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Klipsun

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Klipsun is a Lummi word meaning beautiful sunset.

Klipsun is a student publication of Western Washington University distributed twice a quarter. *Klipsun* is available free for Western students and the community.

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PYROMANIA

04

Jenny Burritt is a creative writing major who sold her soul to the journalism department for a few quarters so she could finish her minor. This quarter her writing was first seen in both *The Western Front* and *Klipsun*. After graduation, she hopes to land a job that will not only allow her to live outside the box, a cardboard one that is, but also help her expand her red shoe collection. When she is not busy typing away on her computer, you can find her working on an art project, bringing on chips and salsa or watching Merchant Ivory films. At night she dreams about working as a novelist/artist in her cabin she will own one day in the San Juan Islands.

Christine Callan, a senior from Tulsa, Okla., is a public relations major with a minor in psychology. After graduation she plans to go to Bible school or go get lost in Africa somewhere. In her spare time she leads Young Life at Sehome High School and loves playing outdoors, especially skiing.

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Katrina Magadan is a senior public relations major and Spanish minor. Following graduation this spring, she looks forward to joining her husband, Raul, in sunny, Southern California and embarking on a new adventure: parenting. After their new baby teaches her the art of surviving on little sleep, she would like to pursue a career in public relations. Katrina has previously been published in the *Planet* and *The Western Front*. This is her first contribution to *Klipsun*.



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Andrew Linth is a senior public relations major with a concentration in management. After summer graduation he plans to backpack New Zealand and shear sheep for part-time employment. In his off time he enjoys hiking, biking, swimming and skinning his smoke wagon. He has previously been published in the *Planet* and *The Western Front*. This is his first contribution to *Klipsun*.

Grant Brissey doesn't know what year in school he is, but he thinks he's supposed to graduate in about a year. He might become a journalism major, but has a fear of commitment, so he isn't sure. When he's not trapped in College Hall writing some overdue article, he is making up homework for some other damn class. When he used to have free time, he enjoyed getting "spanked" by rock-climbing routes that were too difficult, (which constitutes almost all of them), and indulging in Schmidt's premium beer afterwards.



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Melissa Child graduates in August with a public relations degree and psychology minor. After graduation, she plans to whine about how she needs a job. In her spare time, she tutors Hillary "wonkey" Smith in the art of crossing her eyes, and she strives to enhance her culinary skills — regular macaroni and cheese instead of easy mac. Someday she plans to travel across country in a school bus covered with bumper stickers selling tacky T-shirts that say, "I saw the bumper sticker bus in (state)."

Terrill Simecki is a senior journalism major, and this is his second contribution to *Klipsun*. After graduating, he plans to travel around the world armed with a camera, a skateboard and peach-flavored Snapple ice tea.



COMING TO TERMS

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Hi, I'm **Greg Woehler**. I'm a journalism major here at Western of undetermined class standing. I'd like to thank Joe Moser, Jim Hastin and Dick Stone for speaking with me for this story and for providing some of their personal pictures. It's an overused term, but each of these men truly are heroes and I was honored to tell their stories.

Aaron Jacoby is a senior public relations major with a concentration in marketing. His plans for the future include graduating this fall and moving to Seattle before completing his life goal of becoming a husband and father on par with Clark W. Griswold of Vacation fame. In his free time, Aaron enjoys the wisdom of Ralph Wiggum and Gandhi — two of the great minds of the twentieth century. This is his second contribution to *Klipsun*; he has previously been published in *The Western Front*.



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pyromania

Performing with fire is more than a dangerous dance for Western's OPA! club. **Jenny Burritt** describes a night in the audience of these daring artists. Photos by Chris Fuller.

Coating his mouth with olive oil and then filling it with 151-proof alcohol, Gabe Lukeris steps forward, brings a lit torch to his mouth and-Whoosh!-flames soar from his lips creating a flash of light in the dark alley.

So begins another performance of the Otherworldly Pyromancers Anonymous! better known as OPA!

The commotion in the alley behind the Allied Art Center in downtown Bellingham is silenced as a scratchy voice explains that OPA! is here to entertain.

A group of 40 people form a semi-circle on wet pavement, shifting back and forth in an attempt to fight the chilled air.

With the announcement still lingering, OPA!'s musicians begin playing drums and accordions filling the air with a folksy, circus tune. People in the audience chant OPA! OPA! as Lukeris, 25, fills his mouth with alcohol again, letting it out seconds later in a large spray.

A three-foot fireball races into the darkness as the alcohol meets the flame inches from his mouth. Fire chains and fans follow this dramatic opening, brightening the sky as each performer ignites.

OPA!, an Associated Students club at Western, is a collection of musicians and fire performers from Western and the surrounding community. Though OPA!'s flames began flickering this fall, fire performance has been done for centuries. The Navajo Native Americans used to smear themselves with clay and paint and worship around bonfires while holding onto the blazing innards of animals. Samoan warriors of the

Pacific performed traditional dances with knives engulfed in flames, and in Japan, priestesses would walk over hot coals in front of an amazed audience.



Onlookers in this dark alley stand back with wide eyes as Lukeris blows his last fireball and extends his torch to the tennis-ball-sized wick of the next performer.

"I have always been a little bit of a pyro," Lukeris admits.

Lukeris decided to try fire breathing at a dinner party this year where he and his friends were cooking with 151-proof alcohol.

"If you are careful it is not that dangerous," Lukeris said.

He coats the inside of his mouth with olive oil so the alcohol won't burn it. However, this precaution may not be enough for some. Fire breathing is possibly the most

dangerous and health-damaging art found

in circus and street performing.

Experimenting with fire breathing can be fatal because the flames could burn back into the mouth, searing or collapsing one or both lungs.

No one should attempt this trick unless they are with an experienced fire breather who fully understands the possible repercussions.

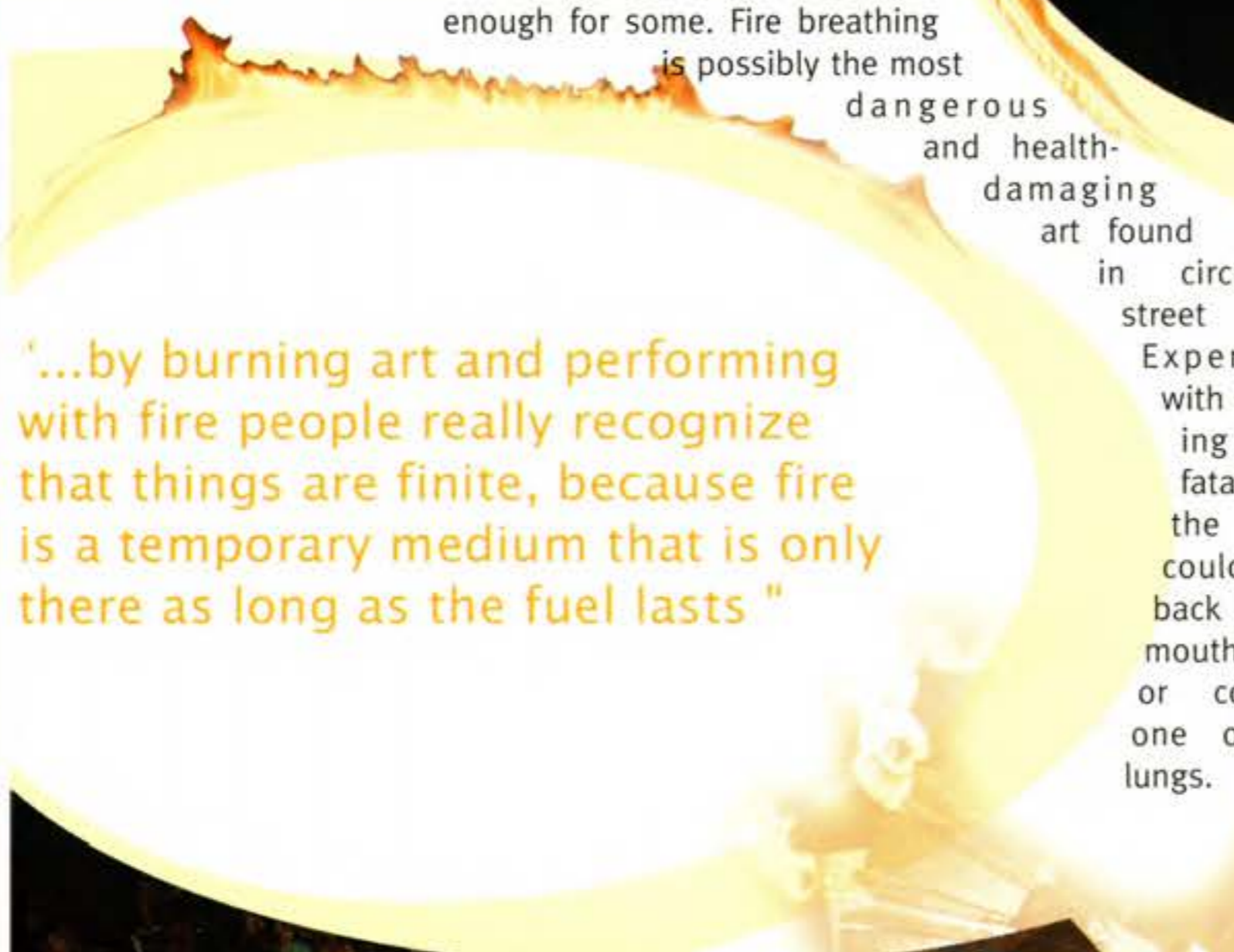
To produce an impressive fireball with a diameter of more than 10 feet and temperatures up to several hundred degrees Fahrenheit, some fire breathers fill their mouths with lighter fluid or kerosene. Lukeris decided to stick with alcohol after researching fire breathing because he is weary of the effects

these carcinogenic alternatives may have on his body.

Perry Anderson from Washington State Poison Control said alcohol is probably the easiest fuel for the body to tolerate when breathing fire.

"I have seen people take shots of 151 (proof) rum in bars; I think the only concern would be the alcohol irritating the tissue in his mouth," Anderson said.

Intrigued with more than fire breathing, Lukeris says he would like to expand on what he does with the group and possibly use his dance background he has received from Western to choreograph performances.



"...by burning art and performing with fire people really recognize that things are finite, because fire is a temporary medium that is only there as long as the fuel lasts "

Covered in a thick, black, cotton costume, Kymin Kiosken, a 25-year-old Fairhaven student, begins swinging her fire chains, or poi, in the air. Poi are made with two chains of equal length that have a Teflon wick attached to the bottom. The wick, shaped like a ball, is drenched in lamp oil which allows it to easily burst into flame.

Poi, which is the Maori word for ball, were used by the indigenous Maori people of New Zealand to improve coordination and increase flexibility and strength in their hands and arms.

"Performing is a spiritual and physical thing; it is good exercise," Kiosken says. "It is also an art outlet; it is a way for me to express my artistic side."

The poi's momentum increase as Kiosken prances from side to side swinging one of the chains in front of her and the other behind. As the fiery chains spin quickly in a large circular motion they take on the appearance of blazing, high-speed Ferris wheels.

Kiosken slows the chains as the fire absorbs the last of the oil. The charred wicks now resemble dying embers from a campfire.

"You have to have a certain level of respect for fire," Kiosken says.

Three years ago, Kiosken traveled to Europe where she began entertaining with fire. In Berlin she ran into a friend she met while living in New York and he introduced her to poi. Together they formed a group with some kids from Poland and a girl from Tasmania. Almost out of cash, street performing provided meals for Kiosken as she traveled with her new band of friends.

Kiosken returned to Bellingham and continued working with poi. While performing in Fairhaven, Kiosken met Melissa Whitman, who was interested in creating fire fans and together they formed OPA!

Whitman slips her long black coat off her shoulders and reaches for her fully collapsible fire fans while Kiosken grabs a torch. An independent study course through Western's art department granted Whitman the time to design her fire fans, research safety and contact those in the pyrotechnics community like the professional fire performers in Seattle's Cirque de Flambé. The fans, which were modeled after traditional Japanese paper fans, clank open at the beginning of the performance as the five torches on top of each fan burn.

"Part of the challenge was not knowing anyone who does this," Whitman says.

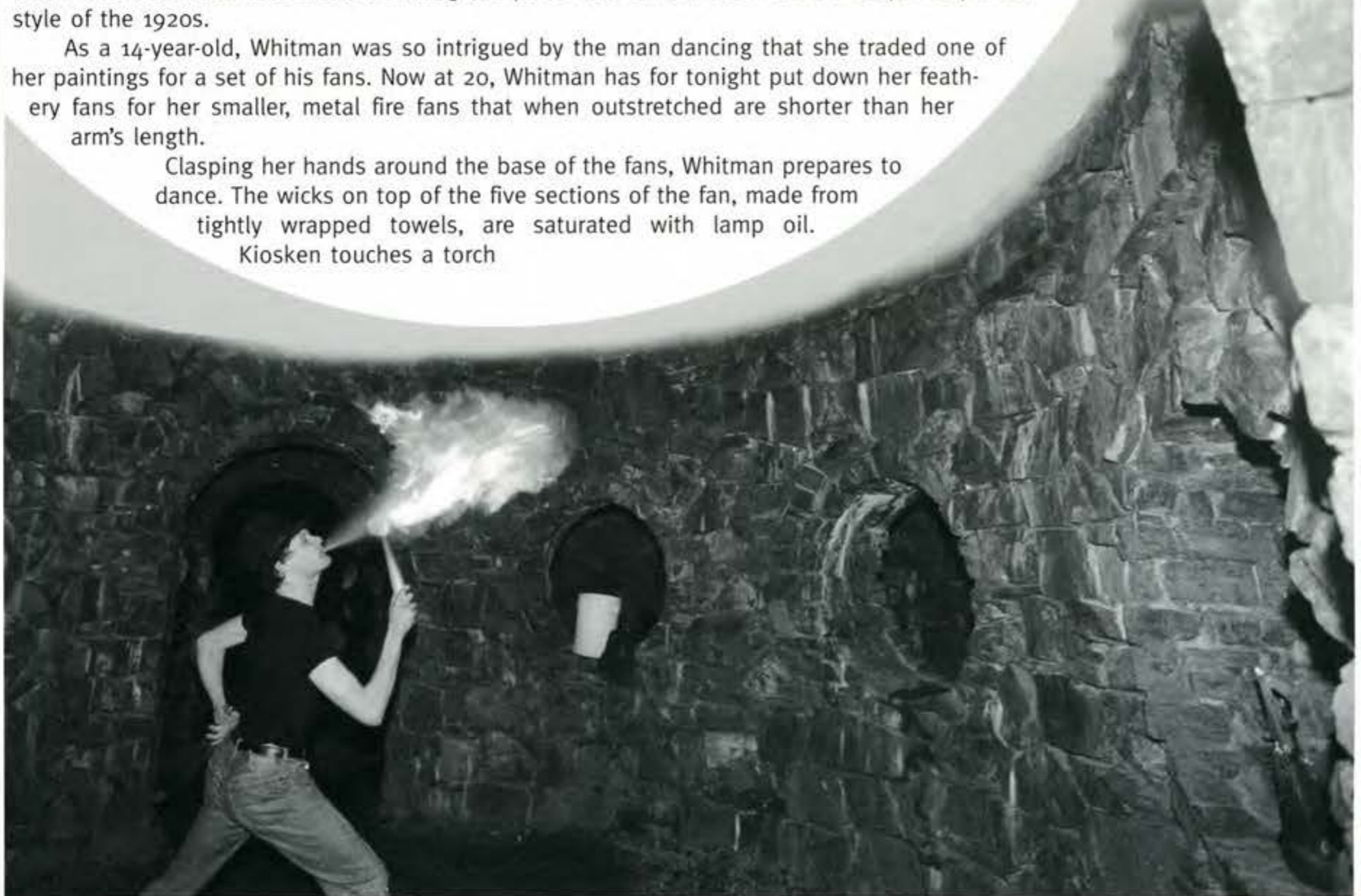
Whitman decided to create a new artistic medium that would combine her love of fire and fan dancing. Her interest in fan dancing sparked at Evergreen State College's camp for the arts where she met a man who dressed in drag and performed fan dances in the burlesque strip tease style of the 1920s.

