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*Western Washington University*

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# KLIPSUN

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## Alternatives

Relieving Pain with Bee Stings  
The Other Garbage Collectors  
Passing Up the Pill



# klipsun

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## Editor's Note

**ALTERNATIVES** Throughout history, information has helped move our society forward. It has brought us new technology, cures to our ailments and more knowledge about the world around us. As an extremely curious person, I often find myself sorting through options and asking myself — what will work best for me?

Three stories are featured in this issue exploring alternative methods. Our cover story, "A small assistant," (page 16) looks at a less conventional therapy for arthritis and Multiple Sclerosis patients. Bee Venom Therapy is not yet approved by the Food and Drug Administration, but this homeopathic treatment has proven to help people in pain. In "Brand new barriers," (page 12) our reporter examines new methods of birth control. *Time Magazine* recently recognized the NuvaRing, a contraceptive discussed, as one of the top inventions of 2001 and it will be available to women soon. "Taking in the trash," (page 8) may appeal to college student and those who are thrifty. Our reporter discovered Bellingham residents who go the extra mile and search through Dumpsters. Who knows, your trash may be their treasure.

These stories exemplify the importance of options. I hope you enjoy these stories and the rest of the stories featured in this issue. If you have some extra time, please fill out the survey on the back page. Our editorial staff is interested in what you have to say about the magazine. We want to know what type of stories interest our readers — so let's communicate.

Please feel free to e-mail us at klipsun@hotmail.com or call us at 650-3737.

Regards,

Erin Crumpacker, editor-in-chief



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**Klipsun** is a Lummi word meaning beautiful sunset.  
**Klipsun** is a student publication of Western Washington University distributed twice per quarter.  
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Brooke Geery



## Homegrown

Snowboarding is a way of life at Seattle-based Mervin Manufacturing. These snowboards are made and designed by people who know best — the riders.

Raena Downer



## Taking in the Trash

Forget coupons, sales and comparing prices. Instead, take notes from the ultimate bargain shoppers as they visit Dumpsters, where the goods are free.

Emily Christianson



## Brand New Barriers

Tired of taking the pill at the exact same time each and every day? NuvaRing and Ortho Evra will soon bring the concept of user-friendliness to birth control.

Cara Hazzard



## A Small Assistant

Bee Venom Therapy is a pain-relief option for sufferers of Multiple Sclerosis and arthritis. Although its medical validity is debated among physicians, patients speak its praises.

Keri Cooper



## Striking a Common Chord

Meet Kyle, Rob, Adam and Mike, Western students who make up the band Turnabout. Together they prove that you don't have to be angry to rock.

Robert Gara Jr.



## On the Prowl

Car prowls and car thefts are clearly a problem in Bellingham. Find out what precautions you can take to ensure the safety of your car.

Jeremy Gibson



## Just Visiting

Each winter, Brackendale, British Columbia hosts the world's largest bald eagle population and it's doing its part to protect these majestic creatures.

Brian Harrington



## The Tears of Koma Kulshan

Mount Baker isn't just the home of ski runs and breathtaking scenery, but also a unique agate called Rainbow Blue. The secrets of this agate are revealed through the story of a family's legacy passed on from grandfather to grandson.



# *home grown*





What began as a hobby for one college student metamorphosed into a successful snowboard manufacturing company. **Brooke Geery** talks with the employees of Seattle-based Mervin Manufacturing, a place where production remains in the United States and the boards are made by the boarders. Photos by Katie Kulla.

**M**ike Olson's sun-bleached blond hair and love for snowboarding could be considered childish for a 38-year-old. The enthusiastic founder of Seattle-based snowboard company Mervin Manufacturing probably wouldn't disagree.

The company is small, and the low-rise office with its adjacent factory in northeast Seattle is littered with old snowboards, skateboards and a poster collection dating back to the early '80s.

Olson remains an integral part of his company. Eighteen years after Mervin's inception, he can still be found circulating the office, concocting new tools and innovations for snowboarding. That is, when he's not participating in the sport.

Olson translated his love of board sports and propensity toward craftsmanship into Mervin Manufacturing, a place where he could see all of his ideas to fruition. This includes having a tight-knit snowboard company that manufactures all of its products in the United States. In addition, people with a personal involvement and love for the sport produce the company's boards. Mervin has become a unique part of the snowboard industry by never abandoning these original ideals. Today, the people who make boards for

Mervin's two brands, Lib Tech and Gnu, ride what they produce on the slopes of Washington's ski resorts.

The Mervin legacy started long before the first Gnu board hit the slopes in 1984. Olson attributes the brand's origin to a photograph he saw in 1977 of a guy turning on a twin tip snowboard in *Skateboarder Magazine*.

"That was my influence," Olson said. "I saw that and said, 'I gotta make one of those things.'"

At 13, Olson fashioned some of the first snowboards in his parents' basement in Burien, Wash. He called the boards, "D.P. Gravity Harness Snowboards: No Guarantee," and gave them to friends to ride at Ski Acres, now called The Summit At Snoqualmie. At the time, it was the only resort in the state that allowed snowboarding.

Olson continued making snowboards while attending community college. On weekends he would test the boards he made during the week. When he enrolled at Pacific Lutheran University, he cranked out as many snowboards as possible to meet the demand. Living at PLU, however, meant moving operations into a dorm room.

"I cleared out the whole room so it was empty, which the school actually got mad at," Olson said. "They said you had to keep a bed and a desk. I put them all out on the balcony."

After three days in the dorm, Olson decided he'd rather surf and make snowboards than go to school.

"My mom had watched me build snowboards, and she said, 'Do it, quit school,'" he said.

Olson dropped out of school during his junior year, but reality soon hit.

"I had no access to money whatsoever," he said. "About seven days after quitting school, I thought, 'I have to make a living at this.'"

**"We may be the only factory where snowboarders make snowboards."**

—Mike Olson—

Mervin Manufacturing founder

Clockwise from upper left: Brad Vuyk places the top sheet down in preparation for "laying up" a snowboard. Mark Stewart pours resin on the core layer of a snowboard. Ian Klein deflashes a snowboard, which cleans the excess resin from the sides of the board. Mervin jerry-rigged fishing weights for use in the "Korrek Kap" assembly.

It was 1984, and Olson was unable to find anyone willing to help him start a company for a sport that barely existed. He set out on his own to make Gnu Snowboards.

Olson knew how to build quality snowboards, and always worked to improve them. This proved enough to sustain the company. Its growth was phenomenal. By 1987, thanks in large part to its team including top riders like Dan Donnelley, Mike Ranquet and Amy Howat, Gnu was the third best selling brand in the world. At 14, Howat had already won The World Championship in slalom and moguls. The team appeared in videos, magazines, and won competitions.

The company was selling 20,000 boards per year in 1988. At the time, this number was huge, considering most ski shops didn't even sell snowboards. Today, Mervin sells around 55,000 boards per year.

The success of Mervin is not surprising considering some of Olson's past endeavors. He is the mad scientist of snowboarding, and it shows in his company, which boasts logos such as "More Popular than Satan."

Before Mervin, Olson worked with other companies to improve snowboarding products. In the early '80s, he helped design the first wakeboards for Kitter Waterskis, but Kitter nixed the project because it saw no future for the sport. Today, wakeboarding is one of the fastest growing water sports. In the late '80s, he proposed the first side-cut or curvature on skis. This development makes the equipment easier to turn. A few years ago, the side cut revolutionized the sport, but when Olson suggested it to K2 they didn't see the need to improve skis.

Now that Olson and his partner, Pete Saari, 37, make all the decisions, no good ideas fall victim to corporate thinking. Saari's marketing and organizational skills compliment Olson's creativity, making anything possible. The company stays as efficient as possible, but isn't afraid to invest in something new. It also keeps everything in the family.

"We've always tried to do everything ourselves," Saari said.

Doing everything themselves means keeping the operation in the United States. All Mervin's boards, right down to their wood cores (an item many companies buy pre-made from foreign manufacturers), are made in the company's factories. One is located in Seattle, while the other sits nestled between tall spruce trees at the base of the Olympic Mountains in Carlsborg, near Port Angeles.

"We really take pride in what we do," Saari said. "The concept of getting stuff built over seas is unimaginable."

Mervin's two domestic factories make the company rare in the snowboard industry. Very few other companies have maintained entirely American-based production.

Many companies look to foreign lands to increase profits. In October 2000, K2, a major manufacturer with corporate offices in Vashon Island, Wash., moved its factory from Corona, Calif. to China.

"It gives us a competitive edge," said Kevin English, K2 snowboard team manager, "and the labor is definitely way cheaper."

The Chinese factory maintains the same standards for board production and employee treatment as the American

**"We really take pride in what we do. The concept of getting stuff built over seas is unimaginable."**

**—Pete Saari—**

**Mervin's marketing director**

Left: Mike Olson and Pete Saari take a fast break from their latest trade show in Las Vegas. (Photo: Brooke Geery) Right: Inside Mervin's shipping room.



one, but the move left the California factory's 100-plus employees without jobs.

Mervin tried overseas production in the 1980's, when it briefly manufactured its boards in a European snowboard factory. The company was trying to more efficiently meet increasing demand, but the boost in production surpassed the amount of boards being sold and the company found itself \$300,000 in debt. This development brought production back home.

About three years ago, Mervin was in trouble again, and almost faced bankruptcy. Quiksilver, a much larger clothing and board sports company, stepped in and purchased the company, enabling Mervin to stay afloat and keep its domestic factories going.

Now that Mervin is part of Quiksilver, Olson and Saari are in a place they are extremely happy with.

"Quiksilver is the best bank we've ever had," Saari said. "We tell them what we want and they give it to us."

Quiksilver harbors a lot of the same attitudes toward team and employee treatment, and has made a good partner for Mervin. It has allowed Olson and Saari to retain complete control over the company.

The company perseveres by staying small and having loyal employees. Mervin staffs about 90 people at both of its factories, most of whom have been there for years. Because of a well-planned production schedule, Mervin is able to keep its staff working year round. This keeps the turnover rate low. Not having to retrain people every year also keeps costs down.

"It's a seasonal business," Saari said. "We keep people on year-round, so they really care about the product. Having people who care adds efficiency."

"It's different than any company because you can go in there and tell them how you want the product. They'll customize the board however you want it."

—Javas Lehn—

A Gnu sponsored snowboarder



On top of job security, workers get benefits such as a season ski pass to area mountains, snowboards and free lunch every Thursday, a perk that's been around since 1991.

"Everyone here has pretty much been here for a long time," Olson said. "We have a lot of veterans."

Olson and Saari, however, are the real veterans of the company. Saari began helping in 1989, after Mervin had to abandon the Gnu name because of a conflict with a partner company.

The pair opted to continue producing snowboards under the name Liberace Technologies. The new company featured boards covered with flowery and flamboyant designs that reminded them of the entertainer by the same name.

Later, they were able to cheaply reacquire the Gnu name, though they weren't really interested in continuing the brand. They still had 2,000 pieces of florescent pink base material with the Gnu logo print, so they decided to produce the boards for one year and then kill it by making the cheapest board possible.

"Mike went through every construction to find the cheapest one possible," Saari said.

It turns out the construction quality was actually very good. The pink-based board he created actually performed well. Team rider Jason Basarich of Bellingham chose to ride one. Soon he had a signature model and the brand continued to flourish.

Twelve years later, Basarich is still riding a Gnu at Mount Baker, because at Mervin, job security goes not only for factory workers, but team riders as well.

Snowboard companies pay a team of top riders to endorse their products. In exchange for money and equipment, riders provide their presence at competitions, public events and in magazines and videos. They are the main link between the public and a snowboard company, and are often responsible for the success of a company.

It may sound like a dream job, but most professional riders have very short careers. With a few exceptions, most companies have an annual team shuffle in which riders often find themselves without a contract, a paycheck or even a free snowboard. Burton, a snowboard manufacturing company based in Burlington, Vt. failed to renew the contracts of some 15 riders last summer, including Olympic bronze medal winner, J.J. Thomas.

This practice may seem harsh, but it is an accepted reality among snowboarders. At Mervin, things are a little different.

"In some circles it's almost a joke, but once you're on our team, you pretty much never leave," Olson said. "If you give half an effort with us, you're on pretty solid ground to stay a team rider."

Mervin's team includes Olympic silver medallist Danny Kass, US Open Snowboarding Championship and X Games champ Barrett Christy and many other accomplished snowboarders.

Local Mount Baker rider Javas Lehn has been riding for Gnu since the beginning of his career five years ago. Now 20, he is still fully supported by the brand and very happy.

"It's different than any company because you can go in there and tell them how you want the product," Lehn said. "They'll customize the board however you want it."

Jesse Burtner of Seattle joined the Lib Tech team last October after a few years of riding for Sims Snowboards.

"Riding for Lib is like feeling like a part of the company," Burtner said. "Other experiences I've had, they make you feel like nothing."

Once a rider is on the Mervin team, he or she never has to buy a board again. Mervin still gives boards to people who were riding with them in the '80s.

"The cool thing about Mervin is you see all these people who still get boards," Lehn said. "They hook everyone up. No other companies really do that."

The company often presents riders with other options once they pass their prime as professional snowboarders.

"With Mervin, they'll work to find things for you to do after you're done being a snowboarder," Burtner said.

Washington native and snowboarding legend, Jamie Lynn, 28, suffered a series of knee, back and shoulder injuries that left him unable to snowboard professionally. Lynn, a team member since the beginning, couldn't go to a ski area without getting mobbed during the height of his career. In addition to being an excellent snowboarder, Lynn is also an accomplished artist and always painted his own board graphics. After he decided to cut back on snowboarding, Mervin offered him an art director position. He now works with other artists to modify and lay out graphics on boards.

