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Erin Crumpacker
Western Washington University

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KLIPSUN

A Western Washington University Publication



street racing
dog sledding
artificial reefs



klipsun MAGAZINE

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e-mail } klipsun@hotmail.com

web } klipsun.wvu.edu

editorial staff

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Erin Crumpacker.

MANAGING EDITOR Greg Woehler.

STORY EDITORS Angie Bring, C. Nicki Krom.

PHOTO EDITOR Katie Kulla.

CO-LEAD DESIGNERS Ruthie Nicklaus,

Heather Nordquist. DESIGNER Lynn Fleming.

ADVISOR Shearlean Duke.

staff writers

Tessa Allison. Sasha Benko. Carise Bogar. Allison Butler. Emily Christianson. Keri Cooper. Lisa Cozart. Raena Downer. Alicia Franklin. Alashia Freimuth. Robert Gara Jr. Brooke Geery. Jeremy Gibson. Sara Haemmerle. Brian Harrington. Cara Hazzard. Jennifer Jennings. Stephanie Kitchens. Lisa Martineau. Camille Penix. Sonja Rose. Jessica Sparks. Karla Tillman. Sarah Warren.

contributors



Brooke Geery is a junior public relations major. After writing this story, she will always be able to differentiate between construction sites, car accidents and Western's Outdoor Sculpture collection. This is her second contribution to Klipsun.



Sonja Rose, a senior public relations major, hopes her story will shed light on the unexplored and sometimes misunderstood profession of funeral directors. Those in the profession celebrate life rather than death in every aspect of their lives. She thanks everyone who contributed to her story.



A junior majoring in journalism, Karla Tillman said Joe's Garden has always fascinated her. Having lived in Bellingham most of her life, she was intrigued by this produce farm which has survived for years in the midst of a growing city. She hopes this article will inspire people to stop by Joe's Garden.



Senior journalism major Camille Penix discovered Bellingham's co-housing community through a friend. She hopes her article will help others shed their misconceptions of co-housing. She has been published in the *Western Front*, *The Polaris* and *Alaska Airlines*, *Midwest Express* and *Horizon Air* magazines.



Senior public relations major Stephanie Kitchens said she enjoyed writing her final Klipsun article about dogsledding. While exploring this topic she gained a new appreciation for dog trainers. The excitement and eagerness of the dogs, she said, reminded her of small children.

editor's note

At Klipsun, we don't assign stories to our reporters. We editors toss out ideas and suggest ways to focus or expand stories, but our reporters are pretty much free to write about anything. Hence, we never know if dominant themes will exist until we pick seven or eight for publication and look at them together. Sometimes themes are obvious and sometimes it takes a little work and imagination to see them.

As hard as I looked, I just couldn't find any grand unifying themes in these stories. Sorry. What I *can* say is that they're all about interesting people doing interesting things in and around Bellingham (Yes, the artificial reef story centers on Nanaimo, British Columbia, but it's still fairly close. Give me a break, I'm trying.).

For a relatively small city, Bellingham is blessed with an incredible variety of stories. Perhaps it has to do with being a college town or its proximity to an international border or its juxtaposition between the mountains and the water. Whatever the reason, this is a great town in which to be a writer.

Several of these stories caught me by surprise. I've driven by Joe's Garden countless times without ever thinking about the people who work there. It was my loss. I had no idea I could find out about my past lives or have my aura smoothed at the Church of Divine Man. I haven't paid as much attention to Western's sculpture collection as I should have. The folks living in Bellingham's co-housing community are redefining domestic life just a few miles from my house and I didn't know anything about them. I obviously need to get out more.

Come to think of it, maybe Bellingham doesn't have any more good stories than any other town. Maybe interesting people and stories are anywhere you really look for them. Either way, it bodes well for our magazine.

We hope you enjoy reading these stories as much as we did. If you have any questions, comments or story ideas, please call us at (360) 650-3737 or e-mail us at klipsun@hotmail.com.

Thanks for reading.



Greg Woehler, managing editor

SOWING IN THE CITY FOUR

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For many city-dwellers, the supermarket is the closest option for fresh produce. Bellingham residents have another alternative. Joe's Garden, on Taylor Avenue, has sold fresh fruits and vegetables from their city garden since 1933. This article unearths the heritage and tradition of Joe's Garden.

MI CASA ES TÚ CASA EIGHT

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Bellingham has many neighborhoods; however, residents may go years without really getting to know their neighbors. Co-housing is different. This story reveals a group of people on Donovan Street who get to know their neighbors and make decisions collectively within their unique community.

AN OPEN AIR MUSEUM TWELVE

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Many students graduate Western with little knowledge or appreciation of the world-famous sculptures that are scattered around campus. This article follows one student on her quest to educate others about Western's Outdoor Sculpture Collection.

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They spend thousands of dollars and countless hours tweaking their cars. They face the possibility of tickets, arrest or a deadly accident. Two Western students explain why street racing means so much to them.

SEEING THE SPIRIT SPECTRUM TWENTY

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Church of Divine Man combines the psychic world with the belief in God. The church view spirits as seven color-coded energy levels that surround the body. This article reveals what reporter Tessa Allison's spirit says about her past and present life.

WHAT LIES BENEATH TWENTY FOUR

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They're not just blowing stuff up, they're building homes and playgrounds. Learn how marine life and scuba divers are benefiting from efforts to turn old ships into artificial reefs.

THE FAMILY BUSINESS TWENTY SIX

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While many people avoid funerals and fear death, undertakers and funeral service professionals face the reality of mortality every day. This article explores the misunderstood profession through the eyes of those who perform its duties.

READY TO RUN TWENTY EIGHT

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In most sports, trainers have to understand their athlete's skills and weaknesses. In dogsledding this connection is required as well. This story looks at the strong relationships between local mushers and their dogs.

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jennifer jennings



Jennifer L. Jennings, a public relations major, is excited to share this story about street racing. She is thankful to those who contributed to the article to help dispell some negative stereotypes as well as the dangers linked to racing.

tessa allison



As Tessa Allison wrapped up her story, she recieved news that the Church of Divine Man was closing its Bellingham location. Saddend by this news, she feels that CDM's spiritual development practice extends beyond local Sunday church services.

alashia freimuth



Alashia Freimuth, a junior public relations major, loves exploring new things. Although she has never been diving she hopes her curiostiy about artificial reefs and scuba diving will encourage others to give it a try.



sowing in the city

Karla Tillman unearths the tradition and heritage of Joe's Garden, a 7.5-acre farm on Taylor Avenue, in Bellingham. Locally owned and operated since 1933, Joe's Garden offers Bellingham residents pesticide-free, hand picked produce every summer. Photos by Katie Kulla.



The clouds of breath from Carl Weston's mouth disappear as he enters the warmth of the greenhouse at Joe's Garden, his 7.5-acre farm on Taylor Avenue. Except for the monotonous hum of the fan, the greenhouse is quiet. Weston and three other workers are diligently planting garlic seeds. The 80-by-50 foot greenhouse shelters hundreds of perfectly aligned black plastic containers, each filled with soil and seeds. Tiny plants and leaves stand poised in the containers, waiting for their chance to blossom and flourish. Hundreds of green baskets hanging from the ceiling sway with the breeze from the fan, as purple and yellow petals of pansies and impatiens peek over the edges.

Weston, 57, of Bellingham, glances up from his work. His khaki baseball cap and sunglasses fail to hide his frustrated expression. Walking through the maze of plants, he stops at a row of wooden crates filled with soil.

"This was a bad bunch of seeds," he says, frowning as he runs his fingers through the soil speckled with patches of green stalks. He holds his flattened hand about four inches above the soil. "These plants should all be about this high by now. I should be able to plant them outside right now."

Weston says these plants, called "tall telephone" peas, are important for his business.

"They're one of the biggest and most popular crops we have," he says. "It's a zoo around here when the peas are ready. I'll have to order more seeds and start all over."

Weston walks over to the cool greenhouse, another of his four greenhouses, to check on other plants. Weston says many bedding plants are placed in the cool greenhouse to "toughen them up," so they're prepared for shipment to grocery stores. Plants in the warm greenhouse will be directly transplanted to Weston's farm. He says he does about 50 percent of his business from his greenhouses, and the other 50 percent from the produce in his garden.

Clouds of breath are visible again inside the cool greenhouse. Here, the plants also sit in symmetry, forming elaborate rows of greenery. A distinct smell wafts around the Walla Walla Sweet Onion plants where Weston stands. Strawberry, rosemary, lettuce, sage, spearmint and other plants seem perfectly still as they grow; the only sound is the patter of condensation dropping from the ceiling onto the leaves.

A thin woman wearing a red fleece jacket, black stretch pants, baseball cap and running shoes darts by, peaking her head into the greenhouse. Karol Weston nods to her husband.

"I'm taking the first load to Mount Vernon," she says as she rushes into the greenhouse, loading crates onto a rolling rack. "Aren't they beautiful?" she asks, stroking the leaves of a plant. She shivers in the chilly atmosphere, then scurries away to load plants into the white Joe's Garden truck painted with carrots.

"Karol moves 100 miles per hour," Weston says as his wife disappears. "She's 50 years old, but she runs around here like she's 20."

It's now 11 a.m., and Weston walks outside to begin his work

in the garden. He greets his son, Jason Weston, 29, who is working alongside two other employees raking soil.

Because the Westons enjoy gardening so much, they have made it a part of their everyday life. Since 1983, they have tended to their beloved garden 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., six days a week, nine months a year. "Our work allows us to be outdoors instead of behind a desk," Jason says. "It's our passion."

Joe's Garden has remained a commercial vegetable farm since 1933, when the land was purchased by Joe and Ann Bertero. While the city of Bellingham continues to grow and develop, the small world of Joe's Garden has been preserved over the years. The Westons take pride in continuing the Berteros' tradition, sharing the fruits of their labor with all of Bellingham. The store at Joe's Garden, opened by the Berteros in 1934, is still open today.



Less than 50 feet from where Jason and Carl Weston rake the soil, a quaint white house with green trimmed windows sits overlooking the garden.

