luckily, few folders if any had to be turned away. Paper folders from all over the country descended upon San Francisco Japantown, and we were especially honored with the presence of three overseas folders, Herman Van Gouberman (Belgium), David Lister (England), and Akio Hizume (Japan).

Before the Conference, the PCOC organizers were invited to a fully catered dinner/reception in our honor at the home of the Consul General of Japan in San Francisco. We each brought an origami model to present to the Consul and his wife. It was a very pleasant evening, but quite surreal on many levels. For one, it was held in an elegant mansion, which in itself was awkward, especially since most of us were not dressed appropriately. Secondly, half of the guests were Consulate members and were very formal in both dress and manner; although we tried to mingle, our paper folders were clearly a different breed. Finally, to ease our uneasiness, we started folding up a storm with the dinner napkins and chopstick wrappers. They had to scramble around to provide us with more paper. In between gulps of Miso soup, I managed to fold a Golden Gate Bridge from magazine paper. Even Robert Lang (who was at my table) got into the action. It was quite a scene! At the end, I broke out my origami models and juggling balls and put on a short show, which went over so well that the Consul's wife invited me to come to her son's birthday party (but that fell through when she found out she would have to pay me).

Before the convention, Alan Parry and I spent several hours folding the shelves for the model menu. In addition to man-handling the huge sheets of paper, we also practiced flipping each other over our shoulders (It's just a Swing dance move, honestly!).

During the conference I taught the whole time, but my classes were small, so it wasn't too stressful. What was slightly stressful was Sunday when I discovered I had left Chris Palmer's video at home. So before lunch, during my Flaming Crane class, which everyone was too scared to take, I went home to fetch the video. When I returned, I managed to persuade enough stray folders to enlist in the class to make it worth it. By the time we were ready to light the paper on fire, it was lunch time and we had gathered quite a crowd. Several folders managed to fold the flaming crane without burning themselves, so it actually turned out to be quite successful.

One of the most extraordinary features of the



PCOC Committee with members of the Consulate General of Japan.

conference was the exhibition which was in the same league as that of Origami USA. Most impressive to me were Yoshino's Triceratops skeleton folded by Kayo Kurata, and of course Robert Lang's entire exhibit which was much larger than his showing in New York, since far more models can fit in a car than in a suitcase. The exhibition made it on to several T.V. newscasts. The only one I got a chance to see was the CNN coverage, and I wouldn't have even seen that had it not been for my cousin in Virginia, who happened to see it and record it for me when it was shown next. The amazing part of the clip was that while they showed many models, only a few people got shot.... One shot was of me opening my Super Flasher Supreme, and the other happened to be my parents looking at the exhibit!

The highlight of the conference for me was the Saturday evening performance, which I emceed. The opening number was Laura Kruskal's International Origami Anthem, which we all sang with gusto. This was followed by Gay Merrill-Gross presenting her storigami (written specially for PCOC) about searching in vain for gold in California and then finding it -- a golden crane! Then, it was the Arizona folders' turn. They dragged up the PCOC committee members to participate in an egg toss with several butterfly-ball-like modulars that exploded when organizers tried to catch them. Then, Ken Martin did some one ball manipulation and some nifty tossing around with a business card. For the next half hour Brian Cox, all the way from Winnepeg, Canada, entertained us with a juggling lesson, some origami troublewit, and finally his amazing string manipulation. Finally, I closed out the performance with The Story of Mr. Smiley as well as some juggling in the dark with lighted balls. Then I dragged everyone outside to witness the Flaming Crane Ritual, where I light a piece of paper on fire and fold it into a crane. My act ended with me on a flaming unicycle chasing an unsuspecting metro bus with a juggling torch. That sure caught their attention!