As a 14-year-old, Whitman was so intrigued by the man dancing that she traded one of her paintings for a set of his fans. Now at 20, Whitman has for tonight put down her feathery fans for her smaller, metal fire fans that when outstretched are shorter than her arm's length.

Clasping her hands around the base of the fans, Whitman prepares to dance. The wicks on top of the five sections of the fan, made from tightly wrapped towels, are saturated with lamp oil.

Kiosken touches a torch

"You have to have a certain level of respect for fire."





to the five wicks and immediately they burst into red flames. Whitman opens the fans and moves gracefully toward the people outlining the concrete stage. Her metal outfit clanks as she twirls. The light stemming from her fans shines in the hundreds of silver, eye-shaped fishing reflectors sewn to her costume. The metal costume protects Whitman's chest and legs during performances. The reflectors swish back and forth on her cropped top as she bends forward, and her v-shaped skirt, adorned with the silvery armor, sways as she moves.

Whitman lifts her fans in the air at the end of her five-minute dance and blows out the flames. One by one sparks vanish and darkness resettles in the alley. OPA! has extinguished.

The audience disperses while a few linger to talk with the performers. Besides holding these "guerrilla" performances, as Lukeris calls them, OPA! entertains and practices in local parks. OPA! does not usually advertise, but lets people know about performances by word of mouth.

It is not illegal to entertain with fire in Bellingham, but police have asked OPA! to leave several locations because they were there after hours.

"The cops are usually nice to us because they realize we are being safe," Kiosken says.

"Public demonstrations that use fire as part of theatrical performance are allowed," says Steve Lamoureaux, Bellingham Fire Department's life safety division chief.

However, Lamoureaux is aware that some performances may inspire copycat behavior that could lead to injuries. The fire department's goal is not to stamp out the artistic expressions of fire performers, but safety is its main concern. The department does not want audience members, especially young children, to receive the message that playing with fire is OK. Each public demonstration must be previewed by the fire department.

OPA! recognizes the dangers of fire and enforces strict rules that its four fire performers must follow. Lukeris is the only one allowed to violate OPA!'s no alcohol policy, because he uses alcohol to ignite the flames in his mouth. The performers are not allowed to drink before or during performances because they know that this could impair their judgement. Performers also must wear natural materials like heavy cotton and wool that are not highly flammable. Attendance at a safety session is mandatory, and fire extinguishers are always on hand for emergencies. OPA! always has a member of the troop act as a fire spotter who watches in case something or someone catches on fire during a performance.

Lighting up is not only a form of entertainment for Kiosken and Whitman but a form of activism.


Members of OPA! recently constructed a large bee out of organic materials in support of the Colmena Collective; they believe in what the collective initiates. The Colmena, a Spanish word for hive, is a community center in Bellingham that encourages people to work collectively the same way bees work together in colonies.

Whitman burned the bee at Burning Man, an event in the Nevada desert that draws about 30,000 people of the pyrotechnic community. There are no spectators at Burning Man because everyone participates. Participants perform with fire, build art installations that are later burned or help construct the infrastructure of a small town that is later burned in the festivities.

Burning Man began in 1986 as part of the summer solstice celebration. At the first Burning Man, Larry Harvey, the founder of the event, constructed an eight-foot wooden man and burned it in front of a crowd of 20 in Baker Beach, San Francisco. Since 1986, both the man and the crowds have grown in size. In 2000 the burning man towered 50-feet over thousands of pyrotechnics in the event's new location at Black Rock Desert, Nev.

"It is kind of a post-apocalyptic version of Mardi Gras," Whitman said about the event.

The bee was taken to Burning Man not only as a political statement for the Colmena Collective but also as an environmental statement about the recent decline of pollinators, which are essential to our food supply.

"I think that fine art captures people's attention," Whitman says. "But by burning art and performing with fire people really recognize that things are finite, because fire is a temporary medium that is only there as long as the fuel lasts." 



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Christine Callan, trusting strangers with her life, follows jumpers off a bridge in a bungee jumping adventure. Photos courtesy of Anna Miller.

Slowly, she inches her toes towards the end of the ledge, every cell in her body rushing with adrenaline. She tries her hardest not to look down at the turbulent waves tossing and turning 140 feet below. Closing her eyes she takes a deep breath. "Just jump and it will all be over," she thinks to herself. No, she is not suicidal, although some may disagree. Shelby VanWinkle, 21, is just another thrill seeker who turns to bungee jumping for adventure.

"I wanted a rush," said Shelby VanWinkle, senior at Western.

The spelling is erratic – bungee, bungi, bungy. The vocabulary is new and multisyllabic – slingshotting, which refers to starting at the ground and being slung in an upward motion as opposed to the common jump; sandbagging – when more weight is added to the bungee cord for a more dramatic effect; bodydipping, which refers to jumping and going into water before coming back up, and vine-jumping – bungee jumping's original name.

The uniqueness of the terms associated with this thrilling sport is as unique as the people who partake in it. But its influence continues to spread and engage participants.

It wasn't until April 1979, however, when members of the Oxford University Dangerous Sport Club took it upon themselves to plummet off a bridge near Bristol, England. They were inspired after watching a film about "vine jumpers." This launched a new worldwide recreational activity-bungee jumping.

During the 1980s, the sport flourished in New Zealand and France and finally was brought to the United States by John and Peter Kockelman of California. In the 1990s the sport rapidly flourished as facilities sprung up all over the United States with cranes, towers, and hot-air balloons serving as launching-off points. Thousands now have experienced the "ultimate adrenaline rush."

"I always knew I'd do it but once we started driving to Canada I began getting nervous," VanWinkle said. "I asked the guy working there if he would be mad if I took a while and he said 'yes,' so I had to go for it."

Some think it's a dangerous sport and many speculate about the safety of bungee jumping.

It was banned in France after three deaths in 1989. The Australian government declared a hiatus after an accident in 1990. In summer 1992 the United States had a few bungee accidents that were given major media coverage.

"The activity is clearly safe," said Paul G. Menz, an author who has studied the physics of bungee jumping.

Most accidents can be traced back to human error such as improper attachment, a mismatch between cord and jumper, and miscalculating or misunderstanding the physics involved Menz said.

Carl Finocchiaro, a registered engineer professional, agrees with Menz. He operates Sky Tower Engineering Inc. and has been active in the sport for years.

"I have investigated many accidents and can confidently conclude that all are caused by human error and not faulty equipment," Finocchiaro said.

Finocchiaro is a charter member with the North American Bungee Association and is the original chairman of its safety committee.

The jumper gripping to the rope, which is cautioned against in instructions beforehand, can cause minor injuries, such as a skin burn.

"I like extreme sports," Amy Dahlgren, junior at Sehome High School said. Dahlgren, along with two friends, drove up to Tsawwassen, British Columbia, a quaint town approximately 14 miles across the U.S./Canadian border, to catch a ferry for Nanaimo, Canada – home of the Bungy Zone Adrenaline Centre. They planned on bungee jumping for the first time.

"I'm attracted to the intensity of it," Dahlgren said. "I like being

scared and it excites me because it's dangerous and I like challenging myself."

Dahlgren smiled sheepishly as she spoke about the adventure she would embark on, on this sunny Saturday afternoon. It was 9:25 a.m. This left the anxious girls plenty of time to grab coffee and breakfast at Starbucks before catching the 10:15 a.m. ferry to Duke Point, Nanaimo.

"I don't know if I will open my eyes or not," Dahlgren said.

Once at Duke Point, the three girls spotted a big white van with the Bungy Zone emblem on it and hurriedly jumped in and began asking questions.

"How high is the bridge? Does it hurt? Has anyone ever gotten injured or died?"

Matt, the van driver in his mid 20s, reassured them in his thick New Zealander accent. He sped along as the girls sat impatiently on the musty smelling, old tan leather interior of the van. Seatbelts were tightly fastened.

Not even 15 minutes later, the girls arrived at the entrance to the Adrenaline Centre which looked more like a luxury camping site lined with big, beautiful brown fences, similar to those outside a rustic cabin in the woods. The trees stood tall as the girls quickly jumped out of the van and began up the walkway.

Up ahead they could see stairs, many of them, one after another, all the way up to the large bridge made of bright, burly wood. They hesitantly pulled open the door of the log-cabin-like building where the office was and began filling out paperwork that allowed their lives to be vulnerably placed in the hands of absolute strangers.

"I wanted to do something crazy," Aird Holmin said. He and a friend, helicopter engineers for Vancouver Island Helicopter, were in Nanaimo for work and decided to take advantage of the playground available to them.

Holmin, with his thick glasses and straight-billed cap sitting a few inches too high on his head, did not look like a typical thrill seeker.

"I got dragged into it," he finally admitted.

This too was his first experience bungee jumping one of the three adrenaline adventures available at Bungy Zone.

Along with bungee jumping, Bungy Zone offers the "ultimate swing," an attraction that involves sitting on a ledge that mechanically drops out, swinging the rider in an exaggerated back and forth motion, a zipline and bungee jumps that get the jumper wet in the still river that calmly runs 140 feet below.

Amy and her friends watched as two others took a leap of faith, jumping headfirst towards the water. Finally, Amy and one of her two friends were next. The two girls handed over their daypacks and cameras to the third girl who had come along to witness this fearful event. She gladly stood behind and became a self-employed photographer.

As Amy and her friend started up the stairs, hearts began to race and words of disbelief were spoken.

"What the heck am I thinking," Amy's friend said.

Once at the top of the enormous bridge, the girls were greeted by two men who would instruct them on what to do. Frightened of heights, Amy enthusiastically volunteered her friend to go first. Her friend sat down on a bench and one of the men began to wrap her feet tightly with a towel.

"You promise this will hold me," the friend asked.

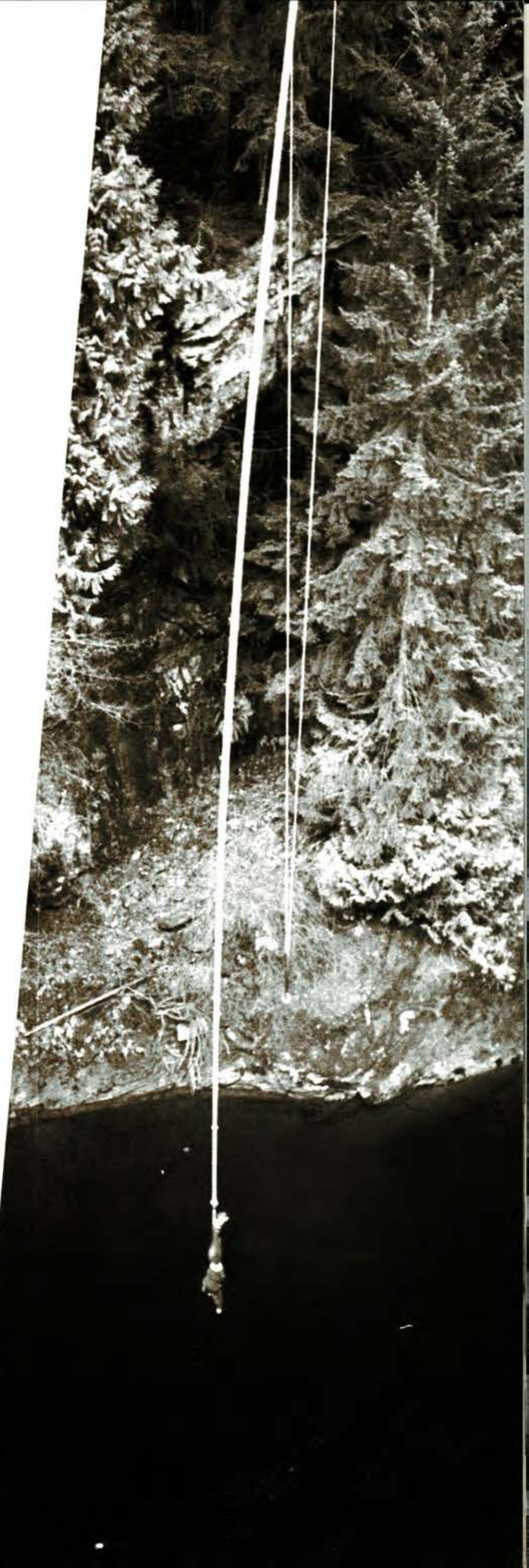
"I promise," said the man. He had a tinge of confidence in his voice that allowed the girls to relax a little bit. The man was wearing a New York Yankees hat and had sunglasses on as if to hide his identity.