Inside, the original owners of Joe's Garden peacefully enjoy their day. Joe Bertero, 95, wears a red plaid shirt similar to the one worn by Carl Weston, as if it were the uniform of a farmer. A tuft of white hair sticks out like a child's cowlick, and wrinkles form around his eyes and mouth when he smiles. Bertero stands by a window in the house built in 1933, looking at the greenhouse that was once half the size it is now.

Bertero purchased the land he lives on today at age 27. Born in 1906, Bertero grew up in northern Italy where he learned how to farm from his family. Bertero came to America when he

Top: The original owners and founders of Joe's Garden, Joe and Ann Bertero. Bottom: Carl and Karol Weston, the current owners and managers of the garden.

was 18, to establish a new life and fulfill his dreams of working in the farming industry. After his first job milking cows in Ferndale, Bertero went to work at his uncle's vegetable farm, Iowa Gardens, on Iowa Street. There, he delivered produce to local markets and eventually took over the farm when his uncle died.

Through a co-worker, Joe met a woman four years younger than he. Ann Del-Tedesca, like Bertero, was an immigrant from northern Italy. As a teen, Del-Tedesca sold produce at the Farmer's Market in downtown Bellingham. Having so much in common, Del-Tedesca and Bertero instantly bonded. They fell in love and married in January 1931.

Two years later, the newlyweds moved to Taylor Avenue and created a lavish garden adjacent to their home.

"We were poor as church mice, if that expression still exists," Ann Bertero says. "But we worked hard to make a living."

The Berteros began selling vegetables labeled "From Joe's" to local grocery stores. The labeled produce soon became well known in Bellingham for its quality. Joe's Garden began to prosper.

"When the second World War began, we made a lot of money by sending cauliflower and celery to the Army down in Seattle," Bertero says. "We also saved money by growing a lot of our own food. We only had to buy things like salt, olive oil and meat."

In the 1950s, Bertero hired neighborhood kids at 50 cents an hour. Carl Weston was hired and began the morning of his 15th birthday, June 9, 1959. It was a turning point in his life, a birthday Carl would always remember.

"I spent my teenage years working almost every day at the garden," Weston says. "I probably spent more time with Joe and Ann than I did my own parents. I basically grew up at Joe's Garden."

Weston was a fervent worker. He fell in love with the garden, devoting about 65 hours per week to his work.

"I had practically no leisure time," he says. "I didn't play any sports or anything; I just worked at the garden. I enjoyed it so much, and it was my ideal job."

Weston realized he wanted to do this for the rest of his life. He told the Berteros he wanted to buy the garden in the future, whenever they were ready to retire.

"If you ever want to sell it, I'm here," Weston told them.

At 18, Weston began saving a small amount of his earnings each month toward buying the garden.

"I wasn't sure if they would sell me their garden," Weston says. "Many of my co-workers were also making offers."

Weston took his first break from the garden to join the Army in 1964. After completing his mandatory three years of service, he was discharged in 1967 and went straight home to continue working for Bertero.

Weston and his co-workers, who were also his close friends, began working harder than ever, spending around 90 hours per week at the garden.

"Sometimes we got the chance to go out partying at the end of a long day at the garden," he says. "We'd go out and party, go back to the garden at six the next morning, and then swear to God we'd never go out again. It was a continuous cycle."

Two years later, working at Joe's Garden provided Weston with another life-changing experience. One afternoon, 18-year-old Karol Sanders went to Joe's to get fresh produce for dinner. Eyeing a shirtless Weston carrying a crate of lettuce on his shoulder, she was instantly fascinated by him. She soon left her fiancée for Weston.

Karol Weston married Carl a year later on Valentine's day. She refers to the incident at

Joe's as, "one of those moments that was just meant to be."

Weston decided to find a winter job when the gardening season ended in late October. In 1970, Weston took a job offer at Uniflite, a boat building company. After a few years of balancing jobs, Weston decided to work full-time for Uniflite. Working at Joe's wasn't allowing him enough time with Karol.

"Even though I liked working at Uniflite I was constantly thinking about Joe's," Weston says. "When springtime came around, I was like a fisherman wanting to go out to sea; I just wanted to be out in the garden."

Weston frequently stopped by the garden to buy produce and to remind the Berteros he was still interested in purchasing it.

Finally, in 1983, after 50 years, the Berteros

were ready to sell the garden.

"We were getting too old to take care of it," Joe says. "And I knew how much Carl wanted it because he was always reminding me."

Weston says Bertero gave him a lot of responsibility as a teenager, so he felt he was experienced and ready to manage the garden.



Top: Carl Weston smooths the soil where pea seeds had recently been planted. Middle: Inside one of the greenhouses at Joe's Garden. Bottom: Karol Weston plants seedlings into larger containers by hand.

"We treated our customers like relatives."

—Ann Bertero—
former Joe's Garden owner.

“We still do everything from weeding to harvesting by hand.

And I always remember what Joe taught me as a kid: ‘Always respect the ground.’”

—Carl Weston—
Joe’s Garden owner



The Westons made an arrangement with the Berteros. They agreed to take over the garden while allowing the Berteros to continue living in their home on the garden property.

They continued to call it “Joe’s Garden” out of respect for the Berteros, Weston says.

“I kept the transfer of ownership really low-key,” he says. “For the first five or six years, I treated Joe as my boss. I didn’t want to just take over the garden and change everything. Most people still think Joe owns the garden.”

Bertero continues to do odd jobs around the garden. He has a personal garden and a small 8-by-10 foot greenhouse in his yard, where he still grows flowers and vegetables.

“I grow my own tomatoes,” Bertero says. “I usually just give them away to friends.”

Bertero still loves braiding the garlic every August, a task he has done since he was a child. He braids up to 5,000 pounds of garlic from August to October.

After purchasing the land, the Westons devoted themselves to maintaining the garden with Bertero’s original standards.

“We still do everything from weeding to harvesting by hand,” Weston says. “And I always remember what Joe taught me as a kid: always respect the ground.”

Weston is proud of the way he and his family manage the garden. “There aren’t too many commercial gardens today that are hand-raked,” he says as he rakes the soil, preparing it for seeds.

Unlike most commercial farms, the Westons haven’t used pesticides for over 16 years. Continuing the Berteros’ traditions, they still deliver produce to local stores and nurseries such as Haggen, Cost Cutter, Red Apple and Bakerview Nursery. They continue to grow the same vegetables the Berteros did, such as garlic, cauliflower, broccoli and carrots. They still plant everything close together to get as much from their farm as possible.

“I’m going to make sure this land stays a garden for as long as it can be. We love what we do, and that’s why Joe’s Garden is still here.”

—Carl Weston—
Joe’s Garden owner

Weston says he gets more from his 7.5-acre farm than most get from a 30-acre farm.

“We treated our customers like relatives,” Ann Bertero says.

Dorothy Ramsland, who has been a regular customer at Joe’s Garden since moving to Bellingham in 1949, says she has always enjoyed going to the garden. She buys produce and flowers at Joe’s Garden because of their customer service.

“Joe and Ann were so friendly and always gave you personal attention,” Ramsland says. “And the Westons are wonderful. If I want a bouquet of only zinnias, Karol will actually go out and cut a fresh bouquet just for me. That’s definitely great customer service.”

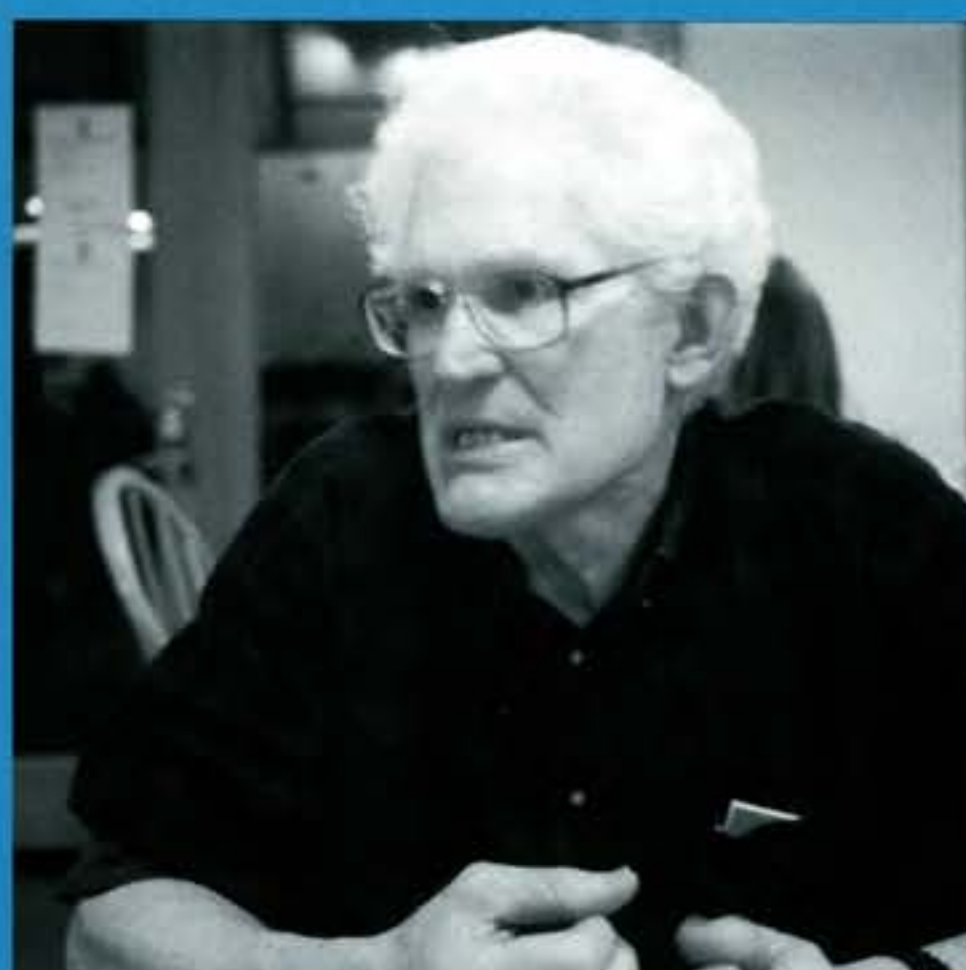
Ramsland says there is more than one reason why Joe’s Garden is special. “It’s also the accessibility, quality, variety, freshness and the prices,” she says.