As Olson watches his company continue to flourish into the new millennium, he is still as enthusiastic about it as he was 18 years ago.

"We may be the only factory," Olson said, "where snowboarders make snowboards." ❄️



The alley behind the Wild Buffalo overflows with numerous garbage and recycling containers.



# Taking



Chris Axling, Associated Students Recycling Center operations manager, searches through the center's junk pile. In his hand, he holds a pot he found that he decided was worthy of his own use and later took home.

For many, buried treasure is a fantasy associated with sunken pirate ships, thousands of leagues under the sea. **Raena Downer** talks with local divers who regularly find treasure while digging through Dumpsters. Photos by Katie Kulla.

# W the Trash

**F**or some it's a hobby. For others, it is an effort to redeem the earth of the average Joe's waste and pollution. For the rest, it's a means of survival. Despite the different motivations, all Dumpster divers agree one man's trash is another man's treasure.

Dumpster divers thrive on lazy people who throw their "junk" in the garbage instead of taking it to Goodwill or re-selling it. Divers search for things other people have thrown out that are still useful, can be recycled or have value. Divers not only pick up discarded items left at the curbside of people's homes, but may also climb into Dumpsters behind apartment buildings and shopping centers.

Shanon Remington, a Bellingham resident, said she has been Dumpster diving for about 10 years. The first time she went diving, she was looking for a bed.

"When I was living in Seattle, I was too poor to buy a bed," Remington said. "The only decent one I could find was in a Dumpster."

Remington said she has a casual approach to diving and will only intentionally go out to dive at the end of the school year when she knows the campus dorms have an abundant amount of useful trash. She said one of her favorite finds was from the dorms at the end of spring quarter.

"I found this really, heavy box sitting outside a Dumpster and opened it up," Remington said. "It was a whole chess set that had been hand-painted."

Most of her other finds have been the result of something she has seen in passing, not while intentionally looking through Dumpsters.

"A lot of the stuff I find is not from necessity," Remington said. "I pick it up, get bored with it and then donate it."

On her big dives, Remington said she takes her three and a half-year-old son with her.

"If there are boxes beside the Dumpster, he will look through them," Remington said. "His tastes

are a little different than mine and a lot of the things he likes I don't let him take. I let him keep this resin Noah's Ark type thing and he played with it and played with it and played with it until it broke. I saved it and put it away with the toys he has grown out of because it's from his first dive."

Employees at Western's Associated Students Recycling Center indirectly become Dumpster rummagers as they collect and sort through approximately 500 recycling barrels from the residence halls, academic and administrative buildings and office storage areas throughout the week.

"When we sort out the barrels, we dump everything out and separate what can and cannot be recycled," said Chris Axling, the Recycling Center's operations manager. "We find things that cannot be recycled, like pots, and put them to use again."

Mary Jane Cuyler, recycling educator at Western's Recycling Center, said her favorite recent find was from Arntzen Hall, where she found a set of Chippendale dancer cards from the 1980s.

"They were all nasty guys with hairy chests and big mustaches," Cuyler said. "It's just hilarious because you know they came from a professor's office."

As a method of deterring divers, some businesses use locks on their Dumpsters or soak their products in bleach to make them inedible. Other Dumpsters have a compactor system that restricts divers from gaining access. In most cases, these methods are a way to prevent businesses from liability if a diver were to get sick or injured while using their Dumpster.

Axling said a friend of his was stopped from using a Dumpster because it had a lock.

"He was at the Haggen on Meridian and saw a bunch of produce being dumped out back in the Dumpster," Axling said. "He asked the guy if he minded if he took some of it and the guy said he didn't think it would be a good idea. My friend hung out afterwards and the guy locked the Dumpster with a padlock like he knew someone was going to be waiting in the bushes or something."

Axling said he doesn't consider his fellow employees at the Recycling Center as a part of the group until they have admitted to eating something they have found while working.

"Some have higher standards than me, but we all have done it," Axling said. "I go by visual inspection as a general rule; others have to have the packaging sealed. I'll generally eat it if it doesn't look like it has been used a lot through its journey to the trash."

Axling said candy is the most common food he comes across because of their small size and individually wrapped packaging.

"Peppermints are usually not worth people's time to sort out and so they just throw them away," Axling said.

Christian Smith, a manager at The Bagelry on Railroad Avenue, said she has only seen one diver in the five years she has worked there.

"It doesn't mean that it doesn't happen though," Smith said. "We close early and I don't know what happens after we close. But we give quite a few of our old products to farmers for their pigs

and stuff. We rarely throw stuff away."

Despite businesses efforts to reduce waste, the Environmental Protection Agency's Municipal Solid Waste fact-book reported that more than 13.4 million tons of food was thrown out by the United States in 1996.

A study by the Environmental Defense Fund found that a typical McDonalds serving 2,000 customers generated 238 pounds of waste per day in 1990.

When she worked at a Burger King in Fairbanks, Alaska, Remington said she had to step on garbage bags of food before throwing them out to deter people from searching through them.

Since Dumpsters are used in a variety of environments, wide ranges of items can be found in them. Some of the more common things divers said they have found include clothes, food and outdated items not worth a store's time to return — everything from dishes

to greeting cards.

Axling said he has nearly furnished his place from things he has found while working at the Recycling Center. He uses glass candleholders, a microwave, dishware, pots and mugs that he has found while sorting the recycling.

"When you are sorting papers, you come across a lot of stuff like posters and calendars," Axling said. "I use the calendars to make envelopes because I think white envelopes are boring."

Some divers say they have "scored" bigger items, such as computers and accessories, furniture, VCR's, televisions, radios, lawn mowers, vacuum cleaners, power tools, telephones, answering machines, and bicycles.

Dumpster diving can also be profitable. Divers make money with everything from aluminum cans to items that can be resold at garage sales.

Axling said when he finds textbooks students have thrown away, he tries to sell them back to the bookstore.

"Most often students throw them away because it's an old edition and the bookstore isn't buying them back, but every once in a while, I get lucky," Axling said.

Divers are sometimes cautious about revealing too much information on their favorite Dumpsters. Remington said she doesn't want to give her favorite spots away because of the good luck she has had with them so far.

The Dumpster diving community is abundant on the Internet. Diver pros like Mary, self-named the Dumpster Lady, are eager to speak out and offer advice to anyone interested in hearing what they have to say about Dumpster diving.

Many of the Web sites dedicated to Dumpster diving stress the importance of rules and etiquette in the Dumpster diving community. Some of the more common ones include:

- Be aware of what you are taking. Businesses can charge divers for taking sensitive materials (office papers with bank numbers) even if it is unintentional.

- Don't take more than you need or can use. It deprives other potential users, who may be more dependent on Dumpster treasures than you are.

**"We find things that cannot be recycled, like pots, and put them to use again."**

**—Chris Axling—  
Recycling Center  
operations manager**

• Don't go behind a closed fence to reach a Dumpster. You can be charged with trespassing.

• If an authority asks what you are doing, it's safest to say that you are looking for boxes and don't argue if they ask you to leave.

Like all hobbies, a few tools help in the trade. For evening rummaging, divers use flashlights or headlamps. Most divers use a stick to pull, poke and probe the trash. A garden hoe works, but some divers use more advanced tools designed to pick up a quarter in the corner of an empty Dumpster.

Searching through Dumpsters understandably has a number of potential hazards. Some of these hazards include lids that suddenly slam shut in the wind, sharp objects and a wide range of rotting and "icky" stuff, such as an occasional dead animal.

Pete Smiley, Bellingham Police Department attorney, said in Washington state, police need to have a warrant to search through people's trash, although it is not required in all states.

"I don't know if the legalities of Dumpster diving have come up (in Bellingham)," Smiley said. "I suppose someone could press charges for trespassing or theft, but it would be a difficult question as to whether they had intended to abandon their things to the world. I doubt anyone has ever charged someone for Dumpster diving but you could easily find yourself on the wrong side of the law."

Don Knutson, compliance office for the city's Public Works division, said once items are put in a Dumpster they become property of the waste collection agencies in town. Knutson also said he doesn't see it often, but he knows Dumpster diving occurs in Bellingham.

"I saw an old lady on Samish Way fishing in and pulling out stuff with her stepstool and a rod with a hook on it searching for cans," Knutson said. "She obviously wasn't well-to-do, but that usually is the case with people who Dumpster dive."

Some divers would disagree with Knutson, claiming that Dumpster diving is not a reflection of poverty but a sign of conscious consumerism and resourcefulness. ♣

An easel that Shanon Remington saved from being trashed. She now uses it as an art station for herself and her three year-old son.



Just a few of the many items Shanon Remington has salvaged from dumpsters around town: a complete ceramic chess set, a cooking container, a box full of unused art paper and a black suitcase.

## Every hobby has lingo. Consider this glossary when you go out garbage picking or Dumpster diving.

**Picker**— somebody who drives along streets on a garbage night to search through other people's trash.

**Clutter**— a collection of garbage goodies in a Dumpster or on a curb.

**Sweet Spot**— an area known for its frequency of good finds.

**Skunky**— trash that smells bad.

**Nouveau Riche**— (pronounced Noo-vo Reesh) the people to avoid; they are the "new rich" — middle class people who live in recently built homes; they have new stuff and won't be throwing anything out better than coffee grounds

**Old Rich**—they tend to be middle class and often set out good, quality clutter; they also tend to be compliant with garbage pickers; but, there are also those who are VERY rich; when they get tired of a VCR because it's "old", they buy a new one and throw out the old one....you can get some pretty quality electronics from these people.

**Spotter**— the person (usually not the diver) in a car whose purpose is to be on the lookout for quality clutter.

**Rootin' Stick**— Sturdy metal plastic or wooden rod of appropriate length for rooting through a Dumpster, trashcan, etc.

Source: Compiled from Dumpster diving Web sites.

# brand new barriers

Women will soon have two new options when choosing a birth control method. **Emily Christianson** reports on NuvaRing and Ortho Evra, which are just as dependable as the pill but a lot more convenient.

Every morning Courtney Gates rushes to get ready for school, but there are two things she has to have before leaving the house: her coffee and her birth control pill.

Gates, a Western senior, said she is consistent about taking the pill each morning but on those rare days when she forgets there is a painful price to pay.

"If I forget to take it one day I don't really freak out about it," Gates said. "I'll double up the next day, taking one in the morning and one at night. I've had occasions when I've had to take both at the same time. I felt ill to the point where I had to puke sometimes."

Taking the pill at the same time every day is a struggle for some women, but two new female contraceptives could make birth control easier and more convenient.

Late last year the Food and Drug Administration approved the NuvaRing, a hormone ring inserted into the vagina, and Ortho Evra a patch worn directly on the skin. Each of these new products has proven to be as effective as the pill.

"It is probably easier to remember to change the patch once a week, or remove a ring once a month than take a pill everyday," said Dr. Hull A. Cook, Fellow of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Like many birth control pills, both the NuvaRing and the Ortho Evra patch are combination hormonal contraceptives that contain estrogen and progestin. The innovations are in the delivery of these hormones.

"In some ways there is nothing new under the sun," Cook, of Bellingham, said. "All of these contraceptives work primarily by inhibiting ovulation.

"The effects of these hormones upon the body are the same, more or less, regardless of just how they enter the blood stream," he said. "Such devices have the potential to deliver very constant and predictable amounts of drug over a prolonged time."

**"It is probably easier to remember to change the patch once a week, or remove a ring once a month than take a pill every day."**