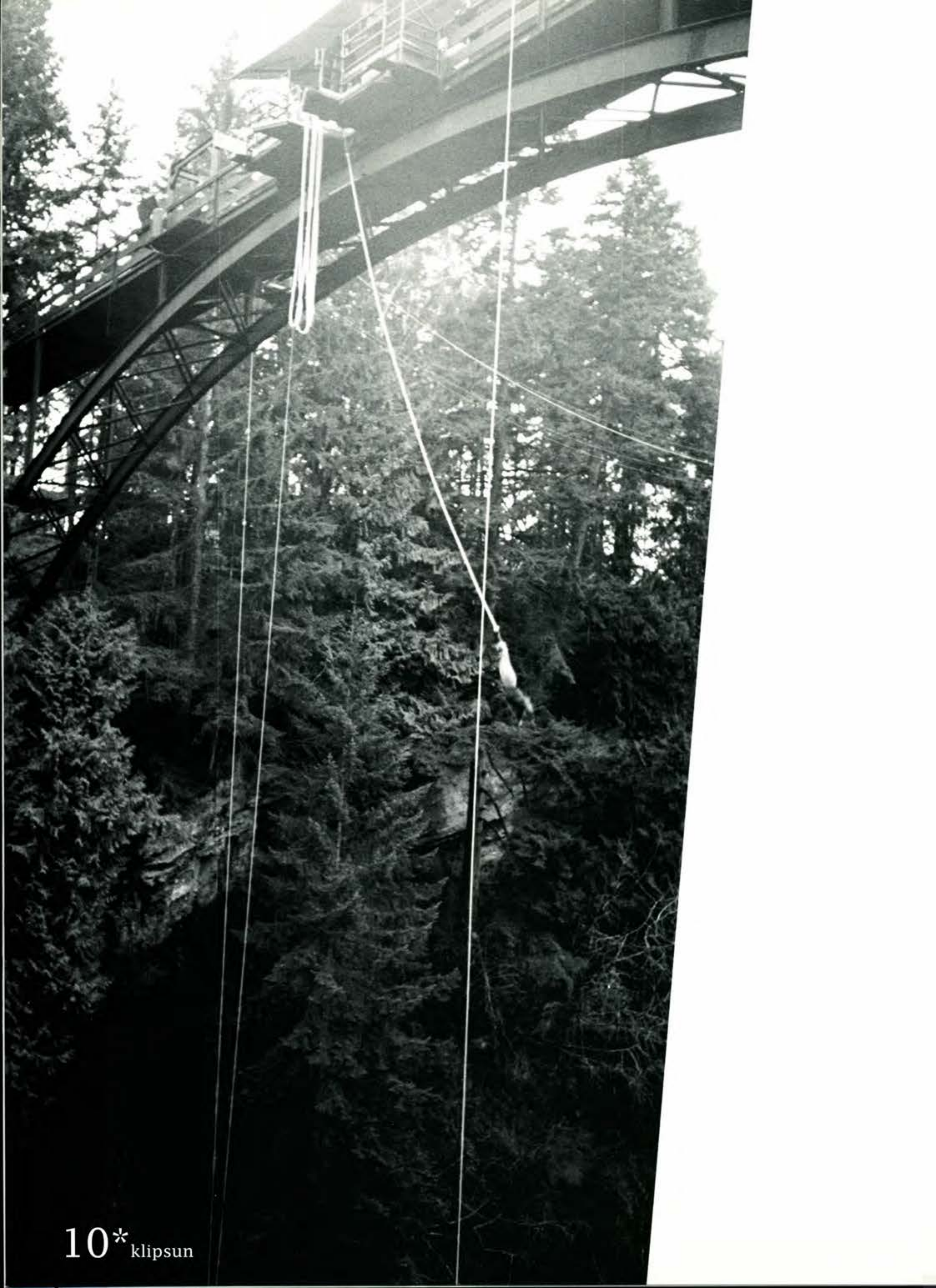
After wrapping her feet in two towels and two seatbelt like "strands," the man asked how it felt and she reluctantly told him that it was tight. He then directed her towards a heavy-set guy sporting a Bungy Zone T-shirt. He connected her to a bungee cord and helped her inch her way out on a ledge.

"Don't think about it," the man said confidently. "The longer you stand here the less fun you will have. You just have to jump."

Once at the edge the girl took a deep breath.

"I'm going to say one-two-three-bungee and after three you jump. OK?" the man said.





10* klipsun

"Oh geez," she said. "Here goes nothing."

Next thing she knew the man's words began to vibrate throughout her head.

"ONE-TWO-THREE-BUNGEE."

Off she went, plummeting towards the water until the give of the rubber rope caught and sent her sailing back up into the air, as if she had just been shot out of a cannon. This motion continued several times until she finally came to a halt.

A man in a little blow-up raft rowed towards the girl to help her come down. He steadied her until he could undo the bungee cord from her feet.

Now it was Amy's turn to go. She stood up there, wishing she had gone first, and cooperated as the man with little identity prepared her for the jump. A look of absolute terror came over her face as she asked a couple questions and inched her way towards the edge.

Once again "ONE-TWO-THREE-BUNGEE," rang out throughout the canyon as Amy launched herself forward leaving all of her fears behind.

"It wasn't worth being that scared," Amy said, as she re-counted the event to her friends. "It was so much fun and I wish I could do it again without being scared."

Just then Fiona Cox-Jansen, owner of Bungy Zone, came ambling through the door.

"Well, what did ya think?" she said excitedly in her thick New Zealander accent.

Fiona was a short, spunky, blonde haired lady, probably in her early thirties who had spent a good portion of the morning going in and out of the door that led to the bridge, making sure jumpers were ready, weighed, and set to jump. Either that or she was inside the plush, log-cabin-like office, pacing as she spoke on her hot-pink telephone to customers calling for information.

She spoke to the girls as she rewound videotapes of jumps from earlier that day.

"What are the oldest and youngest people who have jumped here?" Amy asked curiously.

"The oldest is 92 and the youngest is 10," Cox-Jansen said. "John Brown, who was the original owner of Bungy Zone, came up here in 1994 to visit from New Zealand but ended up staying. He traveled 50,000 kilometers throughout British Columbia to find a perfect canyon that was right off the highway where he could build his bungee facility. He found this location, worked for five years, and spent a total of \$1 million building this bridge," she said. "I bought it from him a year and a half ago."

She continued to pace back and forth doing minute tasks and fiddling with the video equipment.

"We did six people at once on a jump that was done for the MTV series 'Road Rules,'" Cox-Jansen said. "We had a married couple that took their vows on the ledge and right after they said, 'I do,' they jumped, wedding clothes and all."

"Have you had any famous people jump here?" Amy inquired.

"Famous people usually have something in their contract that says they cannot bungee jump, skydive or do things of this nature," Cox-Jansen said. "So no we haven't."

The girls tried their hardest to sit still, but it was not an easy task after having adrenaline take over their bodies. Instead, they just stood and watched as the next couple paced back and forth nervously smoking cigarettes while trying to mentally prepare themselves for the jump. They would soon join the hundreds of thousands who crave adrenaline, and satisfy that craving with bungee jumping.

Amy and the girls sat as people began to fill the office of this thrill-seekers paradise. At 2:45 p.m. Cox-Jansen would drive them back to the ferry terminal in her white Jeep Cherokee Sport, where they would catch the ferry back to Tsawwassen.

"One word of advice for all bungee jumpers," Amy said in hindsight. "Tuck your shirt in and wear Spandex." ❖

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Afternoon sun filters through the dining room window, warming the room as five friends sit drinking lemon herbal tea. They lift steaming mugs for a toast and sing “Happy Birthday” before taking bites of the white-frosted cake. This is another meeting of old friends – a time to celebrate, to laugh and to share stories of the past.

Each member of this group suffers from Alzheimer’s or brain injury and they have something else in common – they come to the house not to receive help for their illness, but to offer it.

“What a treat,” says an 83-year-old woman with Alzheimer’s who visits every Monday. It’s not often they get homemade birthday cake for an afternoon snack. She pushes a strand of her gray, curly hair aside and smiles as she finishes the last bite of cake and one more sip of tea.

Her 76-year-old friend gathers the mugs. The two debate who will get to wash them as she walks into the kitchen, laughing and eager to help.

The cozy dwelling is the home of Country Comfort Adult Day Program, a non-profit organization in Ferndale. Operated by two staff members, the program offers seven adults a place to spend time together in a warm, friendly environment. Since its opening in May 2000, Country Comfort has served older adults and their caregivers who live north of Bellingham.

Clients live with either Alzheimer’s, traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis or strokes and most are referred from the Northwest Regional Council.

Co-director Lovi Jungblom runs the program out of her one-story home in Ferndale. Except for the Country Comfort sign and a wheelchair ramp outside, the home looks like any other home. A welcome sign guides guests past its small yard surrounded by plants and colorful flowers.

Inside Jungblom sits on her blue living room couch with her pet chihuahua, Topper, in her lap. Comfortable couches, salmon-colored walls and floral curtains give the room a sense of warmth. A 76-year-old woman with Alzheimer’s sits next to Jungblom relaxing her feet in pink, fuzzy slippers. Because she comes to the program five days a week, she feels at home here.

Many times people will put their feet up and take naps in the recliner after lunch, says Co-director Megan Brown.

“People begin to feel quite laid back relatively quickly,” she says. “I think Lovi in particular has a knack for making people feel at home. She has the gift of hospitality.”

Country Comfort is the only adult day program in a residence in Whatcom County. Jungblom says she started the program because the area lacked a diversity of adult day programs.

“Sometimes it’s difficult for people to be in a big setting or in a building,” she says. “When coming to someone’s house, you’re coming to visit and see a new friend.”

Adult day care services like Country Comfort enable families of older persons to obtain relief from constant care and provide older persons time to interact with others.

Country Comfort is unlike many adult day programs, such as medically based Adult Day Health at St. Joseph Hospital. This is because of Country Comfort’s small, home-like atmosphere and its focus on social activities such as arts and crafts, mild exercise and meal sharing.

Jungblom says most clients don’t realize the house is host to a program because they do not realize they need help, she says. They see it as a place to have fun with friends and help with chores. When visiting, the older women say they’re “coming to see the girls,” she says.

“They’re not clients to me anymore,” she says. “They’re more like friends. It’s really like a second family.”

Brown's 5-year-old son Evan attends the program two days a week, which adds to the program's casual family feel. Overall this has been a positive experience because he and the women interact.

The 76-year-old woman sitting next to Jungblom says she raised seven children of her own, and enjoys helping to watch Brown's son when he visits.

In addition to "seeing the girls," many clients enjoy washing the dishes, cooking or dusting. Helping in the house makes each person feel important and able to give back, Jungblom says.

"They do help each other," she says. "Each client has the ability to help. They like coming here because it's like a friend's home."

Each individual contributes depending on his or her interests. One 35-year-old man, who suffers from TBI, used to be a chef. He and Jungblom often flip through cookbooks to find new recipes. He loves to cook for others, she says, and even enjoys making snacks for Jungblom's two teenage children. His favorite dishes are desserts, and they once made chocolate-frosted brownies sprinkled with powdered sugar.

She says everyone loves to eat his homemade desserts, which makes him happy to do something he loves and share it with others.

"We're able to individualize the program around them," she says. "All the clients like to participate in any way they can."

The program is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Some people come everyday, while others come only once per week. The program's goal is to empower and equip elders and caregivers for productive living and positive relationships.

"That's where day programs become really important — so that caregivers can have respite — a break for the caregiver, and also a place for the care receiver to go," Jungblom says. "It's an extra stimulation outside of the home, to be in a different environment and to do different things."

Jungblom says the program is fortunate that everyone gets along well.

"They like doing the same types of things," she says. "Not only do they socialize with us, they socialize with each other."

Brown and her 85-year-old friend decide to work on a new craft. They walk into the dining room, Brown holding a plastic box under her arm.

The older woman begins to talk about one of her six sisters who loves to sew. She, on the other hand, loves to knit and says, "I've made baby sweaters galore."

Brown smiles and begins sorting through patches of cloth. The two try to untangle different piles of colored thread, stretching some strands clear across the room. The woman tells more stories from her past, sometimes repeating them several times, including a time she borrowed skates from a little Irish boy who lived down the street from her in New York. This little boy, she says, later became her husband.

Speaking in a soft voice, the friend leans in and touches Brown's arm, bragging about her handsome grandson who is a teacher. Her eyes sparkling with pride.

Her small body hunches as she rests her head in her hand, gazing up with a smile. She laughs, saying this is how young girls in class look at her grandson when he teaches.

Clasping her hands together, she jokingly reminisces about how wonderful and happy her childhood was.

The women's childhood stories are more prominent than recent events because of the effect Alzheimer's has on short-term memory. These are the stories they share, which Jungblom says is very important.

"A lot of their life is now in their childhood," Jungblom says. "I think that's the most important thing that we can do is listen to their stories, learn from the stories. They are very enjoyable."

As the two leave the dining room, they ask if anyone wants to take a walk. Getting up from the couch, one woman removes her pink, fuzzy slippers and puts on her shoes to join them. Two women walk hand-in-hand.

"It's so good that we have a nice place to come. We're so lucky," one of them remarks.

Jungblom says she can tell they are happy by the way they respond and their excitement for returning.

"When people are leaving and want to come back, I feel like I made a difference," she says. "I know I provided a day they enjoyed. It maybe gave a little bit to their life that they didn't get before." ❖

"I think that's the most important thing that we can do is listen to their stories, learn from the stories. They are very enjoyable."

Rather than being surrounded by medical staff and hospital food, Country Comfort provides elderly with Alzheimer's and other health disabilities a friendly alternative. Katrina Magadan sits in the cozy home as clients sip tea and share memories. Photos by Chris Goodenow.

healing hospitality



ONE wet ride

With miles of challenging rapids, Northwest rivers are magnets for white-water kayakers.

Andrew Linth follows several local thrill-seekers into the wet, turbulent waters.

Photos by Chris Goodenow.

They hear its unharnessed power long before they see it. Thundering through the woods on a predictable path to the Pacific Ocean, its liquid mass rolls boulders, carries trees and floats the craziest thrill-seekers willing to ride its rapids.

After a quick road trip in the familiar Washington drizzle, four whitewater craving kayakers can't wait to hit the raging rapids of the Chilliwack River just miles north of the Washington-Canada border. For them, rain means water and water means rapids.

At the Chilliwack, the paddlers change quickly into their skin tight neoprene wet suits, booties, spray skirts, lifejackets and helmets before lifting their multi-colored plastic kayaks and paddles to their shoulders. After double checking each other's gear, they are on their way to the raging river's edge.