The Westons, like the Berteros, have built their home on Taylor Avenue overlooking Joe’s Garden. With their bedroom overlooking the land, they can be “permanent caretakers” of their garden, Karol says.

“I usually wake up a couple times during the night to check on the greenhouses from my window,” Weston says. “Sometimes when the weather is really freezing, we set the alarm clock to go off every two hours so we can check on things.”

Weston is confident in the future of the garden, knowing that in a few years Joe’s Garden will be passed on to Jason. Weston believes this farm that existed long before his generation will continue to exist far beyond it. The history of Joe’s Garden will continue to grow each year along with the produce; both are dependent on the hands which nurture and care for them.

“I’m going to make sure this land stays a garden for as long as it can be,” Weston says, watching his son cultivate the soil with a rototiller. “We love what we do, and that’s why Joe’s Garden is still here.”



mi casa es tú casa

Sharing space, food and other resources with a neighbor doesn't appeal to everyone. **Camille Penix** visits Bellingham co-housing and finds a place where people share a common ground and enjoy it. Photos by Katie Kulla.

Eighteen-year-old Molly Skinner-Day will not be joining her brother at an Ivy League college on the East Coast next fall. The Sehome High School senior, set to graduate this spring, will remain in Washington to attend college and to stay close to her newly extended family. Skinner-Day lives in Bellingham's co-housing complex, built to promote community interaction.

She walked into the common house, a meeting place in the co-

housing community, just before a scheduled, voluntary community dinner. Three 6-year-old girls were wrestling and giggling in the dining room. They had just left a conflict-resolution meeting in the children's room, adjacent to the kitchen. One of the girls fell back and banged her head on the floor. She paused, then laughed and continued playing.

"Girls, why don't you go back into the playroom?" Skinner-Day said. "Dinner isn't ready yet."

The girls scrambled back into the children's room and Skinner-Day left as Kathleen Nolan prepared the meal. Thirty-one people were expected for dinner, including a family of prospective residents.

Bellingham's co-housing community, located on Donovan Street, is a cross between a condominium and an eco-village. It's a self-sufficient community where people share a commitment to environmentally friendly living. The complex was designed by its residents to be energy-efficient, however the houses do not completely meet eco-village standards.

It is a neighborhood designed for people, not cars. The carports circle the exterior of the property, while gravel paths intertwine throughout the property leading to each home. Thirty-three Danish-style, individually owned homes rest on 5.5 acres of land, which includes several acres of wetlands. Homes or units range from 2-bedroom apartment-style homes to 4-bedroom townhouses. Co-housing units are between 780 and 1600 square feet and, depending on size, can cost between \$100,000 and \$225,000. While interiors are privately-owned, the whole community controls the appearance of the houses' exteriors, such as the roof, siding and porches.

Originating in Denmark in the 1960s, co-housing has spread throughout the United States, including several sites in northwest Washington. The idea of creating a co-housing community in Bellingham began in 1995 when a small group of people interested in community-based living began meeting and planning. Six people made down-payments to purchase an area of land for a co-housing community.

Bellingham's co-housing lot was designed to promote community. The entire lot is broken into three clusters of houses called 'gathering nodes.' Although these nodes are in no sense exclusive, they are designed to create relationships through proximity. Each unit was designed with a purpose. The front door of every home opens into the kitchen. This idea stemmed from the notion that the majority of time in the house is spent in the kitchen. While family members are washing dishes, cooking or cleaning, they can look out the window, watch children playing and wave to fellow members walking along the gravel trails.

The layout of the property promotes interaction, and the building materials used in its construction support the environment. Carpets are made out of recycled milk jugs, and the floor in the common house kitchen is a soybean-based marmoleum instead of vinyl.

The 4,000-square-foot common house sits in the center of the lot. It has a large kitchen, with restaurant-quality amenities,

meeting rooms, laundry facilities and a guest bedroom. The goal of the residents is to have three community meals a week: two planned meals and one potluck. Within the common house is a much-used bulletin board and a poster of proposed improvement projects. On the wish list, contributed by various owners, is a hot tub, gazebo, sauna, veggie garden, entry sign and flagpole. The swingset, freshly posted in the center of the lot, was an idea originally scribbled on the list. A box of wineglasses still sits on a table in the kitchen, leftover from a wine-tasting fund-raiser for the soon-to-be-purchased hot tub.

All of the buildings take advantage of natural light with uncurtained windows. The kitchen in the common house is lit with track lighting and lights that hang from the vaulted pale yellow ceiling.

On this particular night, five tables were draped in cloth and each set for seven people. Plates of vegetables and fresh flowers were placed on the tables. Three large pots of soup simmered on the stove and tall stacks of white bowls rattled on the kitchen counter as Nolan cut thick slices of seasoned bread.

Nolan, along with her then-husband Phil Heft and the couple's children, Sean and Erin, were the first members to move in on March 17, 2000. In August, Nolan moved into another unit, despite her recent divorce and decided to remain living



in the co-housing community.

"I didn't realize how valuable it would be after the divorce," Nolan said, popping pieces of bread into her mouth between sips of red wine. Her name is written in gold paint across the glass to distinguish it from the others. "We both had to overcome a lot to stay."

Nolan and Heft decided they had to work together to raise their kids. Their son, Sean, did not respond enthusiastically to living in co-housing.

A shared feast—photos from a co-housing community dinner Above: Residents gather and dine together in the common house. Left page (Clockwise from upper left): Kathleen Nolan prepares dinner. Bill Hinely, a Bellingham Co-housing resident, talks with a guest. Molly Skinner-Day serves ice cream to some youngsters. Elizabeth Skinner and Lesley Rigg enjoy friendly conversation after eating dinner together.

"I didn't like it," he said. "There was nothing to do, and there were too many people nagging on me."

Although Sean disliked all of the eyes watching him, Nolan and Heft chose to remain in co-housing for this reason. The community gets involved if there is a sign of conflict.

"There isn't more conflict here (than anywhere else)," resident Bill Hinely said. "We just can't run away from it. Conflict is inevitable. It is violence we want to avoid. Different opinions don't mean we have to fight."

A common problem is conflicting ideas about the use of the common areas. Many people aren't used to asking permission to plant flowers, or put up swingsets. These sample topics result in long community conversations.

Hinely sits at a table, waiting for the soup line to shorten. He has been interested in intentional communities for a long time.

Co-housing is natural because historically, humans have lived in bands, tribes and groups, he said. Recently, the idea of the nuclear family, as the American ideal, has changed the idea of community.

"My take on it is that those experiments didn't take off very well," Hinely said. "They gave up the virtue of the support system."

"(In co-housing) we have older folks looking after younger folks, and younger folks looking after older folks," he said. "This is the natural way of living. We call it creatively moving backwards into the future."

Skinner-Day is seated at the other end of the table, near her mother, Elizabeth Skinner. She said the children, being more flexible and younger, have an easier time adjusting to co-housing because they have never owned their own property.

"The kid community is active and does really well, but the adults are having a hard time getting out of having their own yard," Skinner-Day said. "There's a little bit of tension between them. We look at them and go, 'They are so grumpy.' They get so angry at the littlest things that we don't care about. You know, who cares if someone's hanging their laundry on their porch? They are kind of uptight about a lot of things that we're not. We tell them to loosen up, and I think they like us for that."

Skinner-Day and her mother moved into co-housing almost two years ago, from Bellevue. They had family in Bellingham and after hearing about co-housing, decided it was a good fit. They moved the Saturday after Skinner-Day's older brother graduated from high school.

"I think he likes to visit, but since he is not so social, he likes to have his own space and is more conservative-minded." Skinner-Day said about her brother visiting the co-housing

community. "I think it is harder for him."

"It takes a lot of work to be with these people," she said. "I mean, I love it. There are so many rewards. But it is really hard sometimes and the adults find it even harder."

The residents range from a 5-year-old girl to a 90-year-old woman. On some nights one might find an 18-year-old guitarist jamming with a 43-year-old pianist in the common house. The professions of the residents include

doctors, lawyers, restaurant owners, firemen, teachers, dog clippers and an acupuncturist. Two three-generation families occupy different units in the community. Single residents, senior citizens, new families and single mothers all reside in this community. A common joke is that it takes at least 10 minutes, and maybe a beer, to get from your car to your front door because of the relationships this community has established. People stop and talk to each other when they

meet on the various pathways. Kids ride their bikes around the lot and shout their hellos. Cats even play together on front porches.

Every household pays homeowner dues each month in proportion to the size of their private house. Electricity and gas are included in the dues, but the majority of the payments go toward

maintaining the property.

"Some of the people who have the larger units, who are more affluent do carry some of the people who are less affluent," resident Liz Bernstein said. "We've done that on purpose so that we are not just another middle-class, hippie, groovy country club. We want there to be some diversity — as much as you can get in Bellingham."

Bernstein, 48, who is relatively new to Bellingham, moved into co-housing about a year-and-a-half-ago. She is a self-proclaimed teen facilitator and organizes weekly teen meetings, where the community's young adults vote on decisions concerning their age group. The teens collectively decide how to allocate \$600



"(In co-housing) we have older folks looking after younger folks and younger folks looking after older folks."

**—Bill Hinely—
Bellingham co-housing resident**



Views of the Co-housing property. Upper-left: The common house where residents gather, share meals, participate in meetings and have fun.



budgeted to the youth-group yearly. They have their own teen room which is in the “Noise Building” above a workshop with community donated woodworking tools.

“One of the reasons why I moved here was because I never had kids of my own,” Bernstein said. “I’ve always had children come and go in neighborhoods. There wasn’t a deep connection. I just love children and part of what I like about co-housing is that it’s not ‘the children,’ it’s ‘our children.’”

Skinner-Day spends most of her time with the other teens in her community.

“I know that they know who I really am,” she said. “They’ve seen me in all these different moods. I like that I can really be myself so I do spend a lot more time with them for that reason.”

Other than teen business, Bernstein talks with the teens about their problems, experiences and issues. She said she fits somewhere between a friend and an aunt to the young adults. They talk to her in confidence about issues involving destructive behavior, sexuality and moral dilemmas.

All the kids have strong adult support and this reflects co-housing values, Bernstein said.