—Dr. Hull A. Cook—  
American College of Obstetrics and  
Gynecology

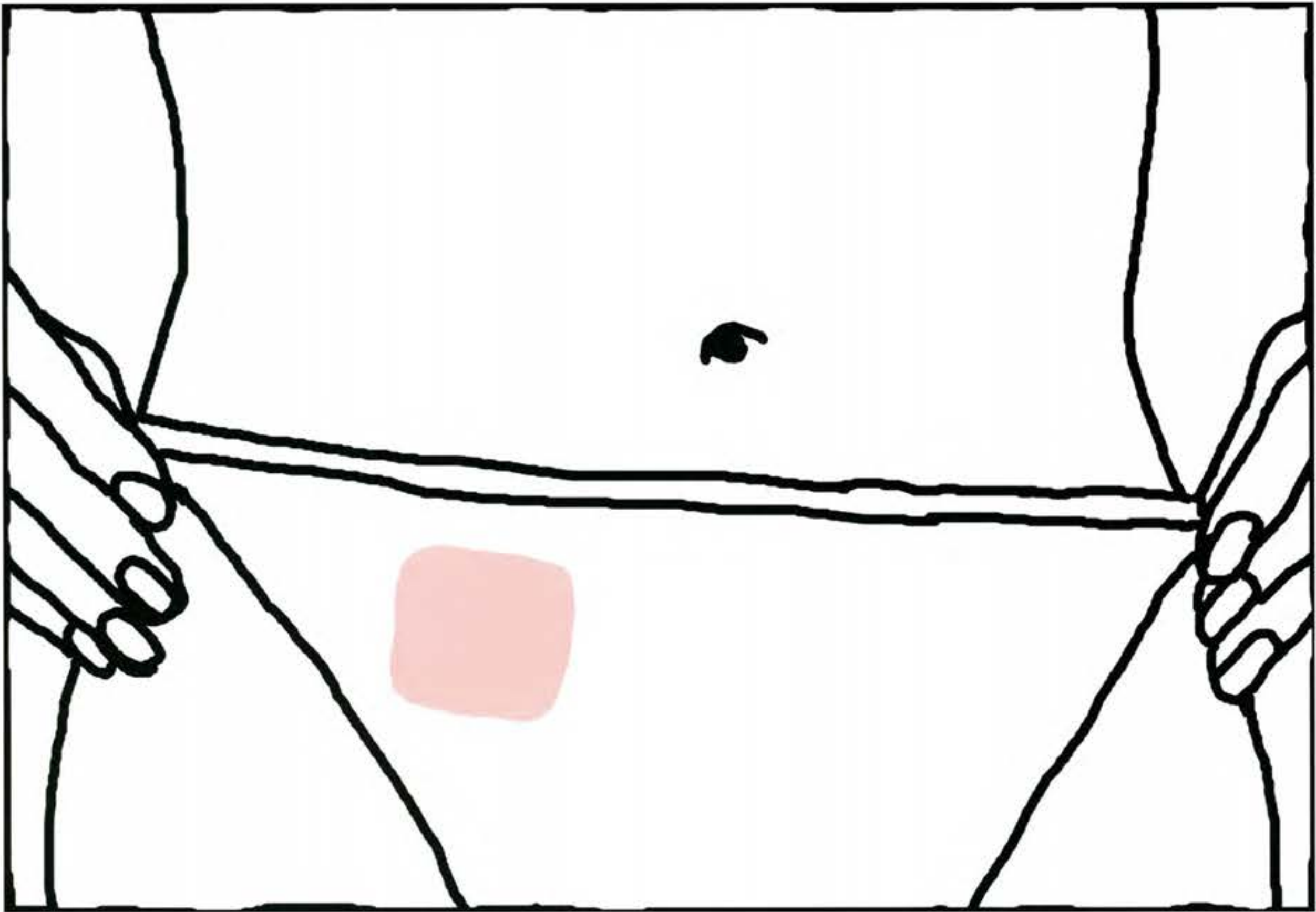
Cook said the "secondary effects" of the hormones lessen the chances of pregnancy even more. The hormones leave the uterus unreceptive to egg implantation and they render the cervical mucus "more thick and impenetrable."

Nancy Alexander, director of contraception in medical services at Organon Inc., which produces NuvaRing, said the idea of a contraceptive ring began in the 1970s and trials for it began in the 1980s. After reformulation of the ring, it was submitted to the FDA, who approved it on Oct. 3, 2001.

"Various hormone levels were tried in order to make sure that the levels would be effective with few side effects," Alexander said. "The preliminary studies revealed that a very low dose of estrogen would be necessary due to the steady state release from the ring."

NuvaRing, which is about two inches in diameter, is inserted into the vagina where it is worn for three weeks. The warmth and moisture of the vagina activate the time release of hormones contained within the plastic of the ring. Cook said it delivers the drug through the vaginal tissue.

Heather Mastin, a Western freshman who is not using



birth control, said the NuvaRing sounds like a good idea and that it would be “more effective than just having condoms.”

“It means less changing than some of the other (birth control methods) you have to use,” Mastin said. “It’s a little scary to have to leave it in for that long, but you probably get used to it.”

After three weeks, the ring is removed for one week to allow for menstruation. Then the cycle begins again with the insertion of a new ring.

“I think the primary benefit is that you wear it for three weeks and you don’t have to think about it every day,” said Joanna Johnston, Western’s Sexual Awareness Center coordinator. “With the pill it is very important that you take it at a similar time every single day, which can be an inconvenience for some women.”

The user inserts the NuvaRing herself. The positioning of the ring is not important because the ring is not designed to be a barrier such as a diaphragm or a female condom. To remove the ring, a woman simply hooks her finger on the rim or grasps it between two fingers and pulls it out.

Scott Hain, Western senior, said the ring sounds like a good idea but he remains skeptical because it is so new.

“I think I would kind of question the effectiveness of a

new product for awhile, until it was proven to be safe,” Hain said. “I probably wouldn’t trust it unless there was another method to use (such as a condom).”

The ring is designed to stay in one place, even during intercourse or exercise. Should the ring come out, it needs to be rinsed in lukewarm water and reinserted. According to [nuvaring.com](http://nuvaring.com), if this is done within two or three hours a back-up method, such as a condom isn’t needed. If it has been more than three hours the ring can be reinserted but a back-up method should be used.

“I think the worst would be if it popped out,” Mastin said. “Some people might feel that it is a pain to have to leave it in for so long, but I think it would still be better than having to change it all the time.”

“Most women could not feel the ring when it was in place during intercourse,” Alexander said, quoting from a safety and efficacy study submitted to the FDA. “About 25 percent of men said that they could feel it (during intercourse), but about 95 percent of men said that if they felt it, it was not a problem.”

Organon’s Web site reported that as long as NuvaRing is used as directed, the chances of becoming pregnant are 1 to 2 percent per year (the same as the pill). If it is not replaced at

the same time each month the chances of pregnancy increase.

NuvaRing has been approved in 16 other countries, but Organon plans on releasing it first in the United States.

"Subsequently it will be available in various European and South American countries," Alexander said.

NuvaRing will be available to consumers in May or June 2002, she said. Organon has yet to announce a price.

Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceuticals received approval from the FDA for the Ortho Evra patch on Nov. 20, 2001 after researching and developing it for about 10 years.

The patch is similar to the NuvaRing in that both use the same type of hormones and a time-release system. However, the patch must be changed more often.

The patch is a one and three quarters of an inch square. Similar to the nicotine patch, women can wear Ortho Evra on their upper outer arm, lower abdomen, buttocks, or upper torso, excluding the breasts. The patch releases a consistent combination of progesterin and estrogen for a full week. Users change the patch on the same day each week for three weeks, then go patch-free for one week to allow for menstruation.

Kellie McLaughlin, global pharmaceutical communications director at Ortho-McNeil, said marketing research told them the patch was a popular idea among women.

"The patch controls the release of hormones into the body and it controls the release rate," McLaughlin said. "You peel the backing off, which is similar to the back of a Band-Aid, and there are actually hormones in the adhesive that begin to release."

Dr. Patricia Stephenson of Stone Ridge Ob-Gyn Associates, a private practice in Sellersville, Pa., worked as

clinical investigator during the trials of the patch. She distributed it to 40 women for a period of six months.

Stephenson said the idea behind the patch is to make it easier for women who have difficulty taking the pill every day.

"The women made it sound like it was easy to use and were very excited about being able to use it," Stephenson said. "They didn't want to stop using it once the trial was over."

Mastin said women might be concerned about others seeing the patch, but Gates said she doesn't see it as a problem.

"It would be an issue for me if I couldn't wear it on a part of my body where nobody could see it," Gates said. "It's a very personal thing. I wouldn't want to walk around with a birth control patch on my arm. I don't think it's a big concern because you can put it other places. Even if you're wearing a swimsuit you can wear it on your

butt so no one is going to see it."

Hain and Western junior Tony Oguinaga agreed that seeing a patch on a partner would not bother them. Hain also added that women don't need to be concerned about people seeing the patch in public.

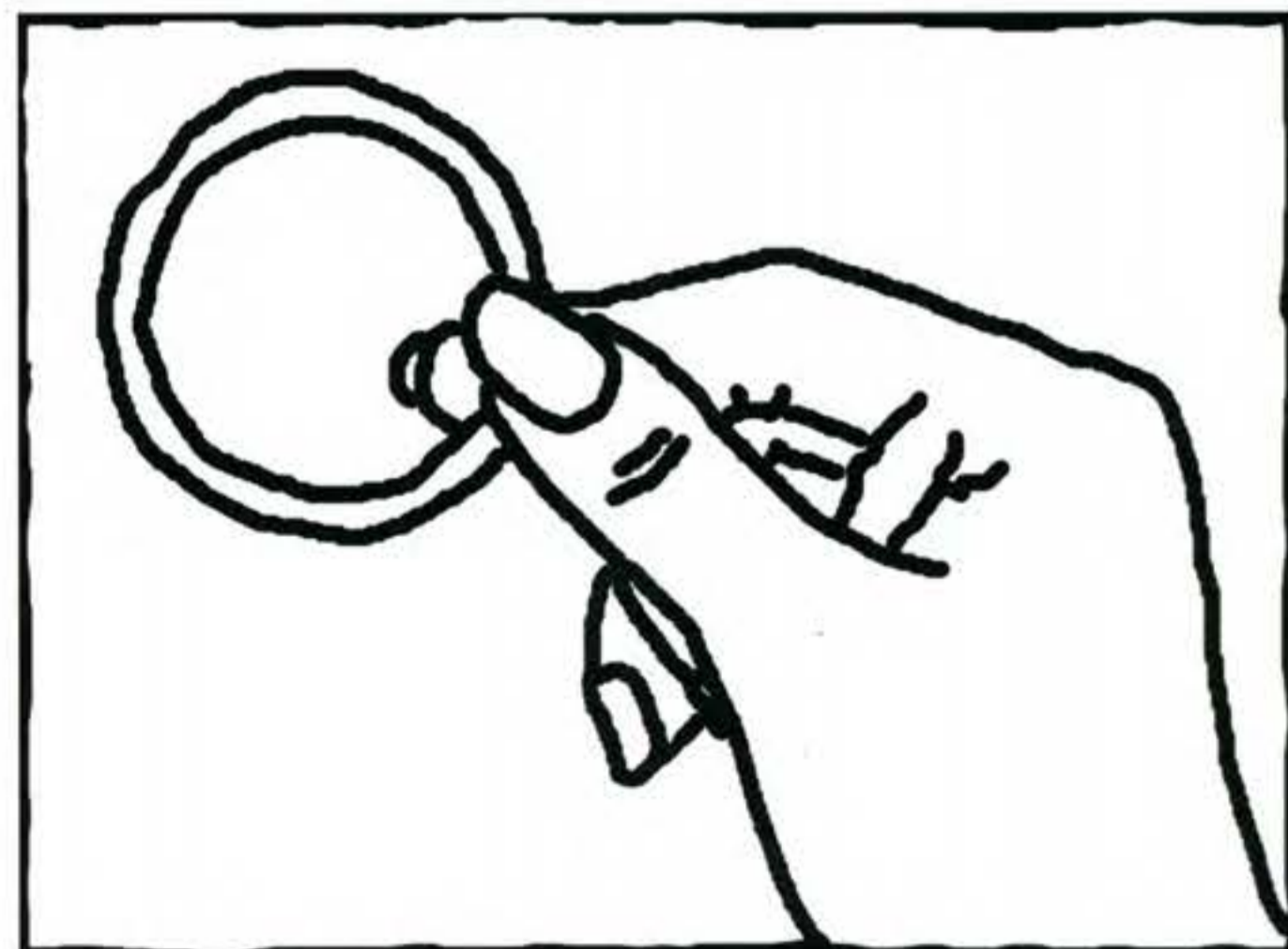
"There are a number of things it could be; it doesn't instantly say birth control," Hain said. "It could be a nicotine patch or any number of things."

During clinical research, investigators found that some men actually liked seeing the patch — they could visibly see that their partner was protected.

The patch remains in place while bathing, swimming or exercising, according to the company's Web site. The company also reported that "less than 2 percent of patches had to be replaced because of complete detachment and less than 3 percent had to be replaced because of partial detachment" during trials.

**"The patch controls the release of hormones into the body and it controls the release rate."**

**—Kellie McLaughlin—  
Ortho-McNeil  
global communications director**



"I was reading about the partial detachment and full detachment and that kind of scares me, having it fall off," Oguinaga said.

Johnston said having the patch fall off is easier to deal with than forgetting to take your pill because you can replace it without using a back-up method.

"If it is a little bit off, push it back on," McLaughlin said. "If it is completely off, replace it within 24 hours and no back-up (method) is needed. If it has been over 24 hours use a back-up."

According to Ortho-McNeil, the patch is 99 percent effective when used as directed.

The company says they will make the patch available to the public by June 2002. McLaughlin said the price will be similar to Ortho-McNeil's birth control pills.

The risks and side effects of NuvaRing and Ortho Evra are very similar to those of combination birth control pills. Each method increases the chance of blood clots, heart attacks, strokes, high blood pressure, heart disease, breast cancer, gallbladder disease and liver tumors in users.

"The risks of significant cardiovascular complications among women using oral contraceptives is less than the risks of using no contraception while sexually active," Cook said. "There is indeed risk to life and limb associated with pregnancy."

More common side effects include headaches, weight gain, nausea, vaginal infection or irritation and vaginal discharge according to Organon and Ortho-McNeil's literature.

"There is no reason to assume that there should be an increase in vaginal infection with ring use," Alexander said. However, she said trials showed an increase in vaginal secretions.

Camille Faris, a Western senior who has used the pill in the past, said women might worry about the same side effects

with the new contraceptives, as they would with the pill.

"For me personally, I don't like to put any kind of substance into my body unless I have to," Faris said. "If it has the same side effects as the birth control pill then weight gain might be a concern for some women or if they smoke it would put them at a higher risk for a stroke."

McLaughlin said 17 percent of women had skin irritation from the patch, but only 2 percent discontinued for that reason. Stephenson said that putting the patch on a different place each week could prevent some skin irritation.

"I was surprised at how adaptable women were to it," Stephenson said. "You pump them with questions about irritation, but it was quite mild, within a day or so it was gone and the women wanted to continue."

Dr. Emily Gibson of Western's Student Health Center said neither the NuvaRing nor the Ortho Evra patch will be available at the center. Currently students can purchase birth control pills at the center at a discounted price because the center buys them in bulk. Gibson said the new methods would be too expensive to offer right away. However, doctors at the health center can write students prescriptions if they want to try one of the new methods.