SPLISH, SPLASH, SPLUSH! The paddlers drop their kayaks into the near-freezing, swift-moving water and secure themselves inside the hulls of their vessels. As they drift into the swirling cur-

rents and disappear downstream, hysterical laughter and yelps fill the air before the river's monotone rumble drowns them out.


At 22, Alasia Heinritz has been whitewater kayaking for seven years. She is currently ranked No. 9 in the nation for slalom whitewater kayaking, and has competed in nationals for the past five years. Heinritz is also a certified instructor who offers her training services through Paddle Masters in Bellingham.

Heinritz's love for paddling rapids pulled her from the seasonal rivers of Colorado and brought her to the whitewater rivers of northwestern Washington in 1998.


"Out here it's fabulous because you get a spring flood and a winter flood, which is awesome. So basically, you can paddle all year round," Heinritz says.

Hundreds of kayakers disappear down the turbulent currents of the Chilliwack, Nooksack and Skykomish rivers year round. Each are inviting destinations where kayakers can put their paddling skills to the ultimate test.

Aggressively paddling through frothy rapids with agility, grace and endurance, these whitewater junkies instinctively navigate their plastic crafts and fragile bodies through a series of obstacles that seems impossible.



"The first time you drop a waterfall
you get an **out-of-control** rush,
there is so much adrenaline."



With boulder gardens, fallen trees, holes, ledges, waterfalls and the river as primary obstacles, it's amazing these river runners go home fully intact with nothing more than a wet head, tired arms and a bruised backside.

"In this area you always have to watch out for trees," Heinritz says.

The Chilliwack River is one of many rivers that adrenaline-craving kayakers in Bellingham and the surrounding region frequently paddle.

"It's the best slalom course I think I've ever paddled. It's class four and really super rocky. So, it's really technical and when the water is high it is really super pushy and swirly," she says. "The Chilliwack is super cool."

Most of Heinritz's northwestern experiences have been on the Chilliwack where she frequently paddles the "pushy and swirly" course perfecting her technique.

For the past five years Heinritz has been on the water twice per day, seven days per week practicing her

stroke for her next competition.

"I work on it a lot and I am picky about it as well because you have to be if you want to be fast," she says.

River rapids are classified by water level and obstructions found in the water. According to the "American Whitewater Affiliation," Class I rivers consist of fast-moving water with small waves and few obstacles. These rivers are great for beginners. Class II rapids have mild rapids with clear wide channels and some obstacles, which require maneuvering, but are easily missed. Class III rivers have moderate irregular waves, ledges and holes; these rivers are ideal for the intermediate kayaker. Class IV rivers present powerful predictable rapids and Class III obstacles. Only advanced paddlers should paddle these rivers. Class V and VI rivers are for professionals. They are extremely unpredictable and dangerous.

"Class I and II rapids are usually what I am going to teach lessons on, and that is pretty mellow. River running is like Class III and IV rapids, and I look at creeking as something that is going to be Class V or VI rapids," Heinritz says.

For local paddlers

looking for something a little closer to home, the middle fork of the Nooksack River, off the Mount Baker Highway is a great, quick run. It is a frequently paddled river in the Bellingham area.

"It's like the after-school run," Christian Knight, 24 says.

Knight started running the Cascade rivers on log rafts at age 12 and is a familiar face among Washington's kayaking community today.

"Way before I got into kayaking, my brother and I used to hike through the woods and build rafts out of logs and tie them together with twine. Then we sailed them down the Skagit River," Knight says.

Today, Knight is known for paddling some of Cascade range's most extreme river waters.

Steep creeking, a form of kayaking that only the best whitewater paddlers participate in, is Knight's specialty.

"Steep creeking is just waterfalls, steep rapids and ledges, with usually low volume type water, but really steep with lots of rocks and holes," he says.

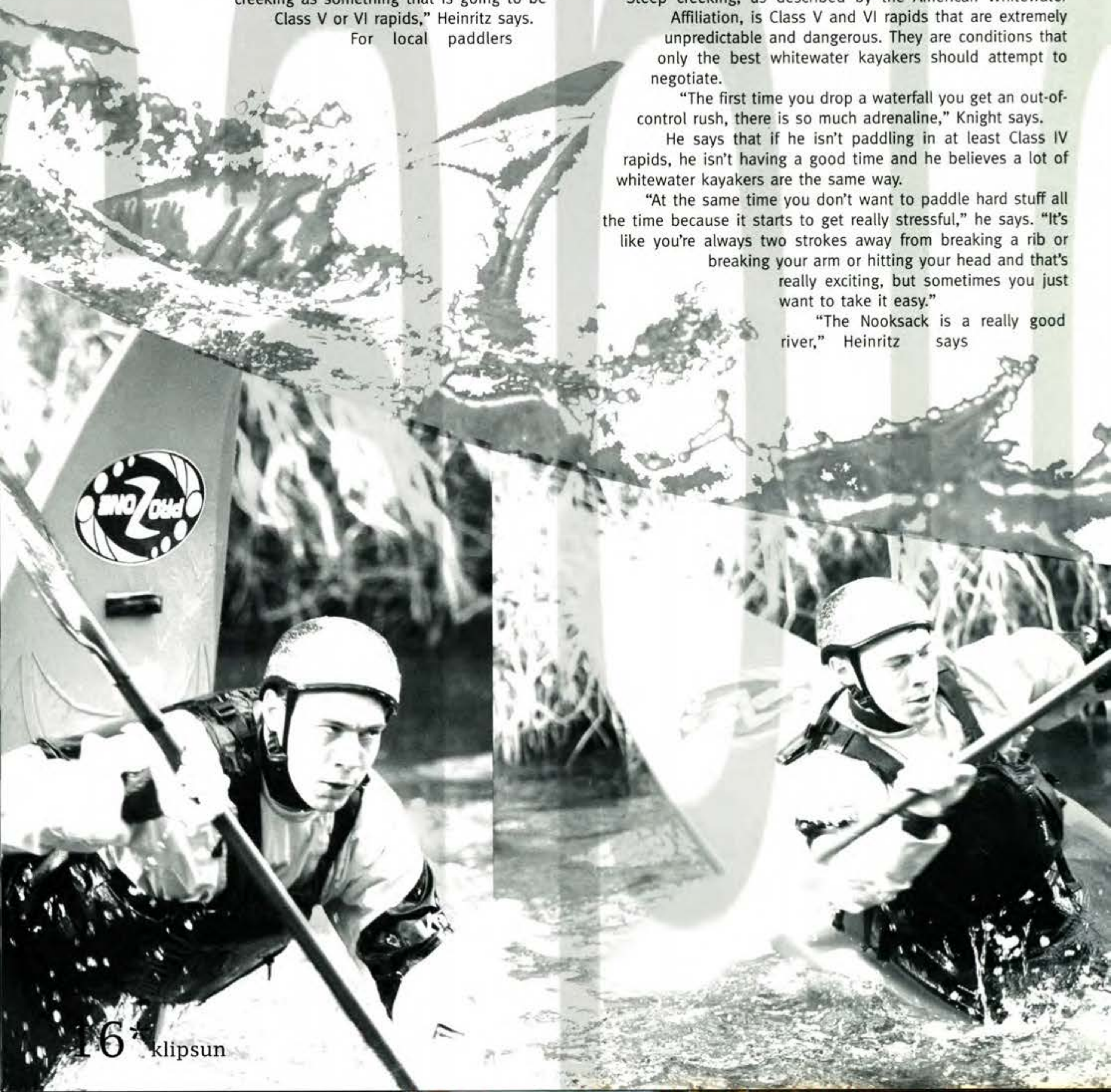
Steep creeking, as described by the American Whitewater Affiliation, is Class V and VI rapids that are extremely unpredictable and dangerous. They are conditions that only the best whitewater kayakers should attempt to negotiate.

"The first time you drop a waterfall you get an out-of-control rush, there is so much adrenaline," Knight says.

He says that if he isn't paddling in at least Class IV rapids, he isn't having a good time and he believes a lot of whitewater kayakers are the same way.

"At the same time you don't want to paddle hard stuff all the time because it starts to get really stressful," he says. "It's like you're always two strokes away from breaking a rib or breaking your arm or hitting your head and that's really exciting, but sometimes you just want to take it easy."

"The Nooksack is a really good river," Heinritz says



"It has a really mellow Class II section, then there is the race course section, which has Class III rapids all the way through the canyon, and above that there is some really nice drops."

"If you're a strong Class III boater just breaking in and you want to do something harder like creeking, the Nooksack is a really good place to go because it is short and you can run it three times in an hour," she says.

For whitewater fiends willing to travel south for a shot at some of the fastest water in western Washington, the Skykomish River is an hour and a half south of Bellingham.

"The Skykomish is probably one of the best areas in the United States, maybe even the world, for creek boating and especially for waterfalling," Knight says. "To my knowledge, there are probably 12 Class III to V runs all with in a half hour of each other."

Knight has done his fair share of exploring the Skykomish River, and has found a number of creeks himself, that a vast group of kayakers use today.

"There is tons of stuff up there. It's unbelievable," he says.

With three years experience, Knight and two other paddlers set out to run Silver Creek, a tributary of the Skykomish. They located the creek on a topographical map and decided to run it without scouting it first. Knight came to a nine-foot waterfall and dropped it. As he broke the horizon line, he realized there was an enormous hole waiting for him at the bottom.

"I ran it deep, but the wall in front of me was undercut," Knight says.

The nose of Knight's kayak became jammed under the wall, which was underwater. Knight was trundled beneath the river's frothy surface for several minutes before the river spit him out.

"For the first time I felt the thrusts of the water, and it was freaking powerful," he says. "I thought I was going to drown."

"The first time you get a little cocky, the river spansks you hard," Knight says.

"To be able to be a kayaker, you have to be able to be comfortable being underwater," Heinritz says. "If you can't take rolling over inside a boat than you shouldn't do it. Being able to roll takes patience and comfort while being in a boat underwater."

"I would say you need an instructor for sure. Ninety-nine out of a hundred people aren't going to be able to learn to roll by themselves," Knight says.

The Bellingham Aquatic Center is open to kayakers who wish to work on perfecting their roll. This facility is open to kayakers from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A \$3.50 admission fee is required before entering the pool.

Heinritz knows from personal experience that there are a lot of dangers and challenges on the river, so it is important for beginners to practice with someone whom they feel comfortable with.

"When I first started I had a really nasty swim. I broke my paddle and had to get 12 stitches in my lip," Heinritz says.

Heinritz was left on the wrong side of the river during this accident and was later ferried across to the other side by a passing raft.

"I couldn't get back in my boat," she says. "I freaked out."

For Bellingham locals, Whatcom Falls Park offers a flat-water slalom course located near the fish hatchery that is open to everybody seven days per week.

When water is being released from the dam, a mild current is produced, which makes it a nice place to practice eddy turns, while giving beginners an opportunity to feel the water's current, Heinritz says.

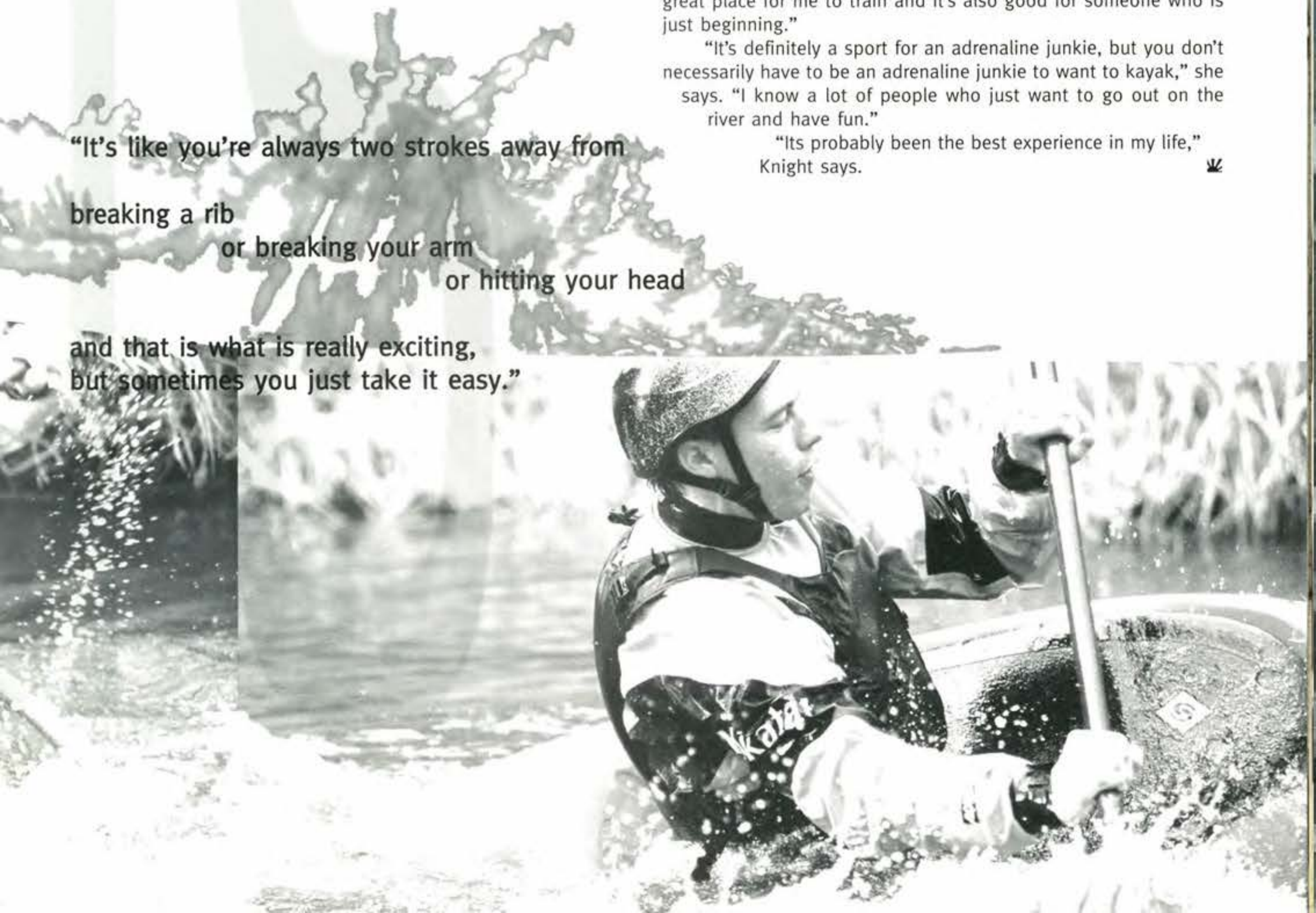
"It's a great place to go and practice," Heinritz says. "It's a great place for me to train and it's also good for someone who is just beginning."