“Children will often talk to somebody else in a way they won’t talk to their own parents,” she said. I think kids like to be listened to.”

Every three months, the kids get an opportunity to be heard by the whole community. The kids and community members are able to show off their talent and skill through musical performances, games and skits in their community talent show.

“One of our favorite performances that was beyond hilarious — just busted our guts — was when one of the teens demonstrated how he could stick a strand of spaghetti up his nose and pull it out of his mouth,” Bernstein said, trying to hold back her laughter. “Sweet, huh? We didn’t know whether to barf or laugh.

It’s the kind of humor you would only get from an adolescent boy, and it was wonderful.”

Bernstein has talked with the young adults about their future plans. She said they have mixed emotions between loving the connections they have in the co-housing community and wanting to explore the world like every typical adolescent. Bernstein is confident that the relationships won’t be broken, regardless of what the teens decide to do.

“I know that when they grow up and marry and have kids, they are not going to be out of my life,” Bernstein said. “I’ll know their kids, and I’ll watch them grow and develop.”

After dinner, only a few groups were left talking quietly while two men talked in the kitchen, cleaning up. Margaret Lyons and Stephen King, dinner guests interested in the community, lingered in an adjacent meeting room. Lyons cradled her 6-month-old son, Rory, while her 4-year-old daughter Elisa drew on a whiteboard. They moved to Bellingham almost a year ago because they wanted to get out of Seattle. Lyons and King are currently renting a house in Bellingham.

“It’s not bad — we have our own friends,” Lyons said of her current neighborhood. “We know our neighbors but we’ve never done anything with them or gotten to know them terribly well. Winter comes and you don’t see anybody for six months.”

Although Lyons and King came to dinner to learn more about the community, it was the quality of the buildings that initially impressed them.

It’s good quality,” Lyons said about the buildings within the co-housing community, pointing to the hard wood floors and the large, thick windows. “That’s the first thing that really stood out to me. It’s pretty — it’s much nicer than I expected.”

Skinner-Day said she wants her children to have the same experience she has had in co-housing.

“It is not for everybody, by far,” she said. “A lot of work goes into it. There are so many people that have some little thing to contribute to my life. I feel like I’ve known these people for a really long time already. It’s like having a big extended family that is right there.”

Skinner-Day expects a turnover in the community soon, because two families plan to move out. She hopes a family with a baby or toddler will move in.

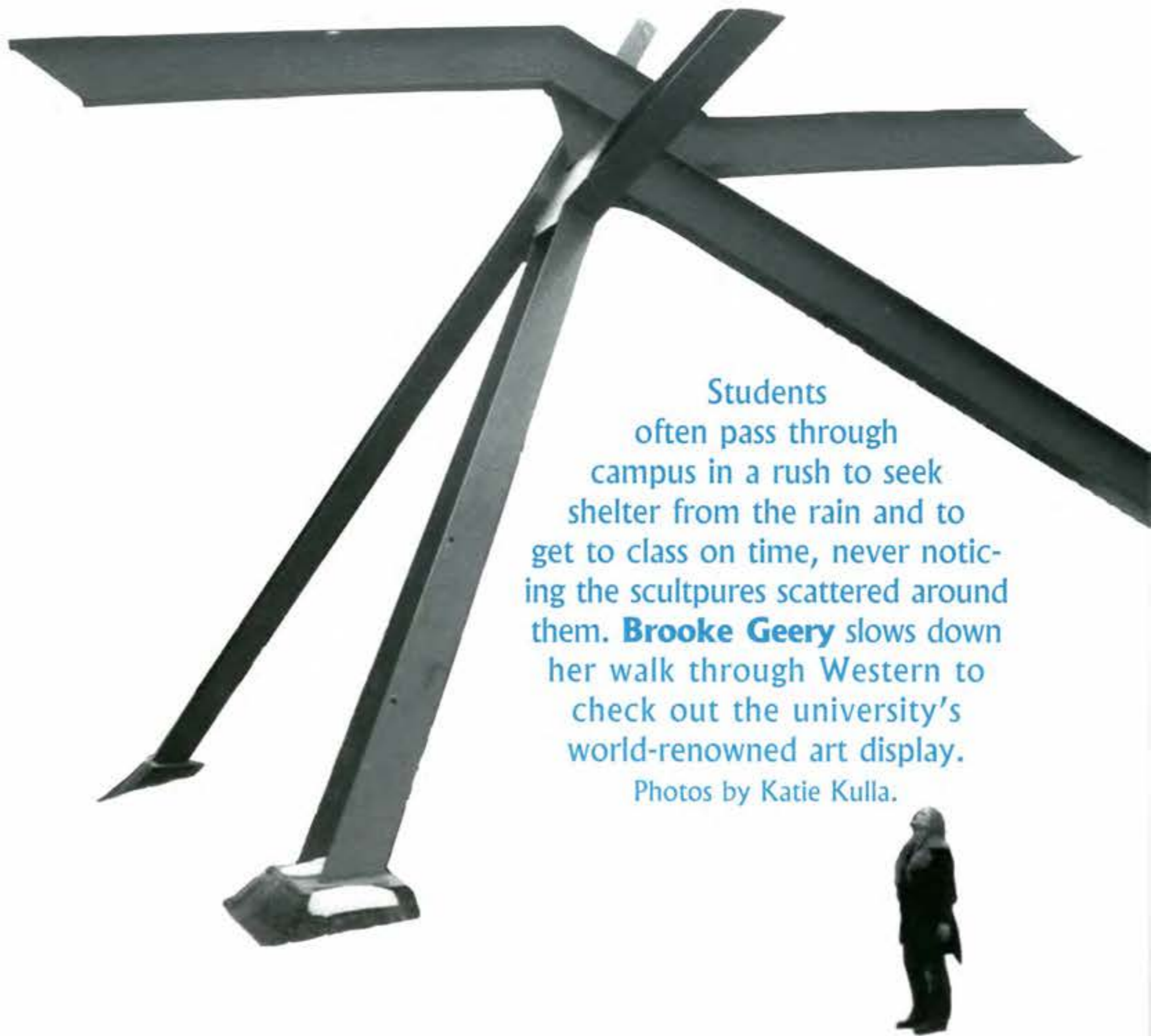
“It will be sad when we have our first members leave. I personally deeply love the people here,” Bernstein said. “I have no plans to leave here. You never know what happens, but I plan to live here the rest of my life. We’ll call it the co-housing retirement community.” ❖

**“It’s not for everybody by far.
A lot of work goes into it.”**

**—Molly Skinner-Day—
Bellingham co-housing resident**

AN OPEN AIR MUSEUM





Students often pass through campus in a rush to seek shelter from the rain and to get to class on time, never noticing the sculptures scattered around them. **Brooke Geery** slows down her walk through Western to check out the university's world-renowned art display.

Photos by Katie Kulla.

Right: A 27-foot tall orange presence in the PAC plaza, *For Handel* dwarfs Cuyler as she stands beneath it. Left: Nancy Holt's *Stone Enclosure: Rock Rings*, is Cuyler's favorite Western sculpture.

Mary Jane Cuyler looked at a few things when selecting a college, including academics, location and art. In the end, Western's outdoor sculpture collection sealed her decision.

"I was just stunned by the art," Cuyler said. "I saw work from all these famous artists I had studied and I knew I had to come to Western. Even if the curriculum ended up sucking, I'd always have a fabulous sculpture to look at."

Cuyler, 20, developed her appreciation for art while taking art classes as a Running Start student at South Puget Sound Community College. It showed her that non-objective art, such as the pieces found at Western could conjure up different images for everyone. Suddenly, the sculptures meant something.

Cuyler hasn't taken any art classes at Western. As a Fairhaven student with a concentration in classical studies, and a double minor in Latin and ancient Greek, she hasn't had time. She touches the sculptures as she's rushing through campus, and said they help her find moments of peace in her busy schedule as a full-time student and recycling educator at the Recycle Center.

Many Western students have no idea

about the art that surrounds them, Cuyler said.

"The most common reaction I hear to any of the art on campus is, 'What? That's a sculpture?'" she said.

"When students graduate from Western and they've not paid any attention to the sculpture collection," said Sarah Clark-Langager, Outdoor Sculpture Collection curator, "they'll be quite shocked when someone says 'Oh that's the campus with the famous sculpture collection.'"

The sculptures on Western's campus have been written up in publications such as *Sculpture Magazine*. They are featured in museum books and catalogs from all over the world, including New York's Guggenheim Museum.

Western's campus is home to 24 sculptures, most by world-renowned artists who are highly respected in the art world. The oldest sculpture, James Fitzgerald's *Rain Forest*, dates back to 1959. *Rain Forest*, an intricate, 14-foot bronze fountain, refers to the Northwest's natural resources.

"We demand the sculptures that in are the collection are known for excellence, just like we don't take the students that have gotten Ds and Fs in high school," Clark-Langager said. "We want the best students to come to Western and we want the best artists."

The university appraises the collection every five years for insurance purposes. Currently the collection's value is listed at several million dollars.

Cuyler thinks everyone should be able to appreciate the sculptures, so in her spare time, she gives tours of her favorites.



Members of the Contemporary Art Society of Vancouver traveled from Canada to view Western's famous sculpture collection.

Dressed in a fur-lined leather coat and flip-flops, her long blond hair blew in the Northwest wind as she excitedly walked over, through and around the sculptures, encouraging everyone else to do the same.

The tour started in front of the Performing Arts Center with the giant red-orange metal contraption that captures the viewer's eye and steals it from the expansive view of the city and Bellingham Bay. The sun glints off the bright steel of Mark di Suvero's *For Handel*. The 27-foot sculpture, dedicated to the composer George Frederic Handel, is appropriately placed outside Western's concert hall.

For Handel has been the source of some past controversy. One of the sculpture's metal rings used to hold a swing. Moving parts are integral to all of di Suvero's work. Shortly after the sculpture was built in 1975, a group of people swung too high, causing the swing to break and the administration had it removed. Removal of the swing took away the interactive aspect of the sculpture, a characteristic common to most of the Outdoor Sculpture Collection.

In 1975, the idea of interactive sculpture was new at Western. Now the campus has gotten used to sculpture and knows how to use it, Clark-Langager said.