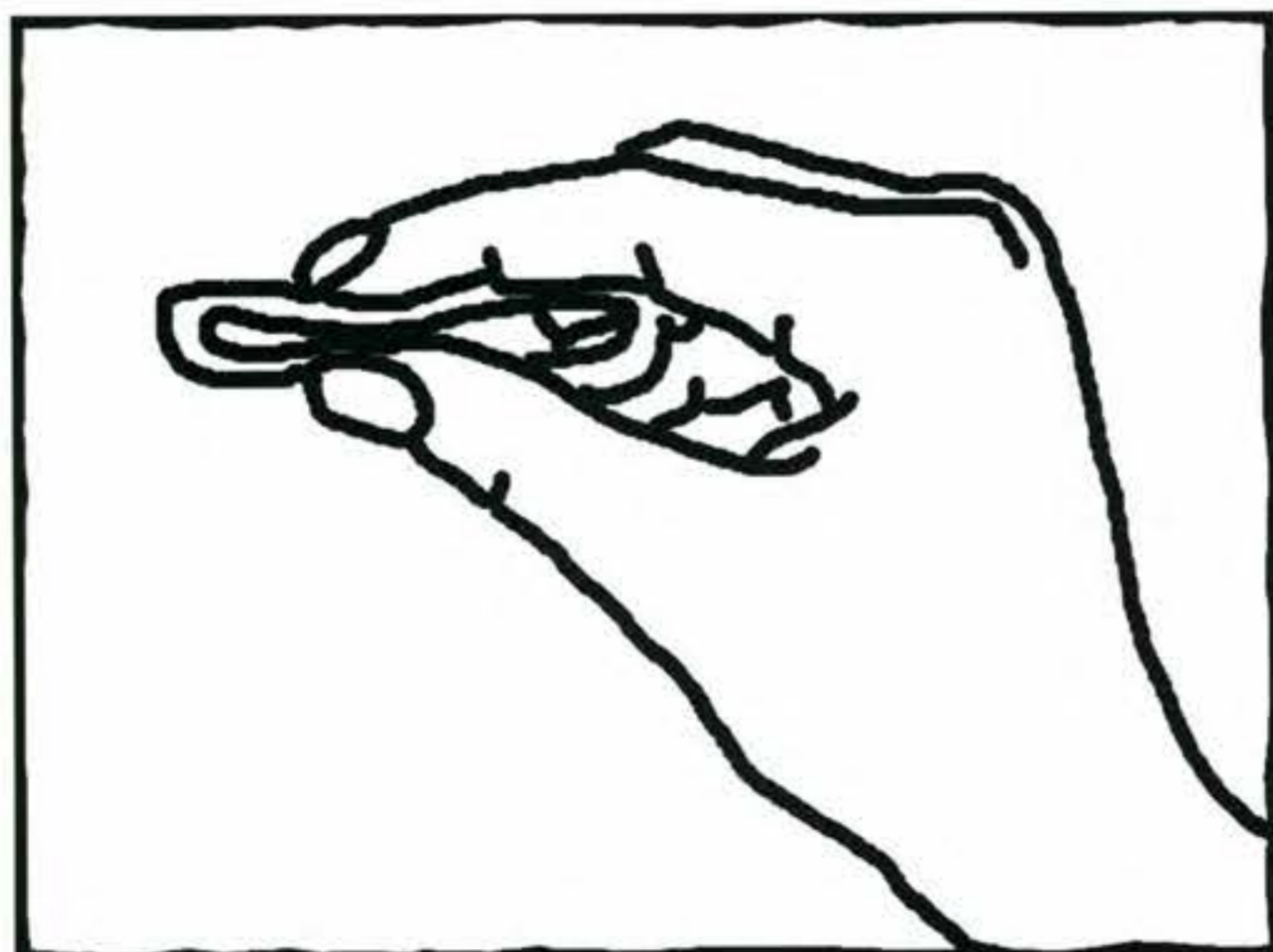
The NuvaRing and the Ortho Evra patch will be covered by any insurance plans that include prescriptions.

Johnston said it is important to note that neither the patch nor the ring protects from sexually transmitted diseases and HIV.

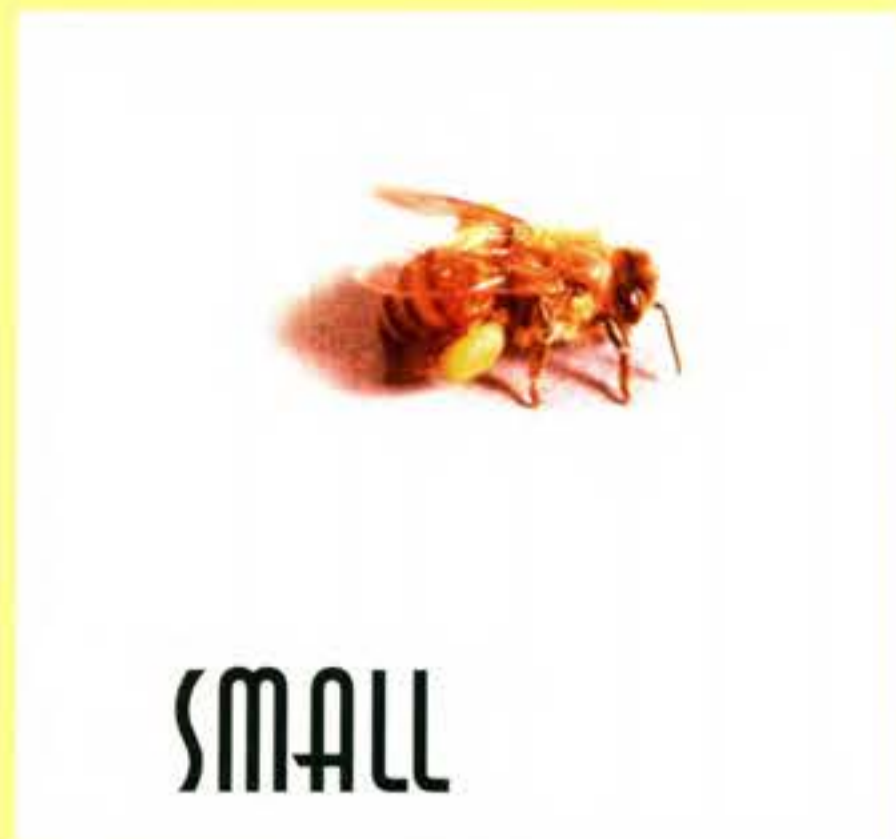
"If you're having sex with a partner and you don't know their sexual history you're basically at risk of contracting STDs and HIV so it's important to have those tests done and communicate with your partners about their sexual history and your own," Johnston said. "If you're not sure, use a condom." ♣

**"The risks of significant cardiovascular complications among women using oral contraceptives is less than the risks of using no contraceptives while sexually active."**

—Dr. Hull A. Cook—







## A SMALL ASSISTANT

For some, there is little relief from the debilitating pain of Multiple Sclerosis and arthritis. **Cara Hazzard** explores Bee Venom Therapy, a debatable alternative for those willing to be stung. Photos by Katie Kulla.

First, the fatigue left. Then the sagging under the eyes went away and the eyes regained their sparkle. After a short while, leg strength and reflexes returned. Soon after that, his concentration improved. Jerry Vickerman, 66, who was diagnosed with symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis (MS), had just begun his new, self-prescribed treatment — a honeybee sting.

Bee Venom Therapy (BVT) is used to treat MS, arthritis and a variety of other afflictions. It has yet to gain acceptance from the medical establishment, though it is earning credibility among those looking for treatment outside mainstream medicine. Its first known use in the United States was by Dr. Bodog Beck, who used BVT to treat his patients in the 1920s.

Vickerman, of Bellingham, was diagnosed 15 years ago. He said he experienced a slow progression of weakness in his legs, fatigue and loss of peripheral vision.

He also noticed drooping in his eyes and a slowing of his reflexes. "It just creeps up on you," he said.

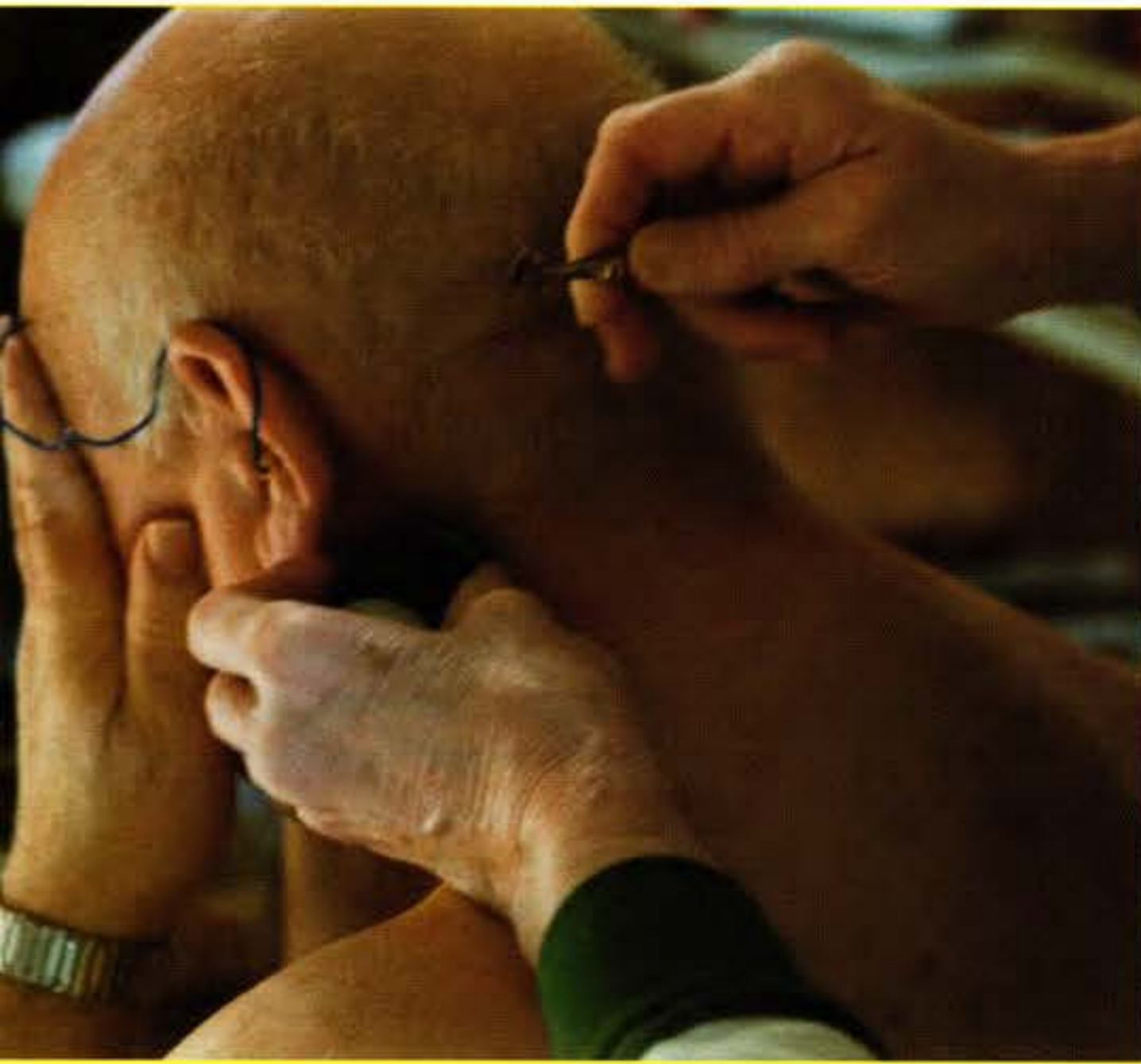
After several years of going to his doctor to have his blood pressure, strength and coordination checked, only to be sent home in the same condition as when he arrived, Vickerman decided to try something different.

After hearing about BVT on television, Vickerman decided he had nothing to lose by trying it. He and his wife, Pat, obtained a hive of bees and Pat began stinging her husband.

She said they used the methods of Pat Wagner, an East Coast woman who also suffered from MS and claimed to have gone from bed-ridden to walking with the use of BVT. The method involved stinging specific pressure points on his body. Pat started by stinging Jerry four times in a session and increased by two stings each session.

"It's scary the first time," Vickerman said. "It feels like something is running under your skin.

"For the first couple weeks you rest an awful lot," he said. "It takes a lot out of you. It's your body fighting the enemy with-



in." Pat now gives him 20 stings, three times a week.

Using a pair of six-inch tweezers to grasp the bees by the head, she places the bee's stinger down on the acupressure points on Jerry's body. Pat holds the bee in position for about 15 minutes, allowing as much venom to be released as possible. In placing the bees, she follows an acupuncture chart Wagner gave her.

Vickerman said he likes this treatment because it's more natural than standard pharmaceuticals.

"The nice thing about bee stings is they're clean," he said. "There's no laboratory junk ground up in it."

Vickerman said he doesn't think he will ever get back to perfect health, but the bees have definitely improved his quality of life.

"You come to love those little bees because they make you feel like a human being again," he said.

Pat Vickerman has also used stings on herself for arthritis and sinus infections.

"I'd been on three different antibiotics over seven weeks for a sinus infection," she said. After stopping the antibiotics for a few weeks, she said she tried BVT and within a few days the infection was gone.

"It is important not to be on antibiotics when you are being stung," she said. "If you combine the two you could have an allergic reaction."

She said antibiotics tell the immune system to shut down. Bee venom has the opposite affect. It wakes up the immune system, causing it to start protecting the body.