"It's definitely a sport for an adrenaline junkie, but you don't necessarily have to be an adrenaline junkie to want to kayak," she says. "I know a lot of people who just want to go out on the river and have fun."

"It's probably been the best experience in my life," Knight says. ✦

"It's like you're always two strokes away from breaking a rib or breaking your arm or hitting your head

and that is what is really exciting, but sometimes you just take it easy."



a NW breed of SURF

Frigid water and gray skies don't deter some hardcore Northwest surfers. **Grant Brissey** suits up and paddles out to explore surfing at Washington coast's Westport.

Snow falls from the dull gray February sky as the first surfer hits the water in The Cove outside Westport, Wash. Just before high tide, the waves begin breaking. Today they are big — seven to eight feet. The 20 or 30 surfers that eventually follow into the surf break are dressed similar to the first, covered head-to-toe in five-millimeter thick, black-hooded wetsuits.

Few consider surfing a possibility in Washington state but to the determined like Western graduate Keith Robinson, the frigid water, dark skies and remote beaches are hardly a deterrent to the search for surfable waves on the Washington coast.

Robinson is one of an elite few who are reaping the benefits of one of Washington's best-kept secrets — its surf.

A California native, Robinson moved to Bellingham in 1996. Initially attracted by Western and Mount Baker, he said he knew he could surf in Washington, though not as often as he had in California.

"I came here for school, but I knew Washington had surf if you were willing to look for it," he said. "The surf is farther away, which is good, because there are less people fighting over the same wave."

Carter Turk, of Carter's Carving Edge in Bellingham, said he agrees that the solitude of Washington's coast is one of the things that makes the surf so appealing as opposed to surfing somewhere warmer like California.

In his small shop just off Sunset Drive in Bellingham, Turk tilts back in his stool and props up his sandled feet to talk about the particulars of surfing in the evergreen state.

The walls of the tiny white shop are lined with boards for all types of terrain. The shop sits 100 feet from the main thoroughfare to Mount Baker. Originally a Mount Baker regular, Turk now surfs more often.

"I haven't been up (to Mount Baker) all year," he said.

Turk escapes to the coast to enjoy the hidden surf areas on the peninsula and surrounding spots like Vancouver Island, B.C., and the Oregon coast.

"When I think of (surfing) in California, I think of a beach next to a highly traveled freeway with a huge population on the other side that can wake up and look across to see if the waves are any good," Turk said.

He said he feels the remoteness of Washington's surf havens is beneficial because it keeps the crowds to a minimum.

"Nobody likes a crowd, but it's really a problem in the water when you have too many people all trying to drop in on the same wave," he said. "I'd rather surf some bunk waves and be by myself than surf good waves with 30 other people."

"Here you have to be really willing to go a long distance (to surf) — you have to really want it."

The effort often pays off. Those who hunt little-known surfable beaches sometimes have the waves all to themselves.

"Certain times of the year you can go and there'll be almost nobody there," Turk said. "That's the real beauty of it — the serenity of it all."

The solitude offers other rewards for the Washington surfer. "One time we surfed with gray whales," Turk said. "It was pretty amazing paddling out and being 20 to 25 feet away from such a large whale — the stench of the blowhole was something else."

Weather can also be a factor — winter brings bigger waves than the other seasons. Turk said that sometimes winter waves can be too big.

Robinson said he often checks the conditions such as the wave swell direction and wind direction on the Internet before leaving on a surfing trek.

"One of the biggest problems with weather in Washington — it's too windy a lot of the time, so it gets blown out," Robinson said.

FER



Photos courtesy of Mike Wheeler, Ross Fenton, Grant Brissey.

Wind also affects the air temperature, sometimes spoiling a surfer's relaxing rest while waiting for a good set of waves.

Water temperature only fluctuates about six or seven degrees from summer to winter, Turk said.

"The only difference is really the outside temperature," he said. "The wetsuit technology is so these days that you can stay out there three-plus hours."

There are, however, less expensive ways to keep an older wetsuit efficient in cold.

"I'm not one to pee in my wetsuit, but some people do that to keep warm," Turk said.

He said that despite all the talk about the solitude of Washington surf, he has seen the number of Washington surfers increase exponentially in the last few years.





He said he remembers when the presence of surfers on the peninsula went so unnoticed that they could camp almost anywhere without being hassled.

In more recent years, the local authorities around surf areas are less accommodating. Turk recalls a time when Westport police woke him at two in the morning and told him to pack up camp and find an appropriate place to sleep.

"You used to just be able to sleep at the cove," he said.

The cove is a central point for surfing just outside of Westport.

Once a bustling resource town, Westport was home to Aberdeen sawmill workers during the turn of the century, said Bob Pitzer, director of the Westport Maritime Museum. When the region's logging industry slowed around the 1940s, commercial and sport-fishing industry picked up, but diminished returns slowed this industry as well, said Pitzer.

Westport now focuses its economy on tourism. Airing late-night travel commercials around the Pacific Northwest, the residents of Westport tout their town as a destination haven for the region. One of Westport's biggest draws is its surf.

"(The town) is a good attraction for surfers," said Pitzer.

"Surfing is something that everybody down here doesn't mind."

"The town knows they need the surfers," said Rob Brown, owner of The Board Factory, in Westport, from behind the bar of

"Nobody likes a crowd, but it's really a problem in the water when you have too many people all trying to drop in on the same wave. I'd rather surf some bunk waves and be by myself than surf good waves with 30 other people."

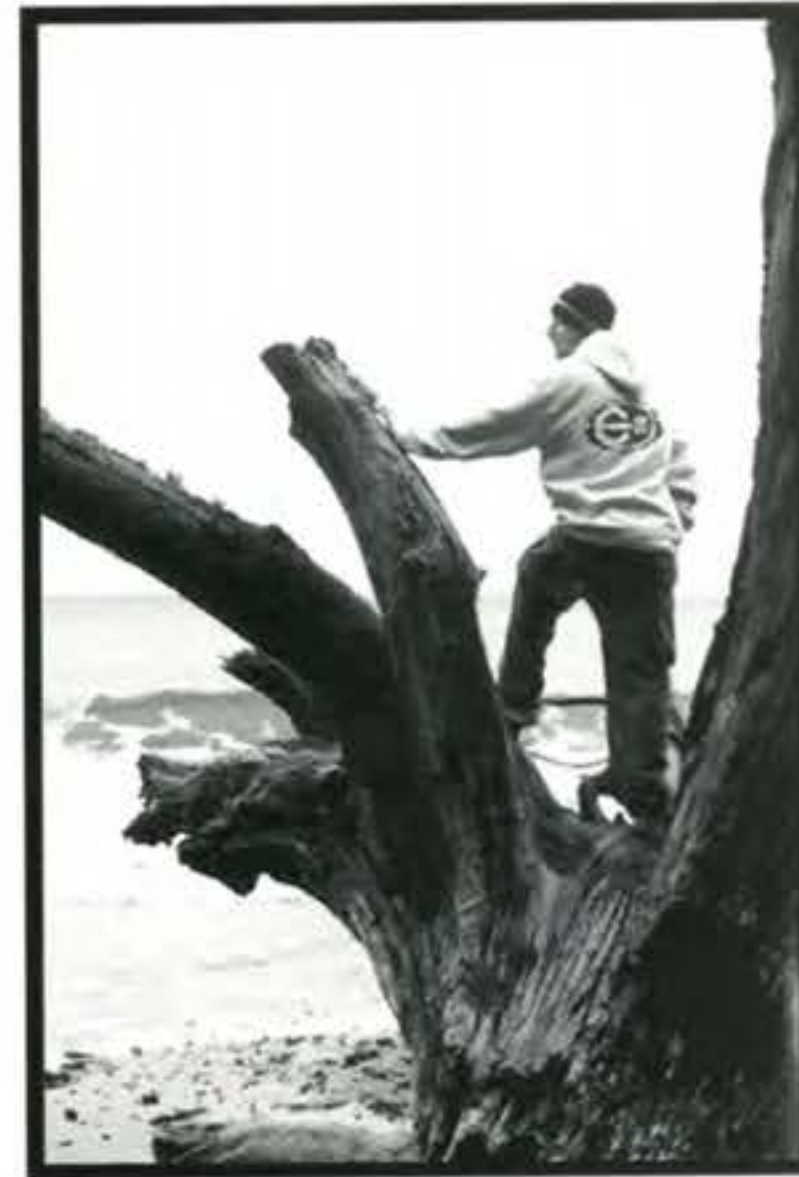
his new coffeehouse next to The Board Factory.

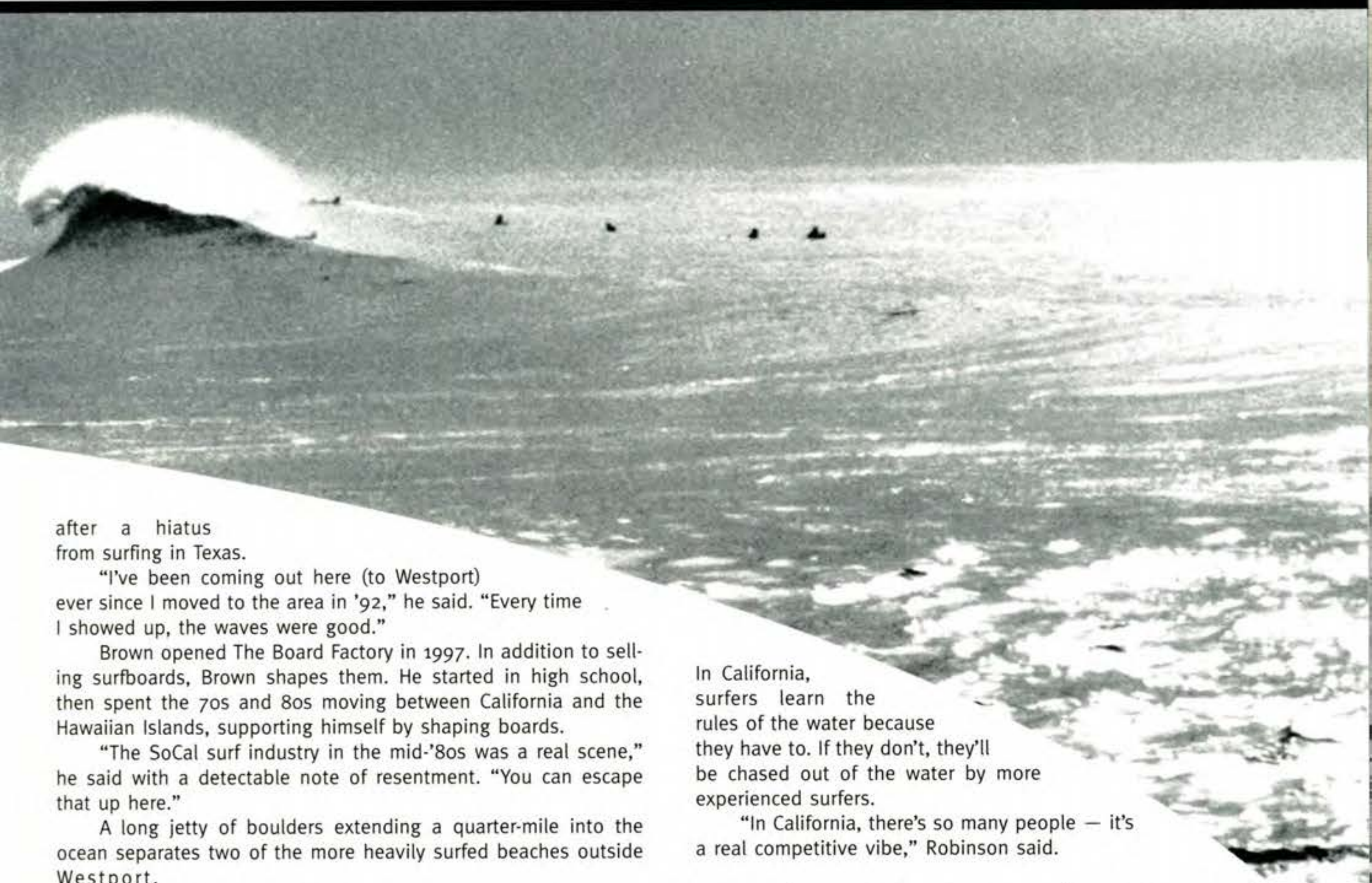
"Surfing and golfing make more money around here than flying kites," joked a local sitting at the end of the bar.

Brown said that during the winter months, the surfing community reduces to a core few.

"There's a crew of about 12 of us that surf all the time," he said. "In November through February I could close the shop and actually save money."

Brown began visiting the peninsula in the early 1990's





after a hiatus from surfing in Texas.

"I've been coming out here (to Westport) ever since I moved to the area in '92," he said. "Every time I showed up, the waves were good."

Brown opened The Board Factory in 1997. In addition to selling surfboards, Brown shapes them. He started in high school, then spent the 70s and 80s moving between California and the Hawaiian Islands, supporting himself by shaping boards.

"The SoCal surf industry in the mid-'80s was a real scene," he said with a detectable note of resentment. "You can escape that up here."

A long jetty of boulders extending a quarter-mile into the ocean separates two of the more heavily surfed beaches outside Westport.

Surfers float silently on their boards about 100

feet offshore, watching the wave sets roll in. They wait patiently for the right one. Seagulls drift in the air above the beach, at times seeming motionless as they point themselves into the strong north wind. Falling snow has regressed back to a heavy rain.

A promising set appears and several surfers turn the noses of their boards to the shore and paddle hard. One stops short as the first wave rolls underneath him. The wave breaks behind another surfer who springs into a crouching position on his board and rides the wave in for about a half minute. The wave loses power to propel him farther, and he jumps off as it curls and closes out.

The waves crashing against the sandy beach on one side of the jetty are often breaking and ridable, depending on what direction the wind is blowing.

On a given weekend, if the surf breaks, surfers travel from all over Washington to Westport to more remote locations further up the peninsula.

Surf spots along the peninsula host a handful of locals, but the majority of surfers come from out of town.

"Most of the surfers in Washington are either snowboarders that decided to try surfing or old-school guys," Robinson said.

In Washington, time logged surfing on a beach can mean wave right-of-way. This differs from surfing in other regions, said Robinson, where the surfer's position in the water decides who takes the next wave.

