

THE END

WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE ANYWAY

Nonprofit head Peter Bauer thinks it's the end of the world, and he feels fine.

BY LAURA PARISI lparisi@wweek.com

Peter Bauer removes his synthetic wool-lined coat and places his cell phone on the table. He sips his dark microbrew and then offers me one—there is a \$5 minimum for plastic at the Red and Black Cafe, and he's short a buck-fifty.

With a mess of dark tresses, the 23-year-old looks like any other young, image-conscious artist who doesn't carry a lot of cash. And at his day job as a freelance production assistant, that's just what he is. But Bauer spends the rest of his time mixed up in the workings of Mythmedia, a nonprofit he started five years ago after dropping out of high school. Bauer, it seems, lives the sort of life many in this town would kill for, with technology and money at his disposal, a job in a creative field and a cause to work for. Then again, he says he recently cooked and ate a dead squirrel he found in front of his house.

Foraging is more than a pas-time for Bauer—it's training for the future. He practices hunting and gathering skills to prepare him for life after civilization collapses, he says. That's right, this modern young man is an apocalypticist. But he's not letting it spoil his day.

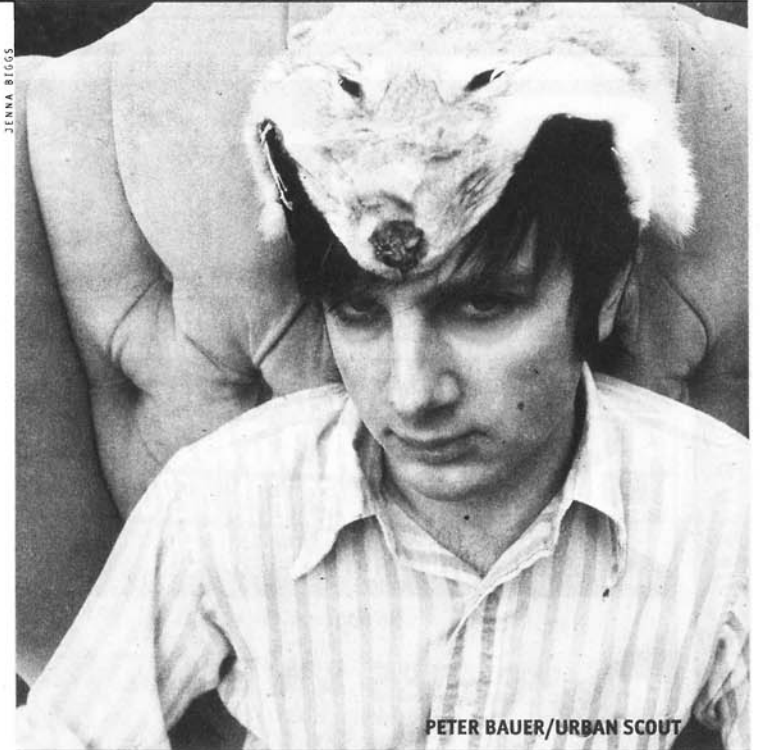
Sometimes, Bauer says, he abandons the credit card and cell phone for nothing more than a loincloth. He claims to have spent a year of his life going bare-foot in the city—he cut the rubber soles from a pair of shoes to get around the “no shoes, no service” issue. He often pulls out these tactics under the guise of his alter ego, Urban Scout, who has become somewhat of a mascot for Mythmedia. The nonprofit's mission is as muddled as Bauer's identity: part art collective, part film forum and part homeless-advocacy network. Upcoming plans include this weekend's Nuclear Winter Formal fundraising event,

a writing class for the homeless and a street kids' summer camp, which, depending on how much funding Bauer can obtain, will teach anything from building bikes from found scraps to skinning and cooking roadkill.

“Hunting and gathering is the only way of making a living that does not violate natural laws,” he explains before gulping down the last of his beer.

This dogma might sound familiar. Bauer's a big fan of award-winning and often-disputed 1991 novel *Ishmael* that has garnered a cult following (evident on Internet forums like ishcon.org and friendsofishmael.com). The book's author, Daniel Quinn, argues farming and overcultivation are at the root of overpopulation problems: Either we change the way we operate or we can expect a rapid, catastrophic decline in the next 100 years.

Bauer appears to be fine with this, nonchalantly talking about



PETER BAUER/URBAN SCOUT

the forecasted downfall the way a Portlander talks about the winter rain. His game plan, he says, is to take intermittent jaunts into a more primitive lifestyle to prepare for post-apocalyptic society, while generally enjoying the very advantages of modern life that are hastening the end. And that's where Urban Scout comes in.

“Urban Scout is a pre-emptive post-apocalypticist,” Bauer says. “That means that he lives as if civi-

lization has already fallen, so when it does, he'll be fine. He won't even notice. So he hunts and gathers by day, and parties by night, because, hey, civilization is still around. Why not drink coffee and get drunk and smoke cigarettes?” www

The Nuclear Winter Formal, featuring Hillstomp and the Hunches, as well as a post-apocalyptic costume contest, takes place Friday, Jan. 27, at Someday, 125 NW 5th Ave., mythmedia.org. 8 pm. \$10-\$20 donation. All ages.