It is *For Handel's* sheer size that makes it an impressive sculpture. Cuyler stood under the center of the sculpture and looked at its peak.

"You can really feel the magnitude," she said. "It has a lot of crescendos and decrescendos."

Just across the street, Richard Beyer's *Man Who Used to Hunt Cougars for Bounty*, sits in a muddy bed surrounded by Edens Hall, Old Main and Wilson Library's main entrance. In the autumn, the trees' leaves fall in yellow piles around the sculpture, making a bright contrast between the moss-streaked granite and the ground. The granite used in the sculpture was mined

in California and brought to Western in the early '70s. The sculpture itself took three months to complete in 1972.

This is one of the most easily misunderstood sculptures in the collection, Clark-Langager said. The cougar perches on the man's lap. Both look bloated and rotund, and as if they are melting together. Many students mistake the sculpture as being sexual in nature, but it is about the relationship of the hunter and the hunted.

Cuyler pointed out a flat spot between the man's head and the cougar as a perfect seat. She said it's the only way she's found to interact with the stone, which she playfully refers to as "man humping bear."

After leaving the dense trees in front of Wilson Library, Red Square opens up into a brick-lined gallery. Perched on three brick pedestals in the far corner sits Isamu Noguchi's *Sky Viewing*. Its black metal edges curve just slightly into perfect circles. The Noguchi sculpture cost the university \$15,000 when it was built and now is worth more than \$1 million.

Since 1969, this sculpture has defined Western, but its origins are actually Japanese. Noguchi is a well-known Japanese sculptor who has provided art for other college campuses, including the University of Washington. He used geometry and the Japanese belief that a circle represents the sun to draw in viewers.

On warm days students lean against the base of the sculpture, but rarely venture inside. As the name implies, people are meant to view the sky through it. The circles serve as portholes or birds' eyes to frame the oft-changing Northwest sky.

Within the metal lies a math equation, which math professor Branko Curgus has had his students solve in the past. This is just one example of how those who aren't interested in art can relate to the sculptures.

From Red Square, the tour moved south to Richard Serra's *Wright's Triangle*. The three main walls of the triangular structure, in front of the Ross Engineering and Technology Building lean on each other and could stand that way on their own. Inside, lights are set into the ground to illuminate the steel walls in the dark. Serra was concerned with making a sculpture that created a space different from those used in architecture.

Wright's Triangle is placed where three pathways meet, and sees its share of traffic. Bikers and skateboarders have used the walls as ramps, and left wheel marks along the bottom of the outer walls. Remnants of vandalism spot the rust colored walls. Handprints, eraser marks and faint words are everywhere.

Vandalism has been a problem for this sculpture. In September 2001, protesters spray-painted "fuck yr bombs" on the south facing wall, and the rust-colored coating still shows evidence of the damage. Less severe vandalism, such as the use of Scotch tape on the metal, also hurts the surface.

"We demand the sculptures that are in the collection are known for excellence, just like we don't take the students that have gotten Ds and Fs in high school. We want the best students to come to Western and we want the best artists."

**—Sarah Clark-Langager—
of the Outdoor Sculpture
Collection curator**

"The most characteristic thing that happens at Western is that people put up posters or signs on the sculptures, not realizing that's something that should not be done," Clark-Langager said.

Despite the abuse it sees, this sculpture is all about tranquility, Cuyler said.

"During busy times no one goes inside," she said. "If you actually go into it, it's a cool experience because you can hear people talking and moving, but you're all alone."

Further south is Tom Otterness's 1999 work, *Feats of Strength*. Seven green men and women, no more than 15 inches tall, hold up rocks of all shapes and sizes. The sculpture is about natural and cultural forces at work in the San Juan Islands. The characters reside among rocks protruding from brick pathways in the shape of the islands.

Cuyler was only interested in one thing. She'd recently learned the sculptures were anatomically correct.

"I've always been embarrassed to check because there's always so many people around," Cuyler said.

She lay down on the ground to peer underneath a rock held up by three figures and came back with confirmation that the sculptures were in deed anatomically correct.

In between Arntzen Hall and Parks Hall, the brick pathways of campus end. Standing atop the stairs the two final stops on Cuyler's tour came into view. On the right is Bruce Nauman's *Stadium Piece* and to the left is Nancy Holt's *Stone Enclosure: Rock Rings*.

Cuyler made her way to Nauman's work, which was completed in 1999.

"I never cared about this sculpture until I climbed it," Cuyler said.

The dirty white stairs go up, then down, then up and down one last time. In the middle, the sculpture drops so low it would be easy to hide away in its indentation. From the top of the stairs is a great view of Bellingham's southside. Currently, the makeshift parking and police stations crowd the sculpture, but usually, it sits alone next to the path from the C-lots.

Holt's sculpture is Cuyler's favorite. Completed in 1978, the two concentric rings of brown mountain stone are cut perfectly so the doors face the cardinal compass points and the windows face the intermediaries. Inside the sculpture the slight variations in stone color create patterns that keep the viewer's eye moving for hours.

Most of Holt's work is geographically designed. This sculpture answers to Bellingham's nautical atmosphere. It lines up with the North Star, a navigation tool

used by sailors. Cuyler said the best time to be in the sculpture is at night.

"You see all the stars above you and the doors and windows line up with them," she said. "I think it's like being inside a sailor's mind."

Stone Enclosure is strategically placed alone on a south campus hill. Western has plans, however, to build the new communications building very close to the sculpture. This upsets Cuyler.

"They may as well take it down," she said. "It ruins the entire point of it to have something so close."

Western has taken the sculpture into account in the plans for the building.

"The artist has been consulted," Clark-Langager said. "We've made certain requirements and those are being fulfilled. It's necessary for Western to build certain buildings, but there is a general understanding in the Master Plan that they will take sculptures into consideration."

This isn't the first time that the administration's actions towards the sculptures have been unpopular. Cuyler would love to have one more sculpture to include on her tour, but Robert Morris's untitled steam sculpture at the far end of campus is no longer in operation.

"People are just infuriated that sculpture is turned off," Clark-Langager said. "It is a very famous work of art. They can't understand why we can't fix it."

The excess steam created by the university's Steam Plant provided the sculpture's steam. This steam would pour from the sculpture into the air and change shapes with the wind. Three years ago, vandals dug deep into the ground, exposing some of the corroded pipes that made the sculpture work. A young boy stepped on the pipes and burned his foot. The Environmental Health and Safety Agency told Western the sculpture had to be shut off.

Western plans to reactivate the sculpture though. The pipes can be fixed so no one will be injured again, but to do so is very costly, Clark-Langager said.

Washington state law requires that one half of one percent of the money spent on government buildings is spent on art. Some money will come from the construction of the communications building, but not enough to fix the steam sculpture.

"If every student here on campus gave up one cup of coffee or one bagel per week for the whole year and contributed that money, we could get it fixed," she said. "And we would be much better loved by the rest of the world."

Although Cuyler feels some animosity towards the administration's actions, she still views the sculpture collection as Western's saving grace.

"It's not as exciting as it used to be," she said, "but I still really like to have cool art to look at whenever I want." ❖

Plenty of information is available for students who wish to learn more about Western's Outdoor Sculpture Collection. Audio phones with recordings of the artists speaking about their work are available in the Western Gallery and at the Visitor's Center. Additional information can be found at the Web site: <http://outdoorsculpture.wvu.edu>.

SOUTH CAMPUS



Bruce Nauman	<i>Stadium Piece</i>	1998-1999
Beverly Pepper	<i>Normanno Wedge</i>	1980
Tom Otterness	<i>Feats of Strength</i>	1999
Lloyd Hamrol	<i>Log Ramps</i>	1974-1997
Richard Serra	<i>Wright's Triangle</i>	1979-80
Alice Aycock	<i>The Islands of the Rose</i>	1987

Apple Tree Surrounded by the Oceans of the World for You, Oh My Darling



NORTH CAMPUS

Isamu Noguchi	<i>Skyviewing Sculpture</i>	1969
Steve Tibbetts	<i>Scepter</i>	1966
Norman Warskinske	<i>Totem</i>	1962
Norman Warskinske	<i>Wall Relief</i>	1962
Anthony Caro	<i>India</i>	1976
Richard Beyer	<i>The Man Who Used to Hunt Cougars for Bounty</i>	1972
Donald Judd	<i>Untitled</i>	1982
Robert Maki	<i>Curve/Diagonal</i>	1976-79
Mark di Suvero	<i>For Handel</i>	1975
George Trakas	<i>Bay View Station</i>	1987



Crescent Kao behind the wheel of his modified Acura Integra.

Off the

One used to do it, one still does. Both know just how dangerous it can be. **Jennifer Jennings** talks with two Western students about the subculture of illegal street racing. Photos by Katie Kulla.

Keys jangle, metal clangs and motors purr as the cars prepare to thrust ahead. Crescent Kao's knuckles turn white as he grips the steering wheel. With screeching tires and wildly jumping tachometers, the two racers are signaled to start. The quiet night is ripped apart by thundering sounds of modified engines roaring down a suburban street. But golden trophies and checkered flags don't await the winner at the end of this race. The satisfaction and respect of beating his opponent are Kao's only rewards.

Kao, who has earned an industrial design degree and is now a computer science major at Western, knows the adrenaline thrill as well as the deadly risks of illegal street racing. He began street racing about five years ago in Seattle. Now 25, he has moved on to racing in Vancouver, British Columbia, and in Bellingham.

The illegal subculture of street racing has been around since the introduction of the automobile. The sport became increasingly popular in the 1960s with V-8 muscle cars like Firebirds, Camaros, and Mustangs. More recently, import cars, mostly Hondas, are being modified and raced.

Kao purchased a new white Acura Integra in 1999 for \$21,000. Since then, he has invested more than \$20,000 in modifications that have increased the car's speed, including three engines. The first engine blew up because of mechanical failure,

and the second because of over-heating. He has installed custom parts such as turbo chargers, especially high compression pistons, custom camshafts, and stiffer suspension components. Kao stripped the vehicle of its seating, air conditioning, cruise control, stereo system and speakers. He even went as far as to scrape out the flooring from the inside of the car to make it as light as possible. His top speed in the car is 164 mph, and his fastest quarter-mile time was 12.59 seconds at 116 mph, which is about three seconds quicker than a stock Integra.