In California, surfers learn the rules of the water because they have to. If they don't, they'll be chased out of the water by more experienced surfers.

"In California, there's so many people — it's a real competitive vibe," Robinson said.

"Here you have to be really willing to go a long distance - you have to really want it."

In more recent years, when conditions are right, more well-known Washington spots like Westport can get

overcrowded with people who haven't been around long enough to understand the unwritten laws of surfing the waves.

"The summer I first moved up here — that's when it seems like it really started to blow up — a guy dropped in on a wave in front of me and burned me," Robinson said. He explained that would never happen elsewhere.

"One thing about Washington surfing is that it's all about the weekend warrior," said Robinson. "You could go to any break on a weekday and have the whole place to yourself." ♪





Extreme

How to live is a personal choice. **Melissa Child** explores a subculture that turns away from a lifestyle of drugs, alcohol and promiscuous sex. Photos by Chris Fuller

*I'm a person just like you, But I've got better things to do.
Than sit around and fuck my head, Hang out with the living dead
Snort white shit up my nose, Pass out at the shows. I don't even think
about speed, That's something I just don't need
I've got the straight edge.*

Copyright 1981
"Straight Edge"
Minor Threat

These lyrics by early 1980s hardcore/punk rock band Minor Threat epitomize a philosophy for living among an entire youth subculture known as straight edge. Minor Threat drummer, Jeff Nelson, supposedly coined the term straight edge while using a wooden ruler to design a poster for a show. He commented to bandmates that the ruler's straight edge was a metaphor for their lifestyle; a lifestyle that now influences people across the globe including Europe, Canada, Australia and the United States.

According to the lyrics, straight edge, commonly symbolized as sXe, represents a life devoted to self-control and well-being. It is the only youth counter-culture movement to discourage drug and alcohol use, nicotine and promiscuous sex.

In the 80s when cocaine and other hard drugs were popular, and AIDS became widely recognized, hardcore musicians such as Minor Threat introduced a new lifestyle through song. Straight edgers found support in each other and a philosophy that promoted not only safer living and control over body and mind, but also the security of brotherhood and sisterhood.

E.J. Bastien, 20, of Bellingham, was 13 when he discovered straight edge. He was attending his first concert of a punk band called Undertow when he noticed people throughout the room with Xs on their hands.

Initially, at all-ages shows, minors were marked with a black X on their hand so they couldn't buy alcohol. At this show Bastien discovered the people marked with an X weren't necessarily minors, but a group of people dedicated to living a more pure lifestyle. It had become the straight edge symbol for those who discouraged drinking.

Two years later, Bastien decided he would commit to straight edge.

"I had experimented before," Bastien said. "I smoked pot, got drunk. And I know that people see the fun in it but I've also seen the horrible effects it has on people around me. Already having that back-



Abstinence

ground, and then experiencing what it's like to get drunk – the negatives far outweigh the positives.”

Many people become straight edge for the same reason. Some also commit because they were raised in an alcoholic family, while others simply relate to the straight edge values. Some never want to experience a life influenced by substances.

But what is the difference between straight edge and someone who is just substance free?

Corey Long, 20, of Bellingham, said the hardcore/punk rock scene that straight edge evolved from is stereotypically associated with drug and alcohol abuse. He explained as burned-out hardcore musicians cleaned up their lifestyles, they wrote songs about it, influencing the straight edge movement.

A fan of hardcore music, Long said five years ago he discovered the straight edge philosophy directly from Minor Threat's song, "Straight Edge." He said he didn't devote himself to it during high school because it was easier to just follow the crowd.

After a few years in college, Long realized that, like Bastien, he didn't see anything worthwhile or productive about the party lifestyle. Now he conveys the straight edge message on stage through his own bands' lyrics.

Bastien said to be straight edge, people don't have to like hardcore music, but should at least have knowledge of it and how straight edge came from it. He said people might claim to be straight edge because it coincides with their religious beliefs but true straight edgers commit for themselves, not for God.

For some, straight edge is also a political movement against industries that sell and promote addictive products such as nicotine and alcohol.

“We're not going to support our own death. It's the punk rock ethic — doing things for yourself, not wanting to have to rely on some company to feed us something we're addicted to.”

“We're not going to support our death,” Bastien said. “It's the punk rock ethic – doing things for yourself, not wanting to have to rely on some company to feed us something we're addicted to.”

Bastien's friend, Dan Mohtiak, 24, of Bellingham, has been straight edge for nine years. Mohtiak agrees that considering oneself straight edge makes a political statement.

“People also see it as a social network, people they can hang out with,” he said. “For example, a lot of people need that to get through the college years where drinking and partying is so much a part of the experience.”

Mohtiak recalls reading an article about straight edge in one of his sister's magazines when he was 12 years old. He said the article stuck with him and at 15, straight edge became his tool against peer pressure. At an age of depressed self-confidence, it wasn't easy to avoid pressure from his friends to start drinking

alcohol. But like a poster advertising his values, labeling himself straight edge made those situations a lot easier to avoid.

“I had all these friends that wanted me to do stuff,” he said. “These kids were really sketchy anyway, I think most of

them ended up in jail later on. By getting involved with that (straight edge), it was a way to get away from them, but also avoid the little dramas that happen when you stop hanging out with people.”

Bastien, Long and Mohtiak, all students at Western, know each other to be among the few straight edge people in Bellingham. Bastien said he knows five straight edge people in Bellingham, but from what he has seen at concerts, he estimates there are about 25 straight edgers.

In the new millennium, straight edgers — from teenagers to

STRAIGHT



20-somethings — continue to live the 1980s philosophy with an added edge. Although it's not required of the lifestyle, some become vegetarian or vegan as they become more critical of what goes into their bodies. This is true for Bastien, who decided vegetarianism was the next step in his quest for a healthier life, while both Long and Mohtiak are vegan.

As with any alternative lifestyle, misconceptions about straight edge are prevalent. Because the standard of living reflects many religious beliefs, it is sometimes mistakenly affiliated with religion. But it is strictly a philosophy of living without memberships or regulations; it's a personal choice.

The most common misconception is that straight edgers are violent and exclusive, much like a gang. Bastien, who has a majority of non-straight edge friends, said this is not true, but media exploits only the few that are violent.

On March 26, 1999, the ABC television program "20/20" profiled violence and vandalism in Salt Lake City, Utah, linked to

the straight edge movement. According to the show, Salt Lake City police considered 200 to 400 out of the estimated 2,000 straight-edge youth in the state to be militant.

The show portrayed some straight edgers as violent to those not conforming to their standard of living and who openly smoked and drank in front of them.

"I know the difference between drinking responsibly and getting drunk, I mean I'll leave the room if someone's smoking pot just because I don't want to smell it."

One Salt Lake City gang unit deputy compared them to the most widely known gangs in the United States, the Bloods and Crips. He said they carry weapons, assault innocent people and cost millions of dollars in damage.

But according to 20/20, the majority of straight edgers across the nation are pacifists. The straight-edge lifestyle was never meant to be, nor will ever be, a gang or an organization, according to true straight edgers who say it is simply a way to live a more positive lifestyle.

"Not all straight edge people are alike," Bastien said. "Those kids who are violent were looking to be in a gang in the first place. They were looking for a reason to hate other people. It's unfortunate that they pick to belong to something that's about purity, clarity and self-preservation. Most straight edge people I meet are pacifist."

Bastien's girlfriend of a year and a half, Brooke Denmark, 20, is not straight edge nor did she know what it was until she started dating him.

"When he explained it to me I was like, 'Whoa, what is he going to think of me?'" Denmark said. "Am I not dating material now?"

She said Bastien isn't judgmental and never tells her how to live, but is concerned for her health and safety. She compares him to her parents who express concern about her smoking, but she said Bastien realizes she is an adult and he cannot make her decisions.

"I'm sure it's still something that bothers him, but being straight edge is not about judging others and trying to change them," Denmark said. "It's about living your own life."

Unlike a lot of couples, Denmark doesn't drink or attend parties with her boyfriend. What was once a difficult thing — keeping her friends and social life separate from her boyfriend — eventually smoothed over. She said she doesn't have to split so much of her time after her friends, curious about Bastien's lifestyle, started hanging out with him and became receptive to his lifestyle. Denmark said her friends really enjoy Bastien's company and often they will plan activities that are comfortable for him such as making dinner or going to the movies.

"I never drink in front of him," she said. "It's a respect issue. It's like going out every night with someone who's a sober driver. That's not fun for them."

EDGE



Denmark said Bastien's dedication to straight edge is one reason she's attracted to him. She respects that he doesn't follow the mainstream college lifestyle and life is never boring because he constantly challenges her thinking.


But Bastien isn't socially inept because he doesn't party. Like any college student, he juggles time between friends and schoolwork. He also spends every weekend in Seattle rehearsing as lead guitarist and backup vocalist in two metal bands that have toured the United States.

And although he would likely turn down a weekend keg party, Bastien, whose roommates homebrew beer, doesn't need to leave the room if people are drinking.

"I know the difference between drinking responsibly and getting drunk," he said. "I mean I'll leave the room if someone's smoking pot just because I don't want to smell it."

Enjoying the newness of his straight edge lifestyle, Long said he's more outspoken about it and finds thrill in X-ing his hands at concerts. He wants people, straight edge or not, to recognize his lifestyle and to ask about it. But Mohtiak and Bastien, with more years as straight edgers, said they don't need to be recognized as straight edge anymore.

"A lot of the older people (musicians) just don't talk about it as much because they had been yelling about it for years," Bastien said. "That's how I am now. I used to put Xs on my hands whenever I went out but now I'm comfortable with myself." ✎



With a kickflip here and a boardslide there, Carlos de Andrade has become a rising star in the world of professional skateboarding. With sponsorship deals, wins in numerous contests throughout the world and a first-place ranking in skateboarding's 2000 World Cup circuit, Andrade is living out his dreams.

After living in Bellingham for 2 years, the 22-year-old Brazilian has returned to Southern California to further his career.

Andrade's journey started in Curitiba, Brazil. At age 8, he started skateboarding with a soccer buddy whose dad owned a skateboard shop. Andrade's home sat across the street from a skateboard park, where he skated almost everyday.

Andrade picked up the sport easily, and after a few years people started noticing his skills.

"The locals at the skatepark were good skaters," Andrade said. "They were pros for the local skateboard company, and they hooked me up with sponsors."

In 1995, Andrade was doing so well in Brazilian

for himself by skateboard companies. In 1997, Andrade moved to Torrance, Calif., with five other Brazilians, to do exactly what he dreamed of.

He lived in the Mecca of professional skateboarding and famous skate spots that he had seen in magazines and videos.

"It was so good," he said. "I just felt like skating everything. After a month it was all right, but I mean the first two days I was like, 'I want to go out and skate!'"

During his stay in Southern California, Andrade began competing in contests across the United States and Europe. He was placing well and was getting national exposure in televised contests like ESPN's X-Games. Though he still hadn't landed a big-time sponsorship deal with an American company, he was making good money from the contest scene, which can now yield up to \$15,000 for first place.

In 1998, Andrade once again returned to Vancouver for Slam City Jam, and he placed sixth. The contest spans three days, and during the weekend groups of pro skateboarders explore the town to go street skating and partying. During one such weekend Andrade met a girl from Bellingham and moved into her house. He continued to go to contests all over the world, but his base of operations was Bellingham and SeaTac.

From the streets of Brazil to the half pipes of the ESPN X-Games, Carlos de Andrade turned his skateboarding passion into cash money. Terrill Simecki catches up with Andrade to chat about boarding. Photos courtesy of World Industries.

contests that his sponsors sent him to skateboarding's biggest contest — Slam City Jam in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Andrade competed against skateboarding's biggest and best pros. These were guys he had only heard about or seen in magazines and videos. To his surprise, at age 16 Andrade placed third in his first professional contest.

"It was great!" Andrade said. "I didn't know I could make the finals, and when I was in the finals I was, like, tripping! I was pretty nervous."

In 1996, he won first place.

By doing so well at Slam City Jam, Andrade gained respect and increased his "stock" as a professional skateboarder, because many people buy skateboards and related products based on who their favorite skateboarder is.

Skateboard companies sponsor famous skateboarders so they can associate a person with the company, and this in turn sells products. By doing well in contests, filming for videos and shooting pictures, Andrade creates a demand

Local skateboarders began hearing tales of Andrade ripping up skatespots all over the area.

"My friend said he saw that Carlos dude skating at the Mount Vernon skatepark, but he wasn't sure if it was him," skateboarder Caleb Goodman said. "He said he was doing some bad-ass stuff."

"I saw him at the skatepark, and it was crazy!" skateboarder Robert Sipe said. "He was massively good. I couldn't believe half the things he was doing."

Andrade became friends with many skaters from Bellingham, but the location held back his career; there wasn't any skateboard media coverage in the area.

"It's not good for skating," Andrade said. "There's way more stuff going on down here (California)."

After a year and a half in the Northwest, Andrade returned to Southern California's Huntington Beach area where he now lives.

Andrade's first language is Portuguese, and he had a hard time communicating with other pros at contests and with people in general.

"At first it was pretty hard," Andrade said. "I was around people and they would be telling jokes and laughing, and I didn't know what was going on. I just started trying to talk to people and they would help me out, but I think I learned the most from watching TV."

Andrade knew many pro skaters from the contest scene, and one in particular helped him a lot.

Chet Thomas owns Darkstar, a skateboard and wheel company.

half-pipe dreams



Thomas added Andrade to the Darkstar roster, and Andrade started receiving products from Darkstar's parent company, Dwindle Distribution. A connection with Dwindle led to Andrade getting a work visa and eventually his own pro model skateboard from World Industries Skateboards, a company Dwindle distributes.

"Chet Thomas hooked me up the most," Andrade said. "Everytime I saw him he was all nice to me so one time I just talked to him about, you know, if he could give me some wheels, and he hooked me up."

As part of his job with World Industries, Andrade designed a board to his own specifications that is sold to the public. Professional skaters earn royalties from their pro models in the same way musicians earn money from their CDs being sold.

"I kind of felt a lot of pressure because I had my name on a board," Andrade said. "It's weird."

Since his recent sponsorship, Andrade is becoming more of a household name and appearing in the same magazines and videos that he grew up seeing. Sometimes he is even recognized on the street.

Andrade was ranked first on the World Cup skateboarding circuit for 2000, placed fourth in ESPN's X-games for three consecutive years and has won numerous other professional contests.