People can usually get a hive of bees to keep in their own yard from a local beekeeper for free, she said. Due to the rapid reproduction rate of bees, donating a hive would have little impact on a bee-keeper's livelihood. She suggested calling the local beekeeping association to find local beekeepers. The tweezers for holding the bees can be purchased for less than \$20 from any medical supplier, she said.

Like all natural medicine, BVT has its share of skeptics. Dr. James Bowen, assistant professor of Neurology at the

In order to begin the stinging process on her husband Jerry, Pat Vickerman first removes a bee from the jar with six-inch tweezers (**far left photo**). Then she presses a cold instrument against the skin in order to anesthetize it (**middle photo**). When the skin is numb, she holds the bee against it until it stings (**far right photo**). After that, she removes the bee, leaving the stinger behind. Three stingers are visible in the far right photo. The round spots are left by the cold instrument and the red around the stinger is the welt caused by the bee venom. The stinger is left in for 10 to 20 minutes. Pat Vickerman repeats these steps 20 to 30 times in strategic spots on her husband's body, usually the chest, neck or back. To make her husband more comfortable, she ends by putting a wet cloth on the welts followed by aloe vera.

**"It's scary the first time. It feels like something is running under your skin."**

**—Jerry Vickerman—  
Bee Venom Therapy user.**

University of Washington said, "there is absolutely no evidence that BVT helps MS." He added that the therapy is not only unhelpful, but can be dangerous.

"The inflammation at the sight of the bee stings can be intense, and the effect of the increased inflammation in a disease that already has an over-stimulated immune system is unknown," Bowen said.

Dr. Steven Novella, in his article "Bee Venom Therapy for MS," which appeared in "The Connecticut Skeptic" (Vol. 1 Issue 2/Spring 1996) wrote that the bottom line is that BVT lacks adequate research and clinical trial. Novella said the only existing form of information is anecdotal evidence; a few people hearing about BVT, trying it, having success and spreading the word loudly and quickly.

Novella also pointed out that that MS is a highly unpredictable disease and symptoms can come and go spontaneously.

"The end result is that nobody, not the patient, nor the physician, can predict the course of MS in any individual," he wrote.

It is possible that the relief gained from bee stings could have been the next step in the disease's natural and random course, he said.

A doctor working on his Rheumatology fellowship at the University of Washington, who asked that his name not be used, explained how BVT works. He compared bee stings to taking a small dose of a pharmaceutical steroid such as Prednisone. He said that it will alleviate the pain for a short time, but doesn't alter the course of rheumatoid arthritis.

"Yeah, it makes you feel better, but it doesn't help in the long run," the doctor said.

Dr. Bradford Weeks, a Clinton, Wash., physician, and supporter of BVT, told the Bellingham Herald, "It's a very powerful biological substance which has a long history of folk medicine tradition, but it's dangerous if it's not used correctly."

The venom focuses the immune response to the sting area and enhances a systemic immune response, Weeks said. Results can vary according to patients' compliance with their other prescribed treatments, such as nutrition and vitamins.

In some people, honeybee stings can cause mild to fatal allergic reactions, called anaphylactic shock, if not treated immediately. For this reason, people should always have a bee sting kit close by when stinging, even if they've been doing it for a long time. It is suggested that before trying the therapy a person do a test sting on an area away from the heart, such as the leg. The stinger should be removed immediately, so only a small amount of venom enters the body. After that, it is simply watching and

waiting for at least 15 minutes. Breathing trouble is the telltale sign of a severe allergy to honeybees. Itchiness and redness are expected and are considered good results.

Amber Rose, author of "Bee in Balance," began using BVT in 1993 and now offers advice to people who wish to try the treatment. Rose, a licensed acupuncturist teaching at New York College of Wholistic Health, Education and Research in Syosset, N.Y., used to treat people with bee stings out of her home. She recommends using bee stings on acupressure points.

"I believe the bee sting was the first acupuncture needle," Rose said.

"I've never had anybody not have a good response."

Rose estimated that she has conducted more than 25,000 BVT treatments. She said overall, BVT has about an 80 percent success rate. She believes she's had more success because she stings her patients on acupressure points.

Rose said she's used the treatment mostly on arthritis and MS patients, but said it can be used on most chronic ailments.

However, she said "you don't want to use it on anything acute."

When a bee stings a person, its venom, which is a toxin, goes into the body and the body must immediately respond, Rose said. The adrenal glands then produce cortisol, which moves to the affected area, getting rid of the bee sting toxin. It also gets rid of anything else that is wrong in that area. The body breaks down bee venom protein with fluid and heat, which causes swelling and redness.

"The bigger the reaction (to the bee sting) the better," Rose said. "The red, swollen reaction means that your body is performing its own detoxification."

Pat and Jerry Vickerman stand in their yard after his treatment. Although less than a half hour has passed since the stinging, Jerry Vickerman claims to already feel better than he did before. Behind them are their empty hives, soon to be filled with bees again.

**"You come to love those little bees because they make you feel like a human being again."**

**—Jerry Vickerman—**



"It's like injecting a miniature physician into the body," Rose said.

Anyone who plans on trying the therapy must build themselves up to taking 2,000-3,000 milligrams of vitamin C per day, she said, which the body needs to produce cortisol.

Although she is not a physician, Rose still must consider the ethical issues of this therapy. A bee's venom is contained in its abdomen and when it stings, the abdomen is ripped out of the body with the stinger, killing the bee. Rose said she has no problem with the fact that bees die after stinging a person. She compares it to when a bee stings a person at a picnic.

According to the American Apitherapy Society (AAS), the venom can be administered a few different ways:

- actual bee stings
- injection of a bee venom solution with a needle and syringe
- a bee venom tablet which is dissolved in distilled water
- acupuncture
- ultrasonophoresis, which mixes the venom with an ointment. The ointment is then rubbed on the affected area and penetrates the body with the help of ultrasound or electric current.

The only forms available in the United States are actual bee stings and injections.

Methods previously used to collect bee venom for the injectable solution were harmful to bees and uneconomical, according to the AAS. Newer collection devices and methods are considered safe and do not harm the bees. The devices used now will not kill more than 10 bees per hive during a 30-minute collection period. This is not a significant loss to the population of

Richard Litton, Whatcom County bee keeper, provides Pat and Jerry Vickerman with worker (sterile female) bees in jars for Bee Venom Therapy use. An empty toilet paper roll and some comb honey are also placed in the jar to provide a temporary home and food source for the bees.



**"It's like injecting a miniature physician into the body."**

**—Amber Rose—  
author of *Bee in Balance*.**

the beehive and does not affect the life span of the colony.

Rose said she began using BVT after sustaining a neck injury in a car accident, making it impossible for her to work.

"I was sitting in my own back yard and I looked up and asked for a sign," Rose said.

Just then, she said, her sister called and suggested she look for a part-time job. She then looked in the local newspapers and saw an article about a woman who'd used BVT to treat MS.

"I'd heard it was good for arthritis," Rose said. "An old wives tale."

She called a friend who was using BVT at the time and asked to go with her to her next appointment. Rose accompanied her friend and received stings that made her neck feel better. Soon after, she began researching the treatment and using it on her own acupuncture patients.

Glenda Moser, 64, of Anchorage, Alaska, also uses BVT to alleviate the pain and fatigue that come with MS. Moser's journey, though, has been a longer one than Vickerman's or Rose's.

Moser was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1974 and underwent six weeks of radiation therapy.

Moser said she suspects she was over-radiated during that time, causing her to develop severe allergies.

She was diagnosed with MS in 1981, but she said her doctor wasn't positive that it was MS and not just allergies. More than two years ago she was advised by her doctor to try BVT.

Because her problems were autoimmune in nature, Moser said she was instructed to use the venom on immune system acupuncture points. She said she has tried both having the bees sting her and injecting the bee venom solution, and prefers the injections.

"I just don't like the little things crawling on me," Moser said. She said the therapy is painful.

"In the beginning it would make me swell for days and then itch," Moser said. "But I don't have that anymore."

Before she began BVT, she said she looked extremely sick.

"I looked like I was half dead," she said. Her coloring was bad, she was underweight and was getting sick all the time.

Since she began BVT and vitamin shots, her coloring has returned and she doesn't catch viruses as fast. She said her energy level has picked up a great deal. The crowning moment for Moser was when several of her friends didn't recognize her after the therapy. She looked so much healthier than she had before.

Although some medical professionals are skeptical about this treatment, for Vickerman, Moser and Rose, the bottom line is that BVT has made them feel better and improved their quality of life.

"It was a gift that was given to us," Vickerman said, "and we just want to be able to give that gift to someone else." ❁

# striking a common chord

Many rock bands are known for their fighting and boozing. **Keri Cooper** talks to one local band trying to break that stereotype with friendship and...knitting? Photos by Katie Kulla.



The four members of Turnabout, from left to right: Adam Bollen, bass/back-up vocals; Kyle Winter, lead vocals/guitar; Mike Faris, drums; and Rob Taylor, lead guitar.



**K**yle Winter vigorously rocks back and forth. The gold trimmed, orange starbursts on his guitar strap bounce up and down, in-sync with the bobbing of his head. Though this is just a practice session, the singer/guitarist and his band move with contagious energy.

Midway through, Winter suddenly interrupts the song.

"Let's try that part again," Winter urges the other members of Turnabout. "I know that we can put that together better."

After a few quick rap, tap, taps of the drum sticks and an aggressive count off from drummer Mike Faris, the groove-based rockers find the melodic beat they are searching for. A rhythm naturally glides through the song with ease and the explosive energy of ignited fireworks.

At the end of the song, Winter, 21, looks down from his 6'2" frame at his bandmates with a look of satisfaction. He doesn't have to say a word. His nodding head and slight upturn at the corners of his mouth are all Faris, lead guitarist Rob Taylor and bass player Adam Bollen need to sense his approval. It's moments like this that make it clear that Winter is the father figure of the group, keeping the others focused and motivated, never letting them abandon their dream of making music.

Every Thursday and Sunday night the members of Turnabout, a Bellingham-based alternative rock band, plan, collaborate and practice endlessly in Taylor's one-car garage in Fairhaven. The infamous garage is covered in brightly colored carpet remnants and is wallpapered in egg crate foam. Since the band's beginning one year ago, this is where the four aspiring musicians have turned good and bad times into lyrics, and jam sessions into songs.

Turnabout, who refers to its music as well-crafted alternative rock with strong melodies, is made up of four Western students, who love music. Each possesses his own musical talent, but their unified devotion to jam and the fun they have doing it, is what makes it hard for audiences to resist them.

Most audiences, that is.

**"It was awesome seeing people dance. It's hard for people to get into a group they haven't heard."**

**—Rob Taylor—  
Turnabout guitarist**

Turnabout didn't make it past the first round of this year's Band Slam III, the annual contest that crowns Bellingham's best band. The band members say their judges were all classic rock fans and weren't receptive to their music. They say they would've had more luck if they'd had judges more in-tune with current pop music.

"It was disappointing, but not discouraging," Faris says. "We felt like we put on a show and rocked our presentation."

"We got screwed," Taylor, 21, butts in. "Just joking. The judges were fair."

All four members of Turnabout have distinctly different music tastes and have been influenced by a large spectrum of musicians. They compare their sound to the likes of Red Hot Chili Peppers, Radiohead, Vertical Horizon and Third Eye Blind.

"While there may not be one specific influence, every good band we've ever heard has influenced each of us in some unique way," Winter says.

The band wants its variety of musical influences to be heard in their songs. They say they try to keep their audiences guessing.

"We want every song to be different," Faris says. "Not something where you listen to the CD and can't tell one song from the next."

At a January show at Bellingham's Wild Buffalo House of Music, more than a few enthusiastic beer drinkers jumped to their feet to dance during Turnabout's invigorating set. The four-some label this show as their best. Seeing the audience abandon their seats and their drinks made the atmosphere and the night memorable.

"It was crazy, awesome seeing people dance," Taylor says. "It's hard for people to get into a group they haven't heard."

The band members say live shows are the place where fans will be made.

"Presentation is important for getting people into the music," Winter says. "We videotape all our shows to make sure we have it. If we don't, then we know what to work on."

The judges from Band Slam III liked Turnabout's personality

on stage and gave the band the highest rating possible in the stage presence and performance category. Their laid-back and natural personalities, aggressive playing and relaxed uniform of jeans and sneakers made it clear that they were confident and completely caught up in their music.

"When we're on stage we're just really, really into the music," Taylor says. "When the music takes over it's almost like you become a different person."

Winter grew up playing in grunge and rock bands in his hometown of Kent. He is the epicenter of Turnabout, letting his work ethic and discipline drive the band. In addition to playing Dad, he also writes Turnabout's lyrics.

"When I write lyrics I want them to be a reflection of who I am," Winter says. "They're part of me, my faith, my likes, dislikes, whatever I'm thinking about or feeling at the moment."

*Today I stepped outside my door  
Having walked this way a million  
times before  
A cup of coffee in my hand  
I'm going to get through today the  
only way I can  
I won't let today  
Be thrown away  
I'll turn this gray into green and blue  
I won't let today  
Be thrown away  
'cause every day's got something to  
say*

"Meaning"

Not all of Turnabout's songs are meant to be profound. Some are purely for the band's enjoyment, with lighthearted, joking lyrics set to fun, poppy beats.

Faris grins and his eyes begin to sparkle at the mention of playing one of the "fun songs." He quickly sits down at his drums, his hands gripping his drumsticks, ready to begin another song. Jamming with the guys, keeping Turnabout locked in time is what he loves, he says. It consumes him.

