

Filmmakers: From Carbondale to Peru and back

CARBONDALE — The Carbondale filmmakers who make up Lo-Fu Productions have returned from Peru.

Director Josh Hyde, cinematographer Dan Fischer and producer/editor James Saldana spent six weeks shooting their documentary “Despacho” in villages above the city of Cusco.

“We actually stayed down there to edit so we could still have access to our subject,” said Hyde. “We could edit, find out where our story was lacking and we could go back and get more interviews from some of the shamans.”

The aim of “Despacho” is to illustrate the changing role of Peruvian shamans. The film looks at the effects of globalization on this medical microcosm through the eyes of Denise Kinch.

Kinch is president of Vanishing Cultures, a Massachusetts-based nonprofit organization. She traveled to Peru to discover shamanistic healing secrets, as well as to administer Western medicinal techniques to isolated indigenous communities.

Hyde and the other members of Lo-Fu returned this week from



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village, which is at nearly 20,000 feet in the Andes.”

Lo-Fu will film the shaman’s journey home, then return to Carbondale to tweak “Despacho” into its final form.

Hyde says making the film, which was shot on digital video, has been an eye-opening experience for him.

“Every film is a life-changing event, but to go from the First World to the Third World is a big difference,” he said. “Just

Massachusetts, where they screened “Despacho” for Vanishing Cultures.

“One of the shamans we interviewed is the eldest of the supposed last descendants of the Incas,” Hyde said. “He’s about to die, and he doesn’t want to die in Cusco. He wants to go back up to his

seeing those people, knowing that the language they speak is only spoken in this one village and that their culture is vanishing ...”

Hyde paused for a few seconds before commenting on how the subjects of his documentary differ from Westerners.

“They’re a lot wittier,” he said. “Our technology — I don’t think it’s dumbed us down, but it’s made us less intuitive. They don’t have any of that, so as a whole the kids seemed a lot happier and smarter in general.”

Once “Despacho” reaches its final form, Lo-Fu will screen it in Carbondale, likely early in the fall. Then the filmmakers will begin working on a fiction film, with the help of a man living in Cusco who served as a script consultant on the Oscar-winning Jack Nicholson movie “As Good As It Gets.”

“But right now our hope is to get ‘Despacho’ so that it can be seen and people can see it and be informed about the situation going on in Peru,” Hyde said.

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