East meets West

Peace Corps experience in Orient inspires couple

Jim Algor and his bride Ellen find life in the Orient a tasty cup of tea. In the Orient a title the Orient and the Orient and the Orient and the Orient and the Orient and Indian Algeria when the Orient and Indian Algeria Meeting the Orient and Indian Algeria Meeting of Oriental Culture during "the best two years of our lives" to work at an agency that aids underdeveloped nations.

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To some persons, their life may seem like a segment from a George Pierrot travel show as the couple have become accustomed to new sights, sounds and smells. But adventure aside, Jim and Ellen value most highly the cross-cultural exchange of Eastern and Western customs.

For Ellen, 24, the shift hasn't been quite sor radical. Fresh-scrubbed, blue-eyed Ellen was born and raised in Japan by parents employed in missionary

eyea Eilen was born and raised in Ja-pan by parents employed in missionary work with United Church of Christ. After graduating from McAlester College in Minnesota (her family halls from there), Ellen joined the Peace Corps.

THAT'S WHERE bearded, curly-

degree in psychology.
"That prepared me for absolutely nobling (in terms of employment)," said Jim, now 28. So Jim took electrical training, spent some time in Arizona and entered the Peace Corps in June 1976 after two previous, unsue-sestin attempts.

and an extended the Peace Corps in country of the control of the c

sized Jim came into her life.

After graduating from Livonia Franklin High in 1989, Jim, formerly a low four hours a day. While the Westland resident, went on to Eastern Michigau Outversity and a bachelor's survival phrases, more in-depth in-

ackup.
If a student says the wrong phrase, If a student says the wrong phrase, If a student says the wrong phrase, and the says that the says the says that the says the

times a month.

"The national dish is Kimchi, which is Chinese cabbage and hot red pepper," said Jim.

Other Korean foodstuffs were more

unusual.

For instance, it was customary in the rural community where Jim was living for Korean men to eat dogs — barbecued or in soup — during the hottest

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struction was taught by the "silent" method which places most of the responsibility on the student.
Under this system, the teacher gives a word of plares, then students repeat it. Color charts and visual aids provide repetive) and snake whiskey. Snake heart of the color charts and visual aids provide repetive) and snake whiskey. Snake heart of the color charts and visual aids provide repetively and snake whiskey. Snake heart of the color charts and visual repetively and snake whiskey. Snake heart of the color charts and visual repetively and snake whiskey. FOR THAT same reason, men also ate ginseng root, otter penis (very expensive) and snake whiskey. Snake whiskey is snake meat fermented in alcohol for about six months:

"It's very strong, very rancid — it works. Just ask Ellen," said Jim, with a laugh.

"It's very strong, very rancid — it works Just ask Ellen," said Jim, with a laugh.
Korean men drank a rice wine called Mokkali on social occasions.
Jim said he ate and drank the same food as his Korean hosts. "I wanted to develop rapport (with them)," he said.
Indoor activities took place near the floor because heat fueled by coal was piped through tubes under the floor. People sleep on thick floor pads and bundle up with several blankets, including the intricately designed iblo covering. Because of this heating system, Korean schools are closed during the coldest winter months.
"You can't be judgmental about different cultures," said Jim. "You should try to understand them. You don't have to incorporate them."
"Not unless you want to," said Ellen.
While Jim was absorbing the local customs, he still found time to visit Ellen, who was nine hours away by bus. Ellen, too, was adjusting to her life as an English teacher.
She grappled with the conflict of an

Oriental society dominated by males. It was a lifestyle where authority flowed from father down through the sons.

IT WAS a well-defined, hierarchical society where everyone knew his or her place.
"Conflicts arise when you try to do things a different way," said Ellen.
"Korean men don't take suggestions from a woman."
Korean women don't hold property

"Korean men don't take suggestions from a woman." Korean women don't hold property in their own name, added Ellen. And if there is a divorce, a woman is stricken from the family.

But have the stricken of the from the family and the stricken and Eastern customs. "You learn to compromise your position," said Jim. "I can look at things and try to understand." For instance, Jim is pleased about bringing the American Special Olympics (sports competition for mentally and physically impaired) to Korea, where "handdcapped are looked upon as a social burder." One outgrowth of that has been the

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One outgrowth of that has been the establishment of some special training programs for handicapped.

Four months ago, with their Peace Corps stint finished, Jim and Ellen embarked on a new adventure.

Following their marriage in Japan, they traveled to India, Hong Kong and nearby Macao, Bangladesh and Thailand. It was there that Jim swam in the Mekong River almost to the shores of Vietnam.

Along the way, they met with other former Peace Corps volunteer friends and did a lot of shopping.

and did a lot of shopping.

"WE ALWAYS go to the American embassy and register," said Ellen. "You become their responsibility. Basically, we keep our nose clean and don't get involved in politics."

The newlyweds brought to America artifacts from their travels. There were lacquered chests infald with mother of pearl. There were wooden bowls, chopsicks and Chinese fans. There were tea sets and hand-carved wooden animal pieces.

The future seems bright for Jim and Ellen, as they plan the next six months of training at the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vt. There, they'll study "global issues," community work and analyze greats undied.

Community when the funding.

Then, hopefully, the two will take jobs with an overseas relief agency such as CARE. And they will remember life as Peace Corps volunteers.

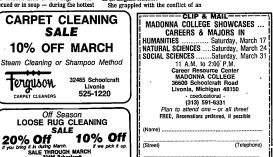
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