Andrade said he is grateful for the amenities his job affords. Though his contract prevents him from disclosing his salary, he said it is substantial. World Industries is one of the highest-selling skateboard brands of worldwide, so his royalty checks help out a lot.

"I didn't expect anything like this to happen, so it's good. I'm doing what I like. I'm making money. I'm able to support myself down here in California and travel and meet people."

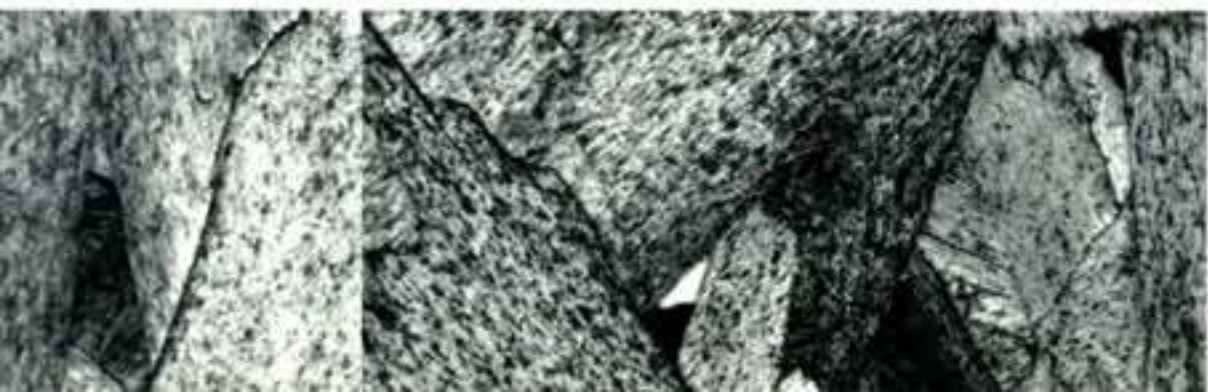
"Things just started happening," he said. "It was like I didn't expect anything like this to happen, so it's good. I'm doing what I like. I'm making money. I'm able to support myself down here in California and travel and meet people."

Andrade says he enjoys his average work day, which he almost doesn't even consider work. On most days he tries to go out with filmers for several different skateboard video magazines or photographers and tries to get tricks filmed or shot.

"The hardest thing to do on a skateboard is get photos," Andrade said. "It's such a big deal. Like when you get to the spot and you get kicked out. Sometimes you get the photos and they don't turn out good. They (cameraman) don't like it, so it's like you're throwing yourself down stairs or you spend a lot of time trying to land a trick and then you land it, and it's not worth anything."

But Andrade is not complaining. He's getting paid to do something he would do for free anyway.

"My favorite part about skateboarding? Free products and the paycheck!" he said jokingly, "and I like to skate. The best part about skateboarding is when you go out and have a nice fun day and you land a good trick or learn a new trick. It's fun." ❖



Though Joe Moser and Jim Hastin grew up in a damp northwest corner of Washington, they didn't meet anywhere even remotely close to this area. The two men, both pilots in the Army Air Corp, met in a cramped, stinking train car on its way from Paris to Buchenwald Concentration Camp – a place their SS captors said they'd never leave alive.

It was August 1944. Moser, Hastin and more than 90 other Allied prisoners of war were crammed into a train car meant to hold 40, and shipped to Buchenwald. The trip took five excruciating days, the longest five days of Moser's life.

"Yeah, that train ride was pretty bad," Moser, 79, said. "There was really no room to sit or lay down, so everybody was sort of piled all over each other."

coming to terms



Prisoners of war share harrowing tales of escaping death at the hands of their Nazi captors during World War II. Greg Wochler tells how their friendship and healing began through an organization called American Ex-Prisoners of War. Photos by Chris Fuller.

It was the middle of the summer and the stifling heat made it almost unbearable. They were given one five-gallon bucket of water for the trip and their food consisted of chunks of black bread made mainly from sawdust.

The prisoners could catch only glimpses of the countryside between the slats of their pitch black train car as it rolled deep into the heart of Germany. Hastin assumed they were going to a Prisoners of War camp. Instead, they were on their way to one of the oldest, largest and most notorious Nazi concentration camps. It was unlike anything either Moser or Hastin had ever seen.

"There were thousands of people there who were just skin and bones," Moser said. "It was just awful."

Buchenwald, opened in 1937, originally housed political prisoners, but soon it was used mainly to hold Jews, along with homosexuals and Gypsies. During its eight years of operation, the camp contained more than 250,000 people and more than 50,000 died there.

Hastin said the POWs slept outside on the rocky ground, often in the rain, for three weeks until a block house opened up for them.

"About 500 Jews lived in that block before we were put in there," he said. "I'm not exactly sure what happened to them, they just disappeared."

"There was death everywhere," he said, his voice quavering. "We'd hear shots ring out every so often. I once saw a man beaten to death by guards. It's difficult to describe what it's like to see dozens of people die every day. You'd see people just collapse from starvation. What a terrible way to go."

"Death was always hanging over you," he said.

It was many years until either Moser or Hastin could tell anyone else about the things they'd seen.

"People who haven't been through that just can't fathom it," Hastin said. "There's just no way for them to know what you're talking about. They'll

Beschreibung des Gefangenen
Nr. 874
Lager: Kriegsgefangenenlager

Staatsangehörigkeit: U.S.A.
Dienstgrad: 1. LT.
Truppenteil: USAAF
Zivilberuf: VWGT
Matrikel Nr. (Stammrolle des Heimatlandes):
Gefangennahme (Ort und Datum):
Ob gesund, krank, verwundet eingeliefert:

Nähere Personalbeschreibung

Besondere Kennzeichen:

Wohnort und Anschrift der zu benachrichtigenden Person
Heimat des Kriegsgefangenen

MRS. MARY MOSEB
BELLINGHAM, WASH.

8418 1. LT. MOSEB

10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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Wichtige Angaben: Moseb
Beschreibung der Erle:
Nr. 874
Lager: Kriegsgefangenenlager

Staatsangehörigkeit: U.S.A.
Dienstgrad: 1. LT.
Truppenteil: USAAF
Zivilberuf: VWGT
Matrikel Nr. (Stammrolle des Heimatlandes):
Gefangennahme (Ort und Datum):
Ob gesund, krank, verwundet eingeliefert:

Nähere Personalbeschreibung
Kennzeichen

"I know the experience stayed with me," Moser said. "I know sometimes I was short-tempered with the kids and with my wife.

"Did it help to finally talk about it? You bet it did," he said. "Talking about it takes a big load off you. It's so important to share it with others."

They said the only people they felt comfortable talking about their experiences with were other POWs. But for decades, neither knew any others and they hadn't kept in touch since the war. They finally ran across each other at a POW reunion in Seattle in 1981.

Hastin thought he saw a familiar face, walked up to Moser and said, "I know you. Buchenwald, right?"

That same year, Moser got a call from a fellow POW who was in an organization called American Ex-Prisoners of War, and he's been a member ever since. Hastin joined after he retired from the Air Force and moved to Anacortes.

The organization serves the interests of POWs by lobbying lawmakers. But just as important, or maybe more so, is the role it plays as a social organization and support group.

The group now has 30,000 members in more than 300 chapters nationwide. The Fourth Corner Chapter of the AEPOW serves all of north Puget Sound and has about 35 members

Dick Stone, commander of the group, was also a World War II POW. He said he too kept the experiences bottled up until he joined the group. He simply wasn't comfortable talking about it to anyone who hadn't been through the same thing.

"You didn't brag about it," he said. "It's like being an alcoholic, you don't go around talking about it."

Stone was an army infantryman captured in 1944 in Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge. He and 12 others were trapped on a hilltop, cut off from the rest of their company. German tanks and infantry pounded the small group, but they held their ground. There was no medic on the hill and Stone had to tend to his friend who'd been shot four times in the fighting.

During the fight Stone took a bullet in his left foot. It went clear through, breaking bones and tearing ligaments and making it practically impossible for him to move.

After two grueling days on the hill, the platoon sergeant told the 12 exhausted soldiers, eight of whom were wounded, that they were surrendering.

The decision came as a relief to Stone, though feelings of shame and regret plagued him.

"Our generation grew up hearing about having a yellow streak down your back if you give up," he said. "Do you know of any movies where the heroes give up? Even today, you've got Arnold Schwarzenegger in movies killing 50 people without even getting shot. But that's just not the way it is."

Stone said he was constantly haunted during his imprisonment with thoughts that he could have done something to prevent their capture. The thoughts still come back from time to time.

Moser echoed these feelings about his capture.

"In war movies, nobody ever gives up," he said. "Well, we gave up. All of us did."

Moser was attacking a truck convoy the day he was shot down. Anti-aircraft fire hit the plane, engulfing the left engine in fire. It was Aug. 13, 1944 and it was his 44th mission; after his 50th, he would have been sent home.

Moser was about 35 miles west of Paris. If he could have nursed the plane along another five minutes, he would have been behind Allied lines, but he knew the plane would never last that long. The fire was spreading. He had to bail out.

The burning plane was in a steep dive and gaining speed. Suddenly, Moser realized that his left foot was caught. He pulled frantically, but couldn't free himself.

Moser estimates he was 100 feet from the ground when his boot finally tore loose. His parachute had barely opened when he came crashing to the earth in an open field where farmers were tending their crop.

In his spotty high school French, Moser asked the farmers if German soldiers were in the area. They nodded and he raced off for the shelter of the woods a few miles away.

Moser never made it. He'd run about half a mile when soldiers on motorcycles caught up and surrounded him.

"I couldn't help thinking, 'what if I'd fought back?'" Moser said. "(In the camp) we all kind of felt we'd dishonored ourselves by giving up. But really, if you'd fought back, they would've killed you."

After Stone and his army platoon were captured, German soldiers forced him to walk for several hours over rough terrain in the snow on his bleeding, infected foot. His treatment, a day and a half later, consisted of draining and bandaging the wound. The German medic who looked at it said it would probably need to be amputated.

For more than two weeks following his capture, Stone and 19 other POWs endured more marches, along with long rides on trains, buses and trucks to get to a POW hospital in Germany. Usually there was nothing more to eat than the German sawdust bread. In between traveling, they would bed down anywhere their captors could find shelter, often in barns. Usually they bedded down among wounded German soldiers.

"Once we stopped at a shed out in the country and they put me down in the hay next to this wounded German kid who couldn't have been more than 14 or 15," Stone said. "My heart just went out to the kid. I felt so sorry for him."

When they finally arrived at the POW hospital, there was practically no medicine, but the treatment improved. Stone endured two operations on his foot with no anesthetic. Miraculously, he was able to keep his foot.

He spent three months in the hospital until the advancing American army reached the hospital in March 1945.

"There was death everywhere. We'd hear shots ring out every so often. I once saw a man beaten to death by guards. It's difficult to describe what it's like to see dozens of people die every day. You'd see people just collapse from starvation. What a terrible way to go."



“Our generation grew up hearing about having a yellow streak down your back if you give up. Do you know of any movies where the heroes give up? Even today, you’ve got Arnold Schwarzenegger in movies killing 50 people without even getting shot. But that’s just not the way it is.”

Moser and Hastin had a few months to go before they were liberated.

A group of German pilots discovered they were there and insisted they be taken to a proper POW camp and treated with the respect aviators deserve. The pilots saved their lives – the SS was planning to execute the POWs four days after they shipped out.

“I have no doubt that I wouldn’t be here now if it wasn’t for those pilots,” Moser said.

They were taken to Stalag Luft 3 in Poland, the Allied aviators’ prison camp immortalized in the film “The Great Escape.” Moser and Hastin were actually assigned to the same barracks from which the prisoners had tunneled out seven months earlier.

Stalag Luft 3 was a vast improvement over Buchenwald.

“After where we’d been it was almost like a picnic,” Hastin joked. They were given warm clothes and enough rations to at least maintain their weight. Hastin had lost about 60 pounds in Buchenwald and Moser had lost about 40. Other prisoners in the barracks would often give them some of their rations to help them gain back the weight.

By early 1945, the Allies were getting too close, so the camp was evacuated.

In minus 30-degree weather, the prisoners marched more than 100 miles to a camp deeper within the shrinking German territory.

“That winter was the coldest they’d had in 50 years,” Moser said. “We had all our clothes on, our coats and our blankets, but nothing kept out the cold.”

When the U.S. army got too close, they moved again.

Their day finally came on April 29 when American soldiers and tanks attacked the prison. Disobeying direct orders from Hitler, camp guards refused to execute the prisoners when it was attacked.

“Those were regular army soldiers and they were a different breed from the SS,” Hastin said. Many of the soldiers laid down their weapons and surrendered when the attack began and were gunned down by the SS guards.

A tank soon broke through the gates and the American soldiers gained control.

“What a happy day that was,” Moser said, his voice swelling with emotion. “I can still see them raising the American flag over the camp. You know, I still shed tears thinking about it.”

Soon Moser was on a boat headed for New York. The voyage gave him the chance to catch up on some of the meals he’d missed in the camps.

“I was 130 pounds when I got on the boat and I weighed 182 pounds when we got to New York on June 8,” he said.

Three weeks later, Moser was married and three months later, he was out of the army. He soon got a job in Ferndale at a sheet metal shop installing furnaces, a job he would have for the next 30 years. He and his wife also raised four daughters and a son along the way.

Stone enrolled at Washington State University after the war and graduated in 1950 with a Bachelors degree in English. He taught English at Ferndale High School for 30 years.

All three men have returned to Buchenwald and they all say that was an integral part of their recovery.

“The nightmares stopped in 1994,” Moser said, “when I went back and saw for myself that the crematoriums weren’t still working.”



Photos courtesy of Joe Moser.



INTIMATE ADORNMENTS

A local artisan allows Aaron Jacoby into his gleaming world of gems, jewels and precious metals. Photos by Chris Fuller.

From outside, this jewelry store looks like any other. In the windows, light dances on the surfaces of precious metals and brilliant gems laying in display cases. But the owner of this shop, Coenraad Zielstra, is more than a jeweler or goldsmith, he is an artist. His canvases are metals – gold, silver and platinum – his paints are precious stones.

"I am like a child playing with gold," Zielstra says of his approach to his art.

If this is true, then his studio on 11th Street in Bellingham's Fairhaven area is his playroom. But, instead of being littered with wooden blocks and color crayons, it is filled with jewelry and a collection of antique, museum-worthy tools.

All of these tools are used by Zielstra to create jewelry and each one, from an iron anvil made more than 500 years ago to a ball-ping hammer forged during the reign of Napoleon, plays a part in his creative process.