Kao estimated that he streetraces about 15 times out of eight months of the year. He doesn't race during the winter because he said the roads aren't safe enough for high speeds.

He became really interested in cars because of the new technology that has emerged, making it possible for import vehicles like Hondas and other four-cylinder cars to keep up with and go faster than domestic cars with V-8 engines.

Kao has run his own Web site, www.c-speedracing.com, for two years. It specializes in selling Honda performance parts and teaching other car owners how to do both simple and complex modifications and installations. The site also has regular updates on the progress of his Integra, which is sponsored by numerous aftermarket companies. Kao said he spends close to 40 hours a week researching automotive technology on the Internet.

"It's like having a job," Kao said.



Kao's car in the appropriate street racing setting: a dark city avenue.

Legal Track

Racing has become an obsession for many like Kao, who become hard-core racers driven by an insatiable quest for speed. Race junkies invest endless time and money, creating the ultimate power-enhanced vehicles. Racers then drive the highly tuned cars to remote areas such as Telegraph Road in Bellingham at night. Lining up, they go head-to-head in a chase for power. Challenges are made, bets are set and accidents are inevitable.

According to the Bellingham Police Department, last year in Whatcom County there were 1,826 auto accidents in the first 10 months. There are 6 million auto accidents each year in the United States and speeding is involved in 29 percent of all the vehicle accident fatalities.

Kao believes there are two types of street racing. The first occurs late at night as an organized event where racers plan on meeting at a remote location to race.

"It's actually rather safe," he said. "We meet in a secluded area 100 percent of the time. We choose a place where we have enough room to race and the least chance of getting caught."

Kao said the second kind of street racing happens randomly, usually on the freeway.

"It happens when the opportunity arises," he said. "When you see another modified car, it's an instinct to want to race them. I think the younger you are, the more you take this kind of a risk.

Even though your judgment is impaired, you race anyway for the adrenaline rush, and to see who is faster. It's this type of racing that causes the most accidents and draws the most media attention.

"I race not to be popular and not to draw attention to myself but to prove what I've got and see how fast I can get. You spend all this time and money to see how well your car compares to others (modified cars) and it's rewarding. I like cars because they're ever-changing and there's so much new technology involved. To be able to see blood, sweat, tears and money yield performance levels beyond expectation is rewarding. It's about respect."

Kao has never bet money while racing, but knows it is still a gamble with serious risks involved.

"I have not been in any accidents in my entire career of street racing," Kao said. "I don't even know of any of my friends being in any accidents because of street racing. I have gotten two tickets, but I've been lucky. If you think you're not going to get caught or hurt, one day it's going to bite you in the butt."

Bellingham Police Lt. Dac Jamison said he sees no reason for street races.

"It's dangerous, reckless, and it kills people," Jamison said.

Street racing is a regular, even weekly occurrence in Bellingham and the surrounding area, he said. Males, 16-22 years old, street race because of "bragging rights, competition,

and to show off to women.

"Racing is like a mating call for the American male," Jamison said. "The woompa-woompa-woompa of their stereotypes is like saying to women, 'Look how cool I am, I've got a car.' Testosterone is partly responsible; very few women race. It's an attraction for some females who are looking for adventure, or a little bit of a bad boy."

"I've been lucky. If you think you're not going to get caught or hurt, one day it's going to bite you in the butt."

—Crescent Kao—

"There's a rush from running from the cops, but you're still scared of getting caught" Kao said. "I don't street race as much as I used to because I'm more cautious about it now and also because I don't want to have an accident. Racing on the street has just become a more rare event for me. I can understand where police are coming from

because it's their job to make the streets safe for the public, but singling out modified cars just because they're modified isn't fair."

Other dangers Kao associates with street racing include bad traffic, bad weather, and stupidity. When racers show off, burn out or weave through traffic, they can cause accidents. This type of racer is the number one reason that Kao and his friends believe street racers get a bad reputation.

"They don't understand the true meaning of the sport, and because of that they're ruining it. What really pisses me off is these racers who think it's the clear tail lights, gaudy body kits, huge five-inch exhausts, 19-inch wheels and stickers beyond belief that make them real racers. But really, these kids are sinking thousands of dollars into their car's appearance, making them flashy rather than fast, creating a very negative stereotype for all racers."

Kao also blames the media for the bad attention street racers

receive. He said the media hype up the fact that in bigger cities street racing has become linked to gang activities in which big bucks are gambled, weapons are involved and fights break out. He said films such as last year's *The Fast and the Furious* also take advantage of the street racing hype and make money by presenting a "far-fetched, Hollywoodized" version of the sport.

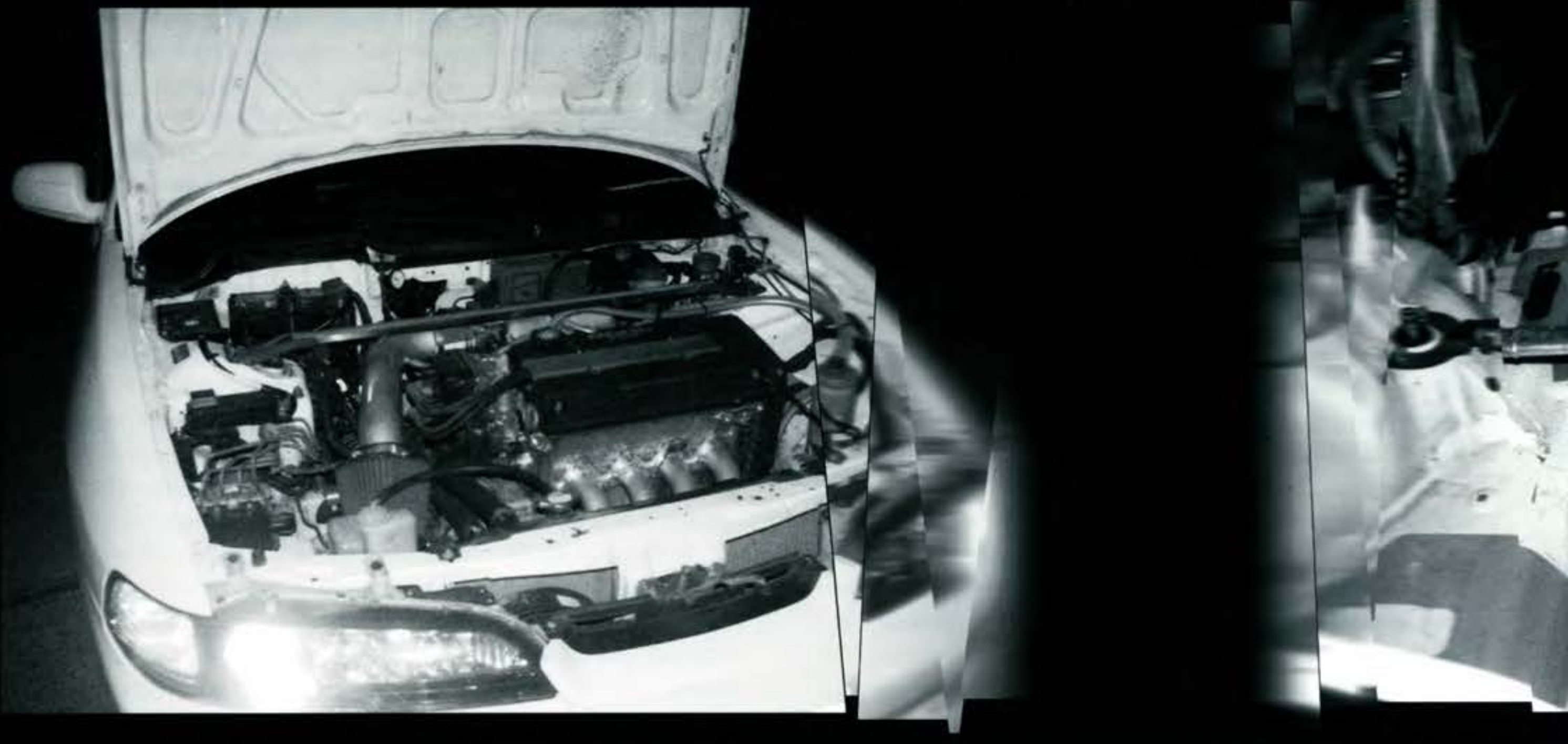
To get racers off the street, many cities are building sanctioned race tracks.

Kao now does some of his racing at these tracks, such as Mission Raceway in British Columbia, and Pacific Raceways in Kent, Wash. Seatbelts and helmets are strictly enforced at these tracks, and time-slips are given to show how fast the car complete the quarter-mile.

"Street racing is a part of city life," Kao said. "It's what happens when guys with cars get together, but I'm a big fan of keeping it at the track. The problem with sanctioned tracks is that they close early, charge you money and there's a wait. Therefore, hardcore racers enjoy the thrill of meeting up late at night to race as long as they want, without paying and without having to wait in a line for their turn."

Kao isn't the only Western student who has found a passion for racing. Harrison Page, a 21-year-old Western senior majoring in management information systems, has invested lots of time and money in his own modified car to jump into the fast lane. Although he loves the sport and continues to dedicate a large part of his life to it, he now prefers taking his car to the track rather than race it on city roads.

Page became addicted to the thrill of speed at the age of 17 and did most of his illegal street racing in remote areas of Whatcom County.



The most important part of the car for serious street racers: the engine.

"I'm just a car fan," Page said. "I started out liking imports, Hondas in particular, and because I'm also a tech junkie I like building stuff with my hands. I like learning about the technology that goes into the cars. It's embarrassing how much time I spend on the Internet researching cars and new technology. It's probably about 15 hours a week.

"I usually race friends to settle the score of who has the faster car. It begins with someone talking trash about how their car is faster, and then you have to prove it with racing. It's cool to do with people I know who aren't taking it all that seriously."

Page has owned several Hondas and now drives a 1995 Honda Civic. He has blown up two engines because of "abuse," and now he's working on his third.

"My motor is worth more than my car," he said. "I've sunk thousands and thousands into it. I'm constantly making modifications to make it run faster. I've done a lot to it including high performance camshafts and high compression pistons."