Faris, 19, is the new kid on the block, replacing ex-drummer Pat Hull after he graduated from Western last spring. He has been playing drums for six years, having previously played in a punk band. He also sang in jazz choir in high school.

"When they asked me if I wanted to jam, I was a bit shocked,"

Faris admits, exhibiting a look of exaggerated astonishment and raising his hands in disbelief. "I was really excited."

Though coming into an established band was intimidating at first, he says the longer the band is together the more they hang out and the closer they become.

"Traveling to and from shows is the best," Taylor says. "Hanging out before and after the show, just goofing around."

Besides traveling, the group gets together for movie nights and hangs out together at the INN, a Christian ministry at Western.

"For guys, we hang out a lot," Bollen says. "Any more and we'd get sick of each other."

One thing that has led to many hours of bonding is their shared obsession with impressions. They can fire Simpsons quotes at each other endlessly; once one of them starts, no one knows when the quotes will come to an end.

After much begging, Bollen, 21, slips into his Kermit the Frog voice, saying, "An impression? What do you want me to say?"

This rest of the band bursts out laughing at the performance. Soon they are demanding that Faris confess his obsession: knitting. He's yet to actually learn this new skill, but the idea of producing homemade goodies with his own two hands appeals to him. Though his new love of yarn brings many cheap shots his way, the others all agree that having a few custom-knitted beanies wouldn't be too bad.

Taylor saves Faris by changing the subject. He says being a musician means music is always on the brain, leaving little time for much else. In the past Taylor trained for triathlons and mountain bike races. Today, this cultural anthropology major has little time for anything besides snowboarding and of course his music.

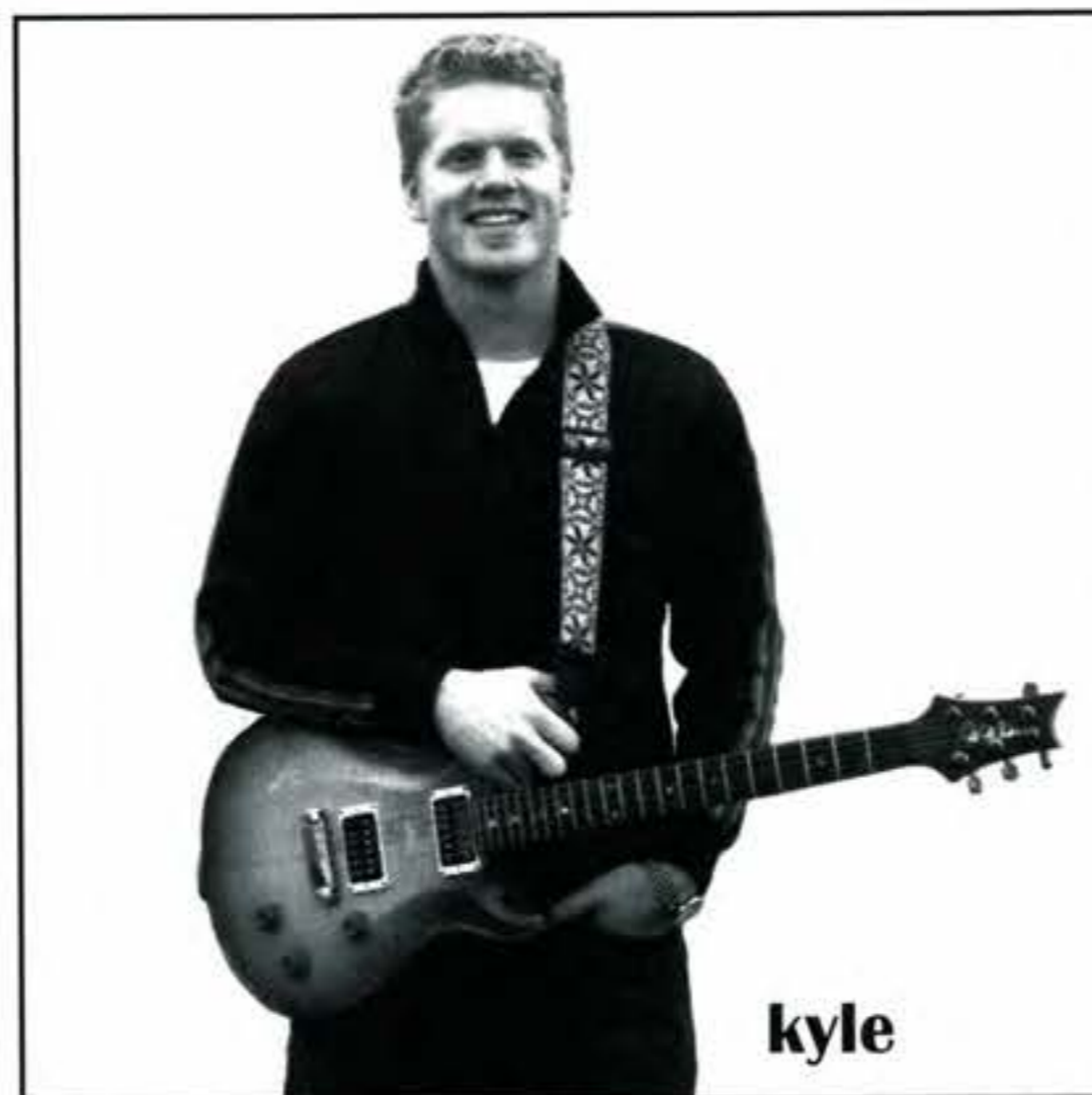
"I think about it all day long," Taylor says.

Everyone nods, agreeing that they're constantly thinking about improvements that can be made or

songs that need to be worked on.

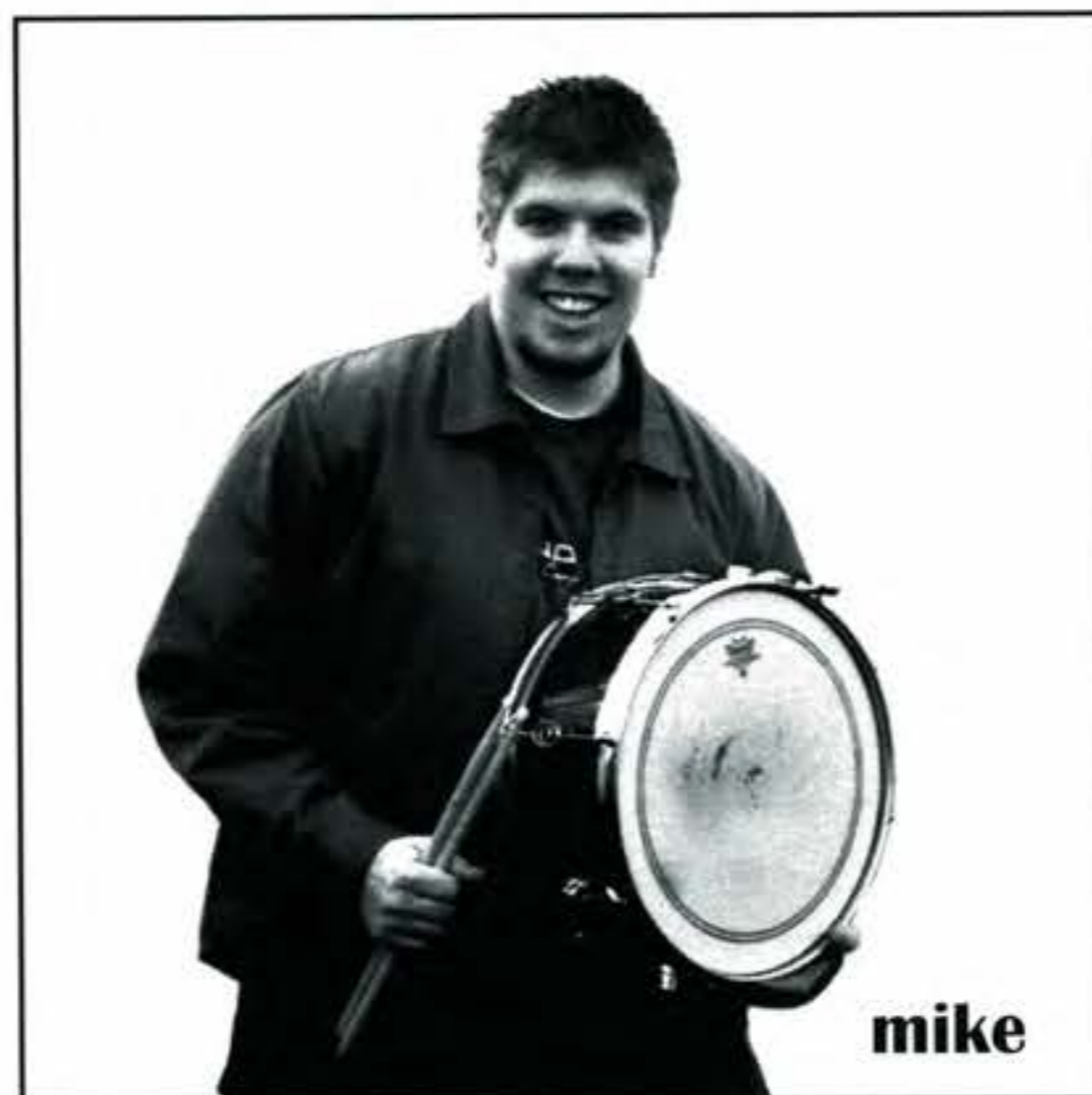
"Sometimes I get so excited about a riff or an idea for something new that it's hard to sit through class," Winter says.

The intensity of these words and the thoughtful looks on their



**"We want every song to be different, not where you listen to the CD and can't tell one song from the next."**

—Mike Faris—  
Turnabout drummer



faces are a contrast to this group of four comical guys sprawled out around the living room. But they transform into serious entertainers once they swing open the garage door and enter into practice mode. Here in Taylor's garage, amid Fender amplifiers and guitar stands is where they come together to produce Turnabout's distinctive sound.

Bollen adds his trained musical talents and smooth, deep voice to the group. He played in jazz bands in high school and taught himself how to play bass eight years ago.

Sitting on a speaker, Bollen expertly strums away on his bass, giving their current piece a deep, hard-hitting bass line. After a few leisurely measures, the tempo picks up and Bollen joins Winter in the main chorus, belting out fast-paced lyrics. The song screams with energy and heart-felt emotion.

Bollen is known as the "true, natural musician" of the band. Besides being a lover of jazz, the music minor has performed in many musicals.

Bollen, Winter and Taylor formed the band after working together on a CD project for the INN. That's when they began focusing less on playing praise songs at the INN's home church on Garden Street and more on their own music.

Though all members of Turnabout have strong Christian faiths, they say they don't want the band or its sound to be categorized as "Christian rock."

"Playing at the INN is something we do that's special, but it doesn't define who we are," Winter says.

Turnabout's music has never been referred to as Christian rock, but Winter says different individuals get different messages from his lyrics. Christian listeners might hear something that other listeners won't, he says.

"I am thankful for the INN every day," Taylor adds. "It's what brought us together, but it's not what our music is based on."

Though they're faced with a lot of uncertainties, as is every new band, Turnabout is slowly moving closer to "making it." In the next few months they'll record their first full-length CD and they've recently begun talks with a record label. In the meantime, they'll continue to book shows in

Bellingham and Seattle.

All four are quick to credit much of their success to the "incredible group of friends" they have surrounding them. Not only have their friends always attended their shows, whether Turnabout is playing for a high school youth group or in a

smoke-filled tavern in Seattle's Pioneer Square, they've also taken on the roles of promoters, web-designers and "roadies extraordinaire."

"Our friends take care of us," Bollen says. "They help out, and then they know people that can help us out, and so on."

The Turnabout men are also big on helping each other out. Faris needed plenty of help finding his way to a show at Seattle's Central Saloon in December. He drove in circles through Pioneer Square, passing the bar several times before they found the location.

They also support each other's musical decisions and ideas.

"Everything is very democratic. . . no, even more than democratic," Winter says. "We talk everything out until we all come to an agreement. We all believe in what we do."

Even their band name was a democratic decision. While Winter says that the name Turnabout just popped into his head, the rest agreed that it had a perfect tone.

"Turnabout just represents all the turning points in life," Winter says. "It's for all those times when you mess up and tell yourself it's time to turn around again."