Zielstra, 58, says he feels lucky to own these rare tools, however, there is nothing special about him using them. His approach to his art simply makes them necessary.

To illustrate his point, he explains a composer may create beautiful music on a piano built 100 years ago just as well as he or she would on one made last year.

"I'm like a composer," he explains, "I play my instrument well. I just prefer the old ones."

The metal tools arranged on shelves at the rear of his workshop are pieced together from four collections he found while living in Holland before moving to Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1977. He moved to Bellingham in 1991 when he married his wife, Barbara, a Western graduate.

Since coming to Bellingham, Zielstra has continued a family tradition in art. Several generations of women in his family were painters and sculptors, including his grandmother, mother and sister. He is the first man in his family to choose art as a career.



As a boy, Zielstra became enamored with beautiful objects and collected rocks, gems and shells. Soon he began painting.

"It was natural for me to express myself in these ways," he says.

At 18, he enrolled in a goldsmithing school in Schoonhoven, Netherlands. There Zielstra earned the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree in goldsmithing and silversmithing.

When one looks at a piece of jewelry designed and created by this native of Naarden, Netherlands, he or she sees soft, sweeping lines that undulate in waves and intricate twists of metal curving around gems, creating pieces of beauty that glow as light sparkles on their finely polished surfaces.

One example of this work can be found on Zielstra's business cards. A gold pendant lies on a white background. The flowing surfaces reflect the distorted image of the photographer and illuminate with the color of their red clothing.

The pendant's smooth surface is disturbed only by a soft ridge, which bends across the metal surface like a ripple across a body of water. On each side of the ridge, reflected light takes on different qualities of the photographer.

A thin twist of gold separates from the main piece and moves on a new tangent, meshing with more lines and ridges before wrapping around a pearlescent center, framing it in thin bands of gold. The silver-colored surface reflects color and light in all directions giving it the appearance of a piece of shell.

"It's definitely a different feeling than you get from something you see on the shelf at Weisfield's or Ben Bridge," says Teo Morca, 27, who owns a \$900 ring made by Zielstra. It was given to him by his girlfriend, Jill Sucee, for Valentine's Day in 1999.

For Zielstra, every point in the process is essential. The initial step begins with consulting a prospective client. This meeting gives Zielstra an opportunity to meet the future wearer of his jewelry and acquire their sizes. This meeting allows him to create a reflection of who his client is, which makes for a unique, personalized piece of jewelry.

"I'm very intuitive," Zielstra explains. "I can tell a lot about a person in just a short meeting."

Morca says he believes this since Zielstra created his ring by simply looking at his picture and reading a one-page description his girlfriend, Sucee, wrote about him.

"I look at the ring and ask myself," Morca says, "What must he have seen in the photograph that made him put this line here? How did he arrive at that line?"

With this information, Zielstra sets about designing the ini-

tial idea for the piece in watercolor, placing the completed painting on a small card to refer to while working.

A black background frames hand-painted images of Zielstra's ideas, giving a visible representation of a client's personality.

Zielstra then immerses himself in his project by "preparing his canvas," creating his own gold alloy. He mixes raw 24-karat gold with silver and copper on a rolling table built about 1880.

He mixes the metals by turning a crank, forcing them between rollers and folding the layers of metal together like dough being kneaded by a baker. The resulting strips of 18-karat gold are then heated, twisted and soldered into shape as Zielstra works to replicate his watercolor.

"He brings old-world artisanship into play," Morca says, "He invests so much time in each piece, it's impossible not to notice the craftsmanship."

In the case of Morca's ring, Zielstra's process lasted about six weeks.

Zielstra says he uses no effort when working on a piece of jewelry. He simply allows his creativity to guide his hands. Sometimes, this direction leads him away from the initial design. During these times, there is no inner struggle about which way to proceed, Zielstra simply lets his idea flow and experiments with his new path.

"When you have an impulse, you must have an action," he says. "That is how to stay in balance with the whole project."

During his creative process, Zielstra feeds off the experiences of his life. He says he draws from everything in the world he sees and experiences for inspiration.

"I am a spiritual being having a human experience," he says. "All my creativity comes from what is."

As the piece of jewelry begins to take shape, Zielstra uses his antique tools to create the final product. The tapping of metal on metal sounds out in rhythmic pulses as the finishing touches are made on a piece of jewelry. The resulting adornment will then be polished to remove any signs of the soldering performed to join the metal together.

These pieces maintain their long-lasting shine largely due to the process Zielstra uses in preparing his metals. Rolling the metal eliminates pits and crevices, which are created by casting. This allows an uninterrupted surface to reflect light and color.

Zielstra says he feels as if the reflective quality of his work, combined with its 3-D shapes, creates a wearable sculpture that matches clothing of any color.

Prospective clients from around the world contact him to create jewelry for them. Most of those clients end up coming back.

One story of a satisfied customer sticks out in the mind of Zielstra's wife, Barbara.

A woman from Florida passed through Fairhaven while driving across the country on vacation. After stopping in Zielstra's studio and seeing his work, she decided to have a sapphire ring made.

Zielstra made the ring and the woman returned to Florida. Soon, a thank-you note arrived at the studio, followed by a phone call.

The woman told Zielstra she was thankful for her ring because every time she looked at it, she was reminded of who she was.

During a simple, short meeting, Zielstra had been able to gain a picture of who the woman was and present it to her so she could also see it. The process he used captured, in the woman's mind, her essence and personality. Morca says he felt a similar connection with his ring.

"As soon as I opened the box, I could see my personality," Morca says of his simple gold ring. "And, as I turn the ring around, I can see its different facets."

The dual nature — technical and artistic — of Zielstra's

work leads to long discussions between the artist and those who enter his studio.

He has found the antique tools and technical aspects of his work first impress men while women gravitate toward the end results to admire Zielstra's craftsmanship.

For Zielstra, the two faces of his work feed off of each other. He describes it using the Taoist analogy of yin and yang.

The yin half of his work is the artistic side and is represented by the individual pieces he creates. The opposite pole, or yang, is demonstrated in the technical process and is represented by the tools he uses. For Zielstra, there is no art without the process and the attention paid to the art makes the process necessary.

"Everything must fit in harmony with each other," he says.

Sucee says it was Zielstra's passion and care in what he does that attracted her to his workshop.

"I could tell he really enjoys what he does and that each piece means a lot to him." Sucee says. "He asked Teo to bring his ring in once a year so he could see how it was doing."

As Zielstra sits at his workbench surrounded by his collection of old-world tools soldering a thin strip of gold to a ring, it is easy to see how he can feel his workshop is like a pocket of history.

In front of the bench, two antique scales sit next to a mod-



ern, digital scale. The metal finish of the larger scale shows its age as its once shining metal trays now have a brown hue to them.

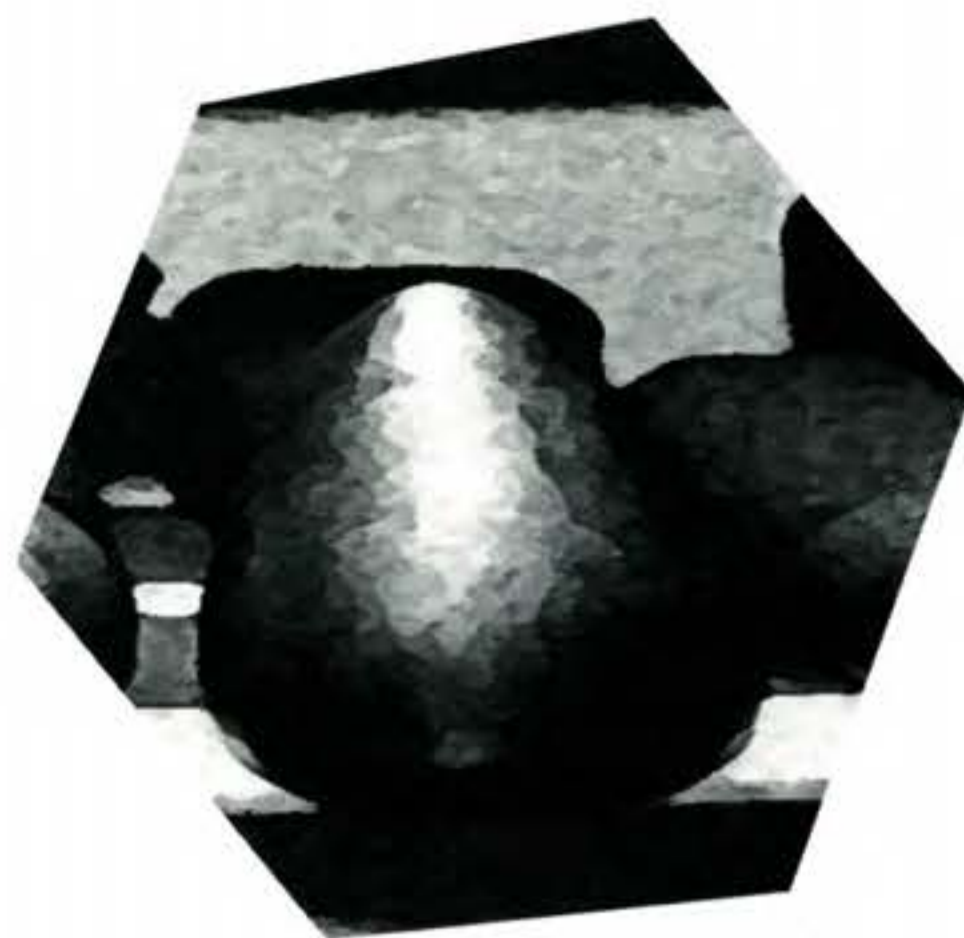
Zielstra purchased the scale in the Netherlands for \$12 in the early 1970s. He still uses it to measure out the weight of gold.

Hundreds of antique tools lie on shelves waiting to be used, as they have been for more than a century, to shape metal. In front of the shelves, a stretching table, used by Zielstra to stretch wire for chains, reveals its more than 150 years of wear through its worn, dried wood.

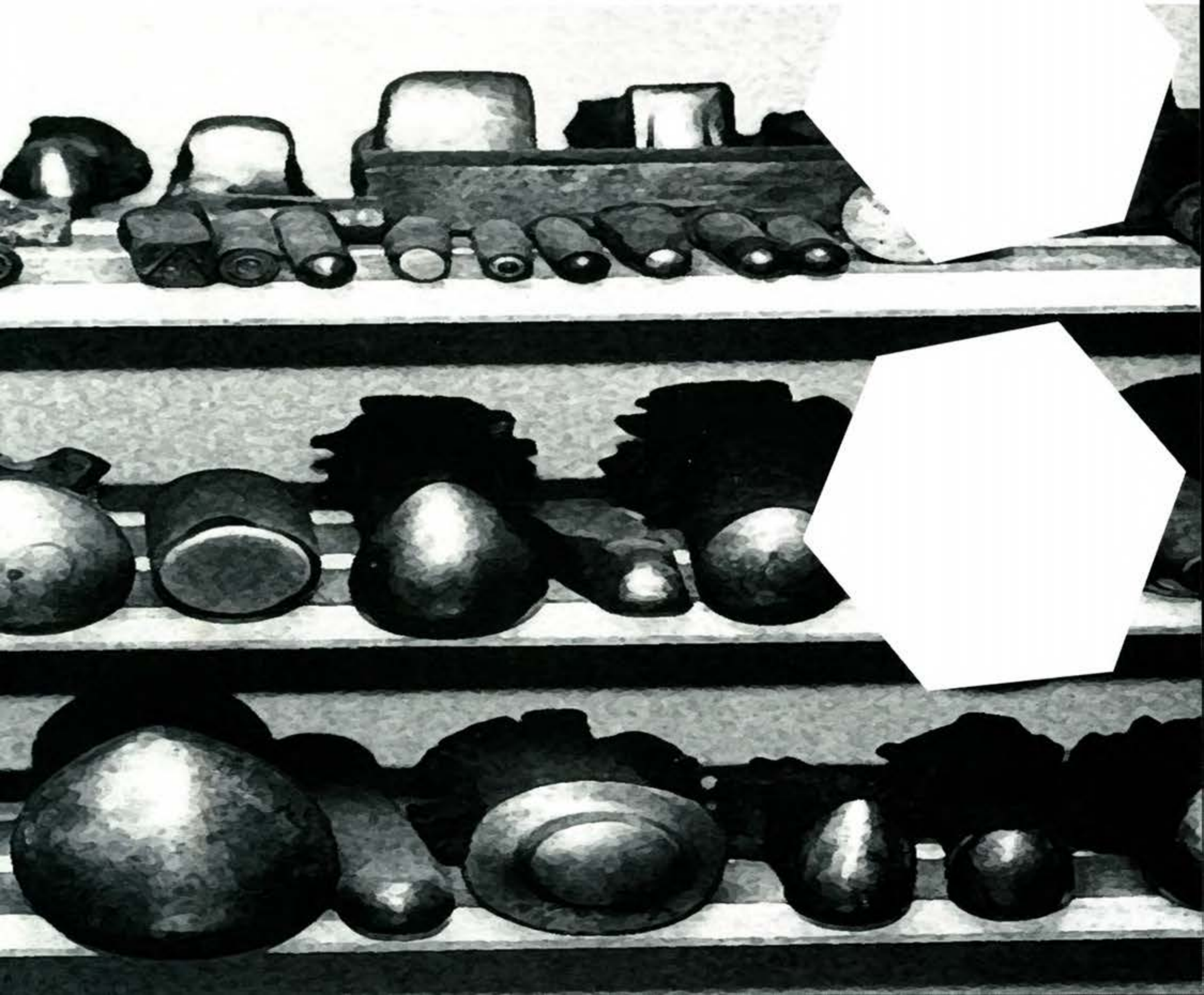
Stretching from the wall, the rolling tables create a barrier signaling the end of the workshop and the beginning of the gallery. On the table tops, metal contraptions stand looking like grinders, their revolving handles hanging, waiting to be turned as gold passes through rollers, creating bands of varying thickness.

Looking around the studio, one can see the completed works of art sitting in cases around the floor. Rings, pendants and necklaces lie in the cases next to shells and precious gems.

Beyond the window looking out on the street, it is possible to see the world from which Zielstra draws his inspiration. ✎



During a simple, short meeting, Zielstra had been able to gain a picture of who the woman was and present it to her so she could also see it. The process he used captured, in the woman's mind, her essence and personality.



professional skater



fire breathing



captured soldiers



vine jumping