Page won't talk about all the modifications he's done, though. "I can't give away all my secrets."

Page didn't want to disclose any of the specific places in the Bellingham area where he has raced either, because he said he didn't want police ticketing his friends who still race.

Page admits that street racing is addictive and appeals to many because of the adrenaline rush.

"Racing is an extension of testosterone," he said. "I do it, and people do it, because they're thrill seekers. The most thrilling races have been on the freeway. I don't think street racing will ever die because of that thrill."

He says thrills don't always outweigh the number one

concern with street racing, safety.

Page hasn't been involved in any accidents related to street racing, nor does he have friends who have suffered from accidents. But he does have friends who have gotten large tickets and now must pay for high-risk insurance

"Analyzing time slip numbers at the track and trying to improve my time is just more interesting than getting in trouble," Page said. "I'm not racing for anyone other than myself."

Street racers face serious penalties if they get caught. Jamison said street racing can result in a \$500 ticket for reckless driving and jail time, and even stiffer punishments if alcohol, an accident, or fatality is involved.

Jamison supports race tracks such as Mission Raceway where people are forced to adhere to driving laws. Although this adrenaline addiction can be deadly, Jamison believes that street racing will always be around.

"Speed is exhilarating," he said. "There's a thrill there. It's not a controlled substance you're putting into your body and it doesn't last long, but speed kills. Look at the fatalities. Look at the kids who don't wear their seatbelts and become slingshots out their (car) windows. When a car comes to a sudden stop, you don't. Street racing is a disregard for the safety of others. It's always dangerous."

Kao and Page agree.

"I don't condone street racing, but it's not going to stop," Kao said. "If you decide to do it, be smart about it, and not just smart about getting caught. It's one of the biggest thrills to race, but it's not worth getting yourself or someone else killed. Money can't buy your friend's life back." ❖

"Racing is like a mating call for the American male. The woompa-woompa-woompa of their stereos is like saying to women, 'Look how cool I am, I've got a car.'"

—Lt. Dac Jamison—



A glimpse into the back of Kao's car from which he has removed the back seats and any other additional sources of weight.

The front of Kao's car which has been stripped of unnecessary sources of weight, including paneling (notice the wires showing in the foot well of the passenger seat).

Seeing the Spirit Spectrum

The Church of Divine Man exercises its clairvoyant power to detox reporter **Tessa Allison's** spirit of negative energy before its Bellingham location closes this spring. Photos by Katie Kulla.

Lisa Lewis uses her soft, aged hands to trace the outline of my leg in the air. The ivory folds of skin surrounding her knuckles hint at her age, yet her face, with its peachy smoothness contradicts this impression.

"I am bringing up the earth's energy," she says in a near whisper, eyes closed, bent down on one knee. Her fingers are grasping the air near my ankles and pulling it upward. Lewis, a no-touch healer at Bellingham's Church of Divine Man, continues to pull and grab at the air surrounding my seated frame, "smoothing out the kinks" in my aura.

Warm sunlight floods in through the arched bubbled-glass windows of the Bellingham CDM, located on I Street. I sit in a worn-out green and fuchsia wing-back chair. I am having my chakras healed and my aura read.

At any other Sunday church service, a Psychic Healing Fair may seem out of the ordinary, nearly sacrilegious, but at CDM it is another Sunday of self-discovery.

CDM is a small church with a big concept: combining the psychic world with the religious.

CDM promotes using the 'natural intuition' in every person by developing their psychic and clairvoyant abilities through meditation. Once these skills are developed, people can become even closer in their relationships with God.

"Clairvoyance simply means to see clearly," said Kim Zirbes, church member and public relations representative for CDM.

"Clairvoyance is a spiritual ability we all have, some just fine tune it."

The clairvoyants at CDM are not stereotypical psychics. There are no crystal balls, no tarot cards, no gimmicks; just concentration, focus and the ability to harness intuition.

"People use their intuition all of the time," Zirbes said. "We are a place for people to further discover themselves as a spirit."

CDM studies the teachings of Jesus, yet promotes spiritual freedom, Zirbes said. God is an all encompassing, greater power for many CDM members. The church wishes to encourage serving that spiritual freedom.

"God means many things to many people," said Janice Spiry, the officiating reverend at Bellingham CDM.

On this sunny Sunday afternoon at the CDM Psychic Healing Fair, a few have gathered to participate in the fair's festivities.

The free fair takes place in the main room of the church. The room is modest in size, each wall lined with windows casting a warm pink light on the carpet below. A slightly elevated stage sits in the front of the room with a podium placed in the center and speakers on either side. At the rear of the church, a detailed stained glass window depicts a surreal place full of willow trees, wild flowers and a pink flowing stream. The room resembles that of any other small church.

Twelve well used chairs sit in pairs, facing one another against a window-covered wall. Two of the six are occupied by women deep in the silences of meditation. Both are sitting a seat apart with eyes closed, hands palm-up on the chair arms. One woman is young, with thick black hair that clips at her jaw line. The other is older, with short pepper-grey hair, round wire-rimmed glasses and a lean frame, legs curled up under her.

Across the room, the other groups of chairs are in a circle below a royal blue banner reading, "Discover Yourself as Spirit."

The banner has a white figure surrounded by a rainbow. The rainbow represents the different levels of energy, called chakras, emitted from the body, creating a person's aura. Each of the



The outside of the Bellingham building owned and used by the Church of Divine Man.

seven energy fields emits a different color. I sit beneath this banner as Lewis runs her hands inches from my body, moving the energy fields that surround me.

"During the day you get all kinds of kinks in your aura for all different sorts of reasons. We just straighten and smooth them out for you, get the energy flowing again," she explained.

The seven energy chakras are located within the body, Lewis said. They begin with the grounding chakra, located at the base of the spine. This chakra is closest to the earth and represents physical survival.

The second chakra is the sacral chakra, located at the hips and pelvic area. Creative and sexual energy is stored here.

A few inches above the navel lies the next chakra, where emotions and sensitivity rest. CDM calls this the solar plexus area.

The fourth energy area is the heart, said to be the seat of the soul, housing love, harmony and peace.

The throat, chakra number five, is the location for communicative and expressive energy.

Six and seven are located on the forehead and the crown of the head. Chakra six is the third eye; seeing the spiritual nature of life, holding clairvoyance, wisdom and dreams in this area. The top of the head is the divine balance of spirituality, God and reality.

"You may or may not feel something," Lewis says as she begins rearranging the energy being emitted from the seven areas of

"Clairvoyance simply means to see clearly. Clairvoyance is a spiritual ability we all have, some just fine tune it."

—Kim Zirbes—

Church of Divine Man member

my body. Speaking slowly and quietly she tells me she is working on my first chakra. She begins moving her hands back and forth across the space above my hips. She speaks inaudibly under her breath, chanting something as she moves around my chair.

Lewis continues with the next six chakras, explaining as she goes along that she is using her hands and meditative powers to push out the negative and unused energy in my body to invite in the energy of the earth and the heavens.

I don't feel anything.

The woman next to me, named Julia, says she feels incredible relief once her aura is "smoothed out."

Julia says that it had been awhile since she had invested time into her spiritual life. After her aura healing, she sits and talks with Spiry. After doing so, Julia decides to have a reading done.

The fair offers two types of readings. The reading of rows briefly explores past lives, and the aura reading explores each chakra and the energies within them.

Julia chooses the reading of rows. I choose the aura reading.

After 'donating' \$10 for my mini-reading, which was strongly encouraged by Spiry, I now join the meditating woman in the wire-rimmed glasses: Nancy Simmers.

Simmers, the song leader at the Bellingham CDM, is kind, speaks as slowly and patiently as Lewis and explains the chakras to me again. She asks my name and studies my face as I sit in yet

another green and fuchsia chair a few feet in front of her.

She apologizes as she closes her eyes and places her hands out in front of her chest. Her fingers wiggle as if trying to catch minute pieces of dust floating in the air.

"I read much better with my eyes shut," she says. "It is just easier to focus."

Simmers then focuses on feeling and interpreting the energy being released by each layer of my spirit. She says she sees each energy level in an intensity-based color. The color tells her how I am using that part of my life.

When Simmers gets to my sexuality and physicality chakra, she says she sees a magenta color.

"You are really enjoying your physical self right now," she says. I try not to snicker immaturely, waiting for further explanation.

"You are rediscovering yourself, moving, allowing and extending touch," she says. "Touch is healing, soothing to you. This is a new touch."

I pause, wondering if she is talking about the relationship I recently started, or if she is merely guessing.

She continues, reading each of the seven chakras of my body. She says many things that I do not completely follow or that seem easily predictable.

"You are willing to explore your spirituality and seek answers," she says. This seems obvious, since I am sitting at a psychic healing fair.

Simmers surprises me with other things read. She 'saw' that my mother and I have an incredibly close and sometimes off-beat relationship and that I am an only child. I got goose bumps as Simmers opened her eyes and smiled at me before reading my next chakra.

She said she saw my communication chakra being of a performing or mass communicated nature. She said, in her mind, she pictured me on a stage with a microphone. I wasn't singing, but story telling in a way that she said was a passion for me.

What Simmers didn't know was that I am a disc jockey and am planning a career in radio.

Two seats down, Julia is being told she was once a leader of a hunting tribe.

She appears to be enthralled.

Her reading further reveals personality characteristics of her past lives that have carried forward to her present life.

"We, as spirits, are immortal," Zirbes said. "We are spirits and we go through many lives to learn lessons."

Zirbes said that CDM believes people are spirits placed inside physical bodies to learn certain lessons. Each life contains spe-

cific lessons available only within our current physical body.

"For example," she said, "My body is large and strong. Right now I am learning a lot about power."

Zirbes said that a past life reading looks at lessons learned and



Janice Spiry, the officiating Reverend at Bellingham CDM, sits in the church's serene sanctuary. The congregation holds its psychic healing fairs, guided meditation and Sunday services in this room.

tries to apply those lessons to the present.

"Past life issues are different for everyone," she said. "Our focus is to discover what are you working on at the present moment. Our idea is that you create your own reality."

Zirbes said CDM believes knowing your spiritual self will help you to do this.

Julia, the former tribal leader, and I are the only guests at the psychic fair that hour. Throughout the day about 16 people stopped in to participate or observe and approximately that many attended the morning service.