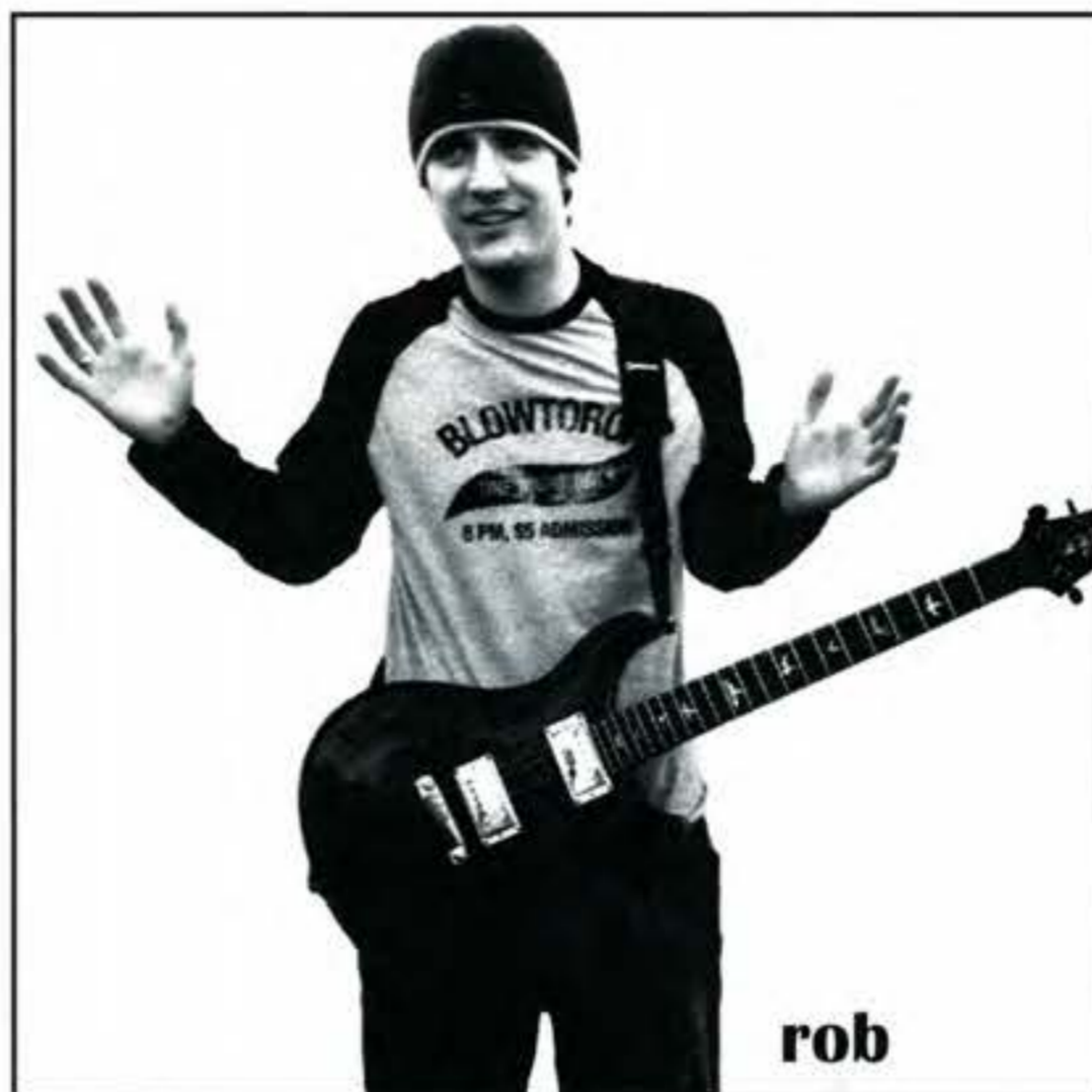
For now, Turnabout plans on making music together until they grow tired of it, which they say will never happen. Or until life takes them down different paths and they can't play together anymore.

"We want to just be the best we can and have fun doing it," Faris

says. "Right now we're having a lot of fun. We're going to take every opportunity we can. Play every chance we get."

Winter says that they're just seeing where their future leads and no matter where Turnabout's journey ends, they will be proud of their success and the memories made.

"The amount of trust we have in each other lets us create together," Winter says, "What's better than that?"

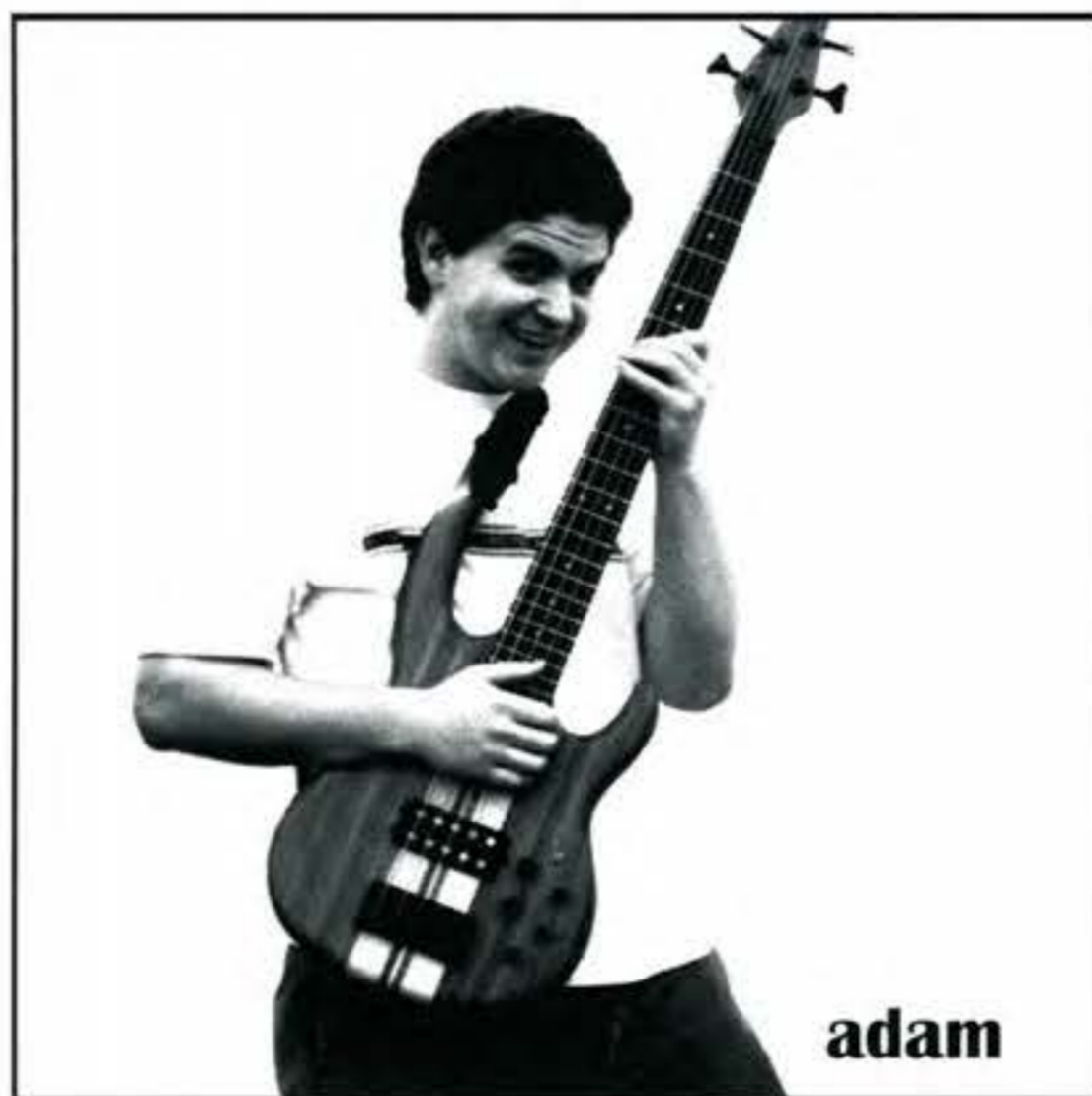


**rob**

**"Playing at The INN is something we do, but it doesn't define who we are."**

—Kyle Winter—

Turnabout singer/guitarist



**adam**



The number of car prowls and car thefts in Bellingham has significantly increased in the past year. **Robert Gara Jr.** determines what the Bellingham Police are doing to remedy this problem and what Bellingham residents can do to secure the safety of their cars. Photos by Katie Kulla.

**M**adison Miner remembers the unattractive 1964 Mustang given to him as a gift from his grandfather on his seventh birthday. The orange convertible's engine was shot, mold thrived inside the gutted interior and the roof was shredded.

Nine years later, after relentless wrench and bolt work, Miner had transformed the once abandoned car into the ideal poster car.

Miner dropped a Ford Racing, 5.0-liter, 375 horsepower engine under the hood and added a Rio Red paint job, helping the Mustang on its way to flawlessness.

With dual exhaust and Glass Pack mufflers, a new tan interior and chrome wheels, Miner transformed his American classic into a jaw-dropping show car.

On the morning of Jan. 17, Miner, a Western senior, headed out back to hop into his Mustang. In disbelief, he found the garage empty — his baby had been stolen.

"Other than a friend or family member dying, this was the worst thing that could happen to me," Miner said.

Miner's unfortunate incident is just one example of the rising problem of car thefts and car prowls in Bellingham. Last year, eight cars were stolen on Western's campus and seven were stolen in 2000.

From Sept. 20 to Feb. 5, 2001, Western reported 26 car prowls, a number that skyrocketed to 95 this year over the same period, Assistant University Police Chief Dave Doughty said. Car prowlers vandalize, steal stereos, speakers, tires, rims and everything else they can get their hands on.

"Western, over the last year has been thrashed by car prowls," Doughty said. "We have beefed up security, working closely with a Bellingham Police task force designed to reduce future prowls."

The task force, headed by Sgt. Dave Doll is comprised mostly of the Bellingham Police bicycle unit. They began patrolling in early January. Along with a handful of squad cars, the bike units patrol at night, keeping an eye open for suspicious behavior, Lt. Dac Jamison said.

More than 30 arrests have been made since the creation of the task force. Only time will tell if it will make a lasting impact on the problem, Jamison said.

The total number of car prowls in Bellingham is proportional to the number of car thefts, he said.

In 2001, 233 cars were stolen in Bellingham, up from 198 in 2000. More than 1,300 car prowls were reported in 2000 and that number increased in 2001 to more than 2000 prowls.

Car prowls are interrelated with vehicle theft because prospec-

# On the Prowl



Above: Madison Miner's 1964 convertible Ford Mustang. After he worked on restoring his car for many years, it was stolen from the garage behind his house. Right: Although Madison Miner's car was returned to him, the thieves did cause some significant damage in their search for his stereo system. Here they have removed and cut the wires connecting his custom radio to his CD player. They also cracked the original windshield and broke the trunk lock.

tive prowls sometimes turn into thefts. If a spare key is found or the situation is ideal for a clean getaway, thieves will take the car, Jamison said.

He said the majority of car prowlers are drug users who will steal anything valuable and sell it as fast as possible. A book of compact discs can be worth a lot, each CD selling for \$4 at a second-hand store.

On Jan. 7, Western senior Sabrina Alberstein, 21, was victim to a car prowler. She and some friends went to catch a late movie at Sehome Cinema. On her way out of the theater, she found her passenger side window smashed and her stereo stolen along with a few CDs.

"Not only was my car's window smashed," Alberstein said, "but the four cars next to mine were as well."

Car prowls are a low-priority problem because they are only property crimes, Doughty said. Crimes of this nature only affect the victim financially, so police don't or can't put as much effort into preventing them as they do violent crimes.

Car thieves have a couple of favorite locations to select a car of interest in Bellingham, Doughty said.

"Western provides a wonderful assortment of cars in its C-Lot parking area," he said. "And Bellis Fair Mall serves as a dealership for thieves."

Breaking into cars between classes gives thieves good cover because no one suspects their car to be stolen in broad daylight, Doughty said.

The rise of car prowls has also contributed to an increase in identity theft.

Jamison said prowlers can get their hands on personal information such as a driver's license, Social Security numbers and credit cards. Thieves can sell personal information over the Internet quickly and easily. By the next day, charges on credit cards can be traced across the nation, he said.

"Credit cards can be issued in your name as well as cell phones," Jamison said. "(Thieves) will forge your checks and empty accounts before you realize your property has been stolen. I have heard of cases where people have spent over five years trying to get their lives back."

Last year, more than 2000 cases of identity theft were reported in Washington state, Jamison said.

Car prowlers sometimes overlook stereos and speakers in hopes of finding bank statements or any other document with important numbers. It's easier to generate funds through fraud than by selling stolen merchandise, Jamison said. He advises victims to check their credit reports for any discrepancies.

Stealing and stripping a car of its parts is another common criminal practice.

Jamison said thieves sometimes abandon the stolen car's frame

and hope it's recovered. Thieves hope the owner will refuse the mangled car and will settle with their insurance company. Eventually, the car will go to a wholesale auto auction, so that the original thieves can bid on the car and buy it legally, receiving a new legal title for the car. Afterwards, they replace all the original stripped parts, the car instantly becomes much more valuable and they can legally sell it and make a huge profit.

"Car prowlers and chop shops have a favorite," Jamison said. "Hondas are the number one stolen vehicles. Their parts are worth the most and are the most popular. Japanese imports in general are stolen most often."

Precautions can be taken to prevent identity theft and deter criminals from invading your car.

"A rule of thumb is to never keep your Social Security number with your license," Jamison said. "Always take your stereo face plate out, put your name on all your CDs and don't leave a wallet, checkbook or keys in the car. A good thief can steal your car in less than 10 seconds, so making your car unappealing is key."

A dead switch can be the most effective deterrent for car thieves,

Jamison said. It's a hidden switch, usually under the dash, that disconnects the car's ignition. With the switch off, starting the car is impossible and thieves are left without a ride home.

University Police officer Ed Malpica said the little things one can do are sometimes the best way to safeguard a vehicle.

"Make sure your car is secure at all times and never leave a spare key in a magnetic container under the fender," Malpica said. "Thieves know all the tricks."

As for Madison Miner, his story had a happy ending. He is one of the fortunate few. Three days after his car was stolen, Miner received a phone call from the Bellingham Police; his baby had been found.

An owner of a storage complex on the Nooksack Indian Reservation noticed a peculiar car seemingly abandoned in his lot. Miner drove to the reservation immediately. Once again his car had been abandoned, and once again he had rescued it.

"I thought for sure if my car ever was found, it would be in such a condition that I wouldn't want it back," Miner said.

Other than a couple of dents in the trunk, some tools missing and a crack in the windshield, the car was virtually flawless.

"(Miner's) incident is very lucky," Jamison said. "We usually find stolen cars in ditches or completely stripped of their parts."

Since the theft of his car, Miner is taking extra precautions to protect his baby. The garage now contains a state-of-the-art motion sensor, which sends a high-pitched alarm sound throughout the house when triggered. Miner also built an enforced wall around his car and secured every possible entrance. With the installation of a car alarm and a dead switch, Miner hopes to never experience this again. ❖

**"A good thief can steal your car in less than 10 seconds, so making your car unappealing is key."**

**—Dac Jamison—  
Bellingham Police Lt.**



Every November, a small town 50 miles north of Vancouver, British Columbia, receives some very important out-of-town visitors. By mid-January, these visitors to Brackendale, population 1,500, outnumber the permanent resident population. The visitors, more than 2,000 bald eagles, utilize the bare, lifeless Cottonwood trees that line the Squamish River. The trees provide the perfect watchtower for salmon hunting.

Brackendale houses the largest eagle population on earth. Each year at least 2,000 of these majestic birds make the annual pilgrimage to the Brackendale Eagle Reserve. They feast on the abundance of chum salmon running in the river.

The 1,100-acre Brackendale Eagle Reserve is located inside Tantalus Provincial Park, a 25,000-acre area divided by the

Squamish River. On one side of the river, visitors can walk a three-mile trail, which offers a view of the eagle habitat located on the other side. The trail is on the opposite side of the eagle reserve so the eagles can be at peace, but can still be seen. The Squamish Valley's old growth forest, combined with the large salmon run on the river, provide an excellent environment for the eagle habitat.

The eagle habitat became popular with the public after it broke the world record for the largest, single-day eagle count in 1994. Brackendale still holds the record with a one-day count of 3,766 eagles. This broke the previous record of 3,495 eagles counted in Haines, Alaska. In comparison, Washington's largest eagle habitat is along the Skagit River, and hosts about 400 eagles.

# *Just Visiting*

Not all birds fly south for the winter. **Jeremy Gibson** travels to Brackendale, British Columbia, a place where thousands of eagles vacation during the coldest months of the year. Photos courtesy of Mike Hughes





Members of the B.C Wildlife Service, the Squamish Estuary Conservation Society and the Brackendale Art Gallery Society take the count. There are a total of 18 areas in which counters will spend one day looking at the sky for eagles. At the end of the day, counters return to the Brackendale Art Gallery, where they input their day's count. The count for 2002 is more than 2000.

"The count only reflects about 20 percent of the total eagles up here," said local eagle-enthusiast Len Goldsmith. "That's only a small percentage of the ones that are actually in the valley."

Goldsmith, 76, said that the volunteer counters can face adverse conditions, and sometimes areas are nearly impossible to access.

"We have a hard time with some areas," Goldsmith said. "Some areas need a four-wheel-drive or even a snowmobile to get into."

He also said that some areas require snowshoes or skis to access as there can be up to two feet of snow.

In order to find protection for these magnificent birds, Goldsmith and his friend, 69-year-old Thor Froslev, brought a petition to the B.C. government, in order to establish part of this area as a provincial park. They were successful, and in 1996, approximately 1,375 acres, were designated as the Brackendale Eagle Reserve and is now a protected park.

"Len came to see me one day in 1995 and told me about the idea to make the area into an eagle reserve," Denmark native Thor Froslev said. "We planned, mapped it all out and got 17 organizations to back us, and had 25 personal letters of support written before we took it to the government."

Froslev also decided that a lot of publicity was needed in order to ensure the success of their mission. He and Len contacted a local writer from the Brackendale paper, *The Times*. A story titled, "A Justice of Eagles" was written about the area and won an environmental journalism award. This gave Brackendale a lot of publicity. The late photographer Jack Barry also helped by writing a story about the eagles of Brackendale. He sent it to 45 countries over the news wire, which put Brackendale and its eagles on the world map.

**More than 2,000 majestic bald eagles reside in the forests surrounding the small town of Brackendale every November through February.**

**"The count only reflects about 20 percent of the total eagles up here."**

**—Len Goldsmith—  
eagle enthusiast**

"We were smart enough to run all the publicity up the flagpole," Froslev said. This was a key factor in getting the approval of the protected status by the government. This protective status eliminated the potential for logging, mining or any other development.

"It took a lot of effort and pushing," Goldsmith said. "When the government told us we had enough parks, I said, 'You can never have enough parks.'"

He said that creating the eagle reserve, which prohibits any development on the land, is vital to the eagles' survival.

"Eagles need the heavy forest cover in the winter for roosting," Goldsmith said.

He said that trees were essential for the birds so they could perch while hunting for food. Eagles in Squamish rely on the carcasses of the dead Chum salmon that spawn up the river in late December and early January. The river has natural gravel bars where the dead fish wash up and are eaten by hungry eagles.

Goldsmith said that by logging the area too heavily, the forest valley will not absorb the water from rainfall. The river will rise too high and wash the gravel bars away, taking the eagles lunch with it.

The bald eagle's scientific name is *Haliaeetus Leucocephalus*. *Haliaeetus* means sea eagle and *Leucocephalus* refers to the white head. Adult eagles average 15-16 pounds, with females usually weighing slightly more than males. The adult wingspan of a bald eagle can reach up to seven feet, and their razor sharp talons are used to pick fish out the water.

Although the best time to see the eagles is in December or January, the eagles come to Brackendale in November and usually stay until mid-March.

Eagles, however, are at their most vulnerable state in the cold, winter months, and locals urge people to view the eagles with responsibility. Any disruption can cause the eagles to expend valuable energy — energy they desperately need to save for feeding. Information booths have been set up at the main viewing sites, and volunteers are available to assist watchers and answer questions.

"There are three things we ask of visitors," Froslev said. "Use binoculars when viewing the eagles, keep your dogs and children on a leash and please do not go out on the sandbars.."

Froslev added that people need to remember that they on one side of the river, and that the eagles are on the other, with the boundary line being the river in the middle. ❖

#### **Directions to Brackendale from Bellingham:**

Take I-5 north to the Peace Arch border crossing. Be sure to have your passport or birth certificate and driver's license for Customs. Then take Highway 99 North through Vancouver. This is also known as the Sea-to-Sky or Whistler Highway. Follow 99 North through Squamish. Four miles outside of Squamish, make a left turn onto Depot Road. Follow Depot Road a half-mile to Government Road. The eagle viewing area is to the left on Government Road. The Brackendale Art Gallery is to the right. It has maps and other information about the eagles.

# the Tears of Koma Kulshan

*To seek the tears of Koma Kulshan  
Follow your heart - beware of man  
Journey to mountain of fire and ice  
Show respect - give sacrifice  
Look into the mouth of the sleeping giant  
Now quiet, but defiant  
The dragon puffs steam  
His eyes a gleam, like mist in a dream  
Where the sun rises and sacred rainbows fall  
Trees grow thick and very tall  
Springs boil hot  
Most should be not  
Be quick when you pass the dragon's eye  
Take great heed what you see in the sky  
Snatch the tears from the glacier cold  
The creeks run swift and one must be bold  
Follow the peaks and conquer the valley  
Quest on through the dragon's belly  
Two creeks merge at the base of his tail  
Alas here ends the jeweled trail*

**A treasure of Mount Baker was revealed to Robbie Sooter in a riddle when he was a child. Brian Harrington decodes the secrets of Rainbow Blue and the relationship between a man, a riddle and a rare gem. Photos by Katie Kulla.**

**R**obbie Sooter sits back in a chair drawing in the warmth of a cigarette, deep in thought. He reaches up and scratches his hairy, sun-weathered chin.

He looks as though he is searching for the right words in the dissipating smoke. He's trying to remember the words to the riddle.

Sooter, 45, first heard the riddle from his grandfather when he was six years old. The riddle reveals the spot on Mount Baker where his grandfather found Rainbow Blue.

Rainbow Blue is an agate gem found in one specific spot -- on the south side of Mount Baker, a couple of miles up the mountain, near the crater.

"He left hints of landmarks located within the riddle, so that I had to go and find the spot for myself," Sooter says.

Sooter's grandfather, a Whatcom County resident born at the turn of the century, lived in the logging town of Kendall, Wash.,

and spent a lot of time around the mountain. He happened upon the spot one day while hiking.

Sooter's grandfather passed the location on to his grandson in the form of a riddle.

"He basically said, 'if you can find it, it's yours,'" Sooter says.

The beginning stages of Multiple Sclerosis have taken a toll on Sooter's small frame. He can't do all of the things he used to, but he still gets up to the spot on Mount Baker.

"I love to get out; basically it's a hobby."

He began this hobby when he was 18.

Finding the spot was no easy task. Sooter made 12 trips before finding the exact site.

"I would drive up and go swimming in Baker Lake, then spend a couple of hours driving the logging roads looking for a spot to get out and walk around," he says.

Sooter ended up spending more time looking for the spot than he needed to.

"I stood in the correct site three times before I realized I had found it."

Searching along a creek bed, Sooter came upon the spot just after it had rained. The rain revealed the answer.

"It was like the lights came on," Sooter says. "The color comes out when the gems get wet, otherwise it looks almost gray."

The agate stands out against the surrounding rock just enough for a person looking for it to see it. To the untrained eye it looks like any another stone.

"It takes a trained eye," Sooter says. "You have to know how to look for it, or you can walk over this stuff all day."

Sooter's partner in looking for Rainbow Blue is Larry Rowse. The two used to work together and now are roommates. Rowse, 50, has been searching with Sooter for the last four years and is developing an eye for the stone.

"Larry recently went up on his own but was turned back by the weather," Sooter says.

"I got stuck about a mile away from the spot," Rowse says. "I had one more hill to go, but the snow was over two and a half feet deep.

"I knew it would only get worse from there."

Rowse says the area is not totally safe, so the journey must be made in good conditions. On one trip to the spot Sooter says a boulder dislodged and nearly crushed Rowse.

"It's a dangerous place," Rowse says. "You are up so high on the mountain that it's also very cold.

"The river banks aren't stable," Rowse says. "With the rushing water every time you go in there, the creek bottom changes."

Sooter has spent the last 27 years of his life finding the spot and searching for the gem.

"I feel very in tune with the area," he says. "It seems to almost talk to me."

According to Sooter, the native tribes of the area used to search for and collect the stone. They would bring baskets of artifacts and leave them as offerings to the mountain.

Sooter says he has found arrowheads and other artifacts at the site.

Although blue is the most prevalent color in the gem, it also contains traces of red, green and white. Each color has significance to the tribe, Sooter says.

The blue represents sky and water, the red is fire and stone, the green represents grass and trees, and the white is for snow and clouds, he says.

Found in the veins from glacier deposits, large pieces of the gem are a rarity, Sooter has more than 100 pounds of the gem that he's found, not including the jewelry he has made.

Rings and bracelets made with the gem are part of Sooter's daily accessories, along with a large piece mounted in a necklace.

Sooter and his partner sell the gem in weights of 1 to 40 grams at a price of \$5 to \$25 per gram depending on quality.

"I do make my own jewelry, but I am looking for a wholesaler," Sooter says.

Sooter believes he and Rowse are the only people who currently know the exact location of the site. He plans to pass the

secret on to his children.

They offer the riddle as a guide for people who want to find the spot on their own, but Sooter says he isn't worried that it will become overrun with those eager to find their own agates.

"There are people looking," Sooter says. "Let them look." ❖



Above: Robbie Sooter sits in his Bellingham home behind a coffee table strewn with the rare agate.  
Below: Robbie Sooter's hands display many pieces of Rainbow Blue and also show his jewelry-making skills.





**brianHARRINGTON**



Wanting to write this story since he learned of it from a co-worker, senior public relations major **Brian Harrington** thanks everyone who helped him out. Writing this story has inspired Brian to explore and enjoy the Bellingham outdoors in the months left before graduation.

**Brooke Geery** moved to Washington from Vermont to snowboard at Mount Baker. She uses the experience of writing about Mervin as an excuse to drop knowledge about the company every time she sees someone riding a Gnu or Lib Tech snowboard. She has previously been published in Snowboarder, Transworld Snowboarding and the Western Front.

**Jeremy Gibson** chose this story because the eagle is the symbol of freedom to the United States. The senior public relations major believes educating people about eagles and their habitat are important to the survival of these majestic birds since humans are their biggest threat.

**Keri Cooper**, a senior public relations major, goes behind the music of a local band to show what it takes to turn four musicians' aspirations into reality. She hopes this story will entertain as well as inspire others to follow their dreams.



**jeremyGIBSON**



**brookeGEERY**



**keriCOOPER**



**caraHAZZARD**

After experiencing the pain of arthritis, **Cara Hazzard**, a public relations major was inspired to research Bee Venom Therapy, an alternative method for treating the chronic pain of arthritis and Multiple Sclerosis.

**Emily Christianson** recognizes that contraception is an important part of our lives. Whether we choose to be abstinent, use condoms, hormonal birth control or any other method, we have to make the best decision for ourselves as individuals, she said. She hopes her article about new contraceptives will inform readers about the new options available to them.

**Raena Downer** doesn't think she'll do any Dumpster diving after writing her story, but she's glad she got the chance to understand more about it. She wants to thank Lance, who made her watch the documentary on diving for food, which intrigued her enough to look into it further. She hopes others will be as interested by this lifestyle as she was.

**Robert Gara Jr.**, a public relations major, hopes his story will open people's eyes to the realities of car prowls and car theft. He said he felt compelled to write the story after a close friend's car was stolen. In his quest, he learned how serious and large the problem has become.



**raenaDOWNER**



**emilyCHRISTIANSON**



**robertGARAjr**