CDM not only holds psychic fairs and calls itself a church; its locations host regular Sunday worship services. This Sunday Simmers led the small congregation in "When the Saints Go Marching In," "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy" and "Amazing Grace" while Spiry opened the service with The Lord's Prayer and offered a guided meditational sermon.

Spiry said the Sunday worship is a celebration of finding an individual's spiritual self and connecting with a higher power. Spiry recently found out that her Sunday services at CDM are ending. This spring, the Bellingham location will close its doors, and end its worship services. Financial reasons prevent the Bellingham location from remaining active. Spiry said the building will stay open and the staff members will still be available for

“During the day you get all kinds of kinks in your aura for all different sorts of reasons. We just straighten and smooth them out for you. We get the energy flowing again.”

—Lisa Lewis—

CDM psychic and spiritual healer

guidance and healing.

After the Bellingham location closes, the CDM headquarters in Everett will be the closest church and training center.

The other churches, located throughout the Northwest and British Columbia have slightly higher member populations and will remain open, said Dave Andrews, an employee of Western's maintenance staff and CDM meditation and healing teacher.

“The overall community is really a bustling one,” Andrews said.

“In addition to the six locations we have throughout the Northwest and now Canada, we also have members teaching all over the world,” Zirbes said.

All CDM locations offer weekly classes in meditation. The Everett location, called “the Mother Church,” offers the same mediation and healing classes as well as seminary training, which is completed by CDM leadership.

According to Andrews, the church encourages its members to gain inner-focus and insight by controlled thought and reflection. The mediation and healing classes help people do this.

“We have all the answers inside us. Meditation is the way to focus and reach those answers,” Andrews said.

Janice Spiry in the church's sanctuary.



Classes cost \$200, but for the year 2002, the meditation classes are being offered for \$100, Spiry said.

Members of the CDM congregation are invited to attend services one year for free. After the year, they must donate their time and money by enrolling in the CDM classes.

“The classes are ongoing,” said Andrews. “You can continue

on with them as long as you want; it is an inner-journey.”

Although Everett is the current headquarters for the comparatively new religion, CDM was founded 26 years ago in Seattle. M.F. “Doc” Slusher, 84, a former mayor of Quincy, Wash., and Mary Ellen Flora, a former school teacher, founded the religion as a young couple bonded by their

common faith in God.

According to an article written by Marie Senestraro and Jeff Rice for “The Inner Voice”, a CDM journal, Flora and Slusher met in 1975 at the Berkeley Psychic Institute in California.

They came back to their home in the Fremont district of Seattle and began Church of Divine Man. The young couple incorporated their belief in God with their passion for intuition and clairvoyance.

Services started small, with Flora and Slusher teaching classes, giving readings and running the church in their modest home. Soon, their homemade and hand-hung posters began drawing larger crowds to their services. The couple had to look for a larger home. Eventually the couple and their congregation were able to purchase a building to call home for their church.

In the years following, church branches sprang up in other parts of the state, including Bellingham. Eventually

CDM became international when the Vancouver, British Columbia location opened on Dec. 11, 1984.

Flora is the Presiding Bishop of CDM, a position Slusher once held. The two, who live on Vashon Island, are still involved in each location's activities and hold yearly retreats and workshops at their home.

Flora has written a series of books on meditation, healing and clairvoyance. Her books, which were on display at the Sunday psychic fair, are now used as text for the church's ideals and methods of practice.

As Simmers finishes reading my chakras' energies, she asks me if I have one question for her.

“You can ask me anything,” she says. “Just keep in mind that I can't predict the future and I won't give

advice. I can just read.”

“Why CDM?” I ask her. A look of surprise takes over her face. It appears as though she had been expecting a question about my reading or my chakras, not about her choice for spiritual enlightenment.

“It's all I know,” she says. ♣

WHAT LIES BENEATH



The *HMCS Cape Breton* on the day of the sinking.

The waters off Nanaimo, British Columbia are the final resting place for a growing number of ships. **Alashia Freimuth** finds out from Nanaimo and Bellingham scuba divers that not all shipwrecks are accidents. Photos by Katie Kulla.

More than 500 private boats dotted the waters off Vancouver Island on October 20, 2001, swaying in unison with the waves of the ocean. Aboard the boats, all eyes were intently focused on the *HMCS Cape Breton*.

Suddenly, a series of explosions shook the *Cape Breton* and echoed across the water, startling the onlookers.

Spectators tooted their horns and cheered as the ship sank deeper and deeper, leaning starboard as it slid into the water.

It took only three and a half minutes for the *Cape Breton* to sink, though it was estimated that it would take close to 20 minutes.

"It's a good thing that it went down that fast," said Ron Akesson, instructor and owner of Adventures Down Under dive shop in Bellingham, "or else it would have rolled over."

The retired Royal Canadian Navy supply ship would soon become an artificial reef, creating a new home for many species of marine life and a haven for scuba divers.

Dark, hazy clouds of smoke billowed up from the blaze as the *Cape Breton* sank.

"The pyrotechnics were all for show," Akesson said. "They had nothing to do with the sinking of the boat, but they made it look pretty cool."

"It sounded like one big bang, but it was really a rapid series, so all we heard was a loud crack," said Howard Robins, director of public relations for the Artificial Reef Society of British Columbia (ARSBC), the group that bought the ship and organized the sinking. A total of 15 charges blasted holes in the boat. The charges were placed strategically down the entire length of the hull. They're designed to melt holes in the ship's metal hull. The holes

allow the water to rush in and also provide entry points for divers. Each of the explosives created a perfect four-foot square hole.

"They are clean cut and very safe with no jagged edges," Robins said.

The sunken ship originally weighed 11,000 tons. It's 441 feet long and has a 57-foot-beam, making it the world's largest diver-prepared artificial reef, according to the Nanaimo Dive Association (NDA).

The *Cape Breton* nestled into the sand at a depth of 135 feet near Snake Island, about three kilometers off Nanaimo, British Columbia.

Many scuba divers waited in anticipation to be one of the first to explore the sunken ship, Akesson said. But before anyone could enter the water, six Royal Canadian Navy divers had to make sure that the ship was safe. They found that the explosives on the port side hadn't detonated, so everyone had to wait until all the unexploded charges were cleared.

The *Cape Breton* was one of only four others of its type in the world, Robins said. It was built in 1944 and was retired from naval service 50 years later. The ARSBC bought the ship in 1999. It's the sixth ship the group has sunk in the waters around British Columbia.

While in drydock prior to sinking, the ship's triple-expansion steam engine was removed and the ship's stern section was cut off. They're now on display at the North Vancouver Museum and Archives.

According to the NDA, artificial reefs near Nanaimo have brought in nearly \$10 million in diving tourism within the last four years. They say their objective is to make Nanaimo 'The Whistler of Diving,' the best place to scuba dive in the world.

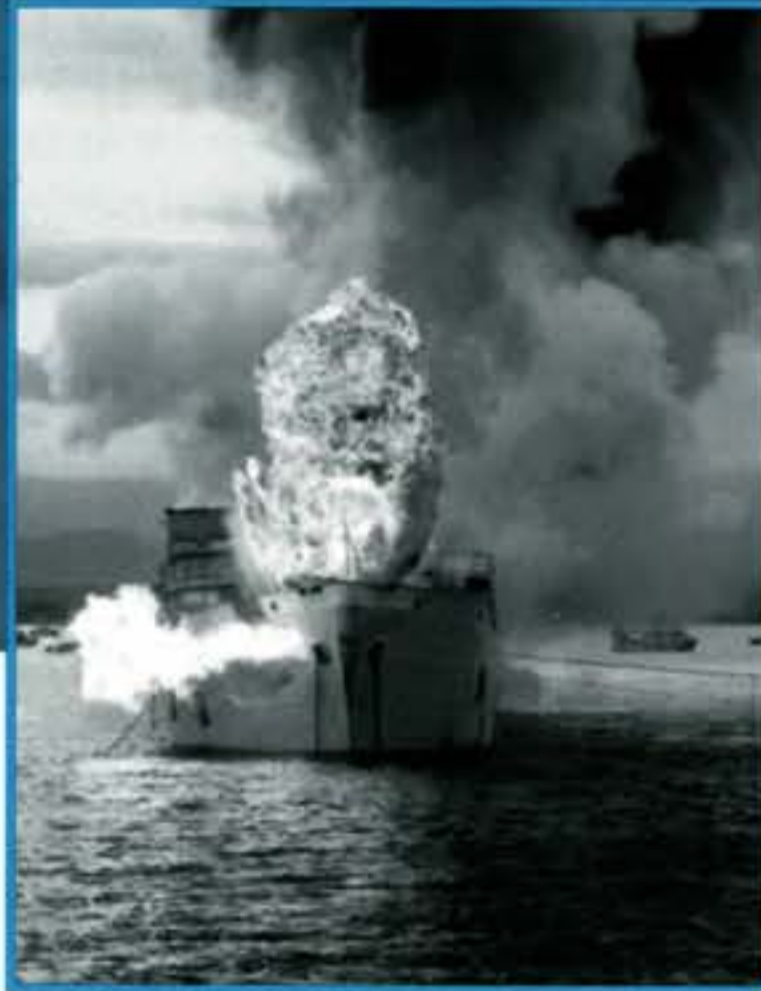
"Divers typically spend more than the average tourist," said Sean Bruce, assistant manager of Sun Down Diving in Nanaimo. He said many boat owners and dive guides have benefitted greatly from ARSBC's efforts.

"The sinking of the ships has created a big boom for charters," Bruce said. "We are estimating that (the *Cape Breton*) will bring in \$6 million more a year to Nanaimo."

"Nearly 5,000 divers visit this area every year and the dive shops will tell you that it is all because of these ships," Robins said.

“ In my opinion, (the Pacific Northwest) is the best place to dive in the world, and it is right here in my back yard. ”

—Jason Flake—
dive shop owner



The sinking of *HMCS Cape Breton* in October, 2001.

Environmental Canada, the equivalent of the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States, takes great precaution before sinking a ship, Robins said.

“The ships have to pass the white glove test,” he said. “There are many stages the ship has to go through before it is ready to go under.”

It costs nearly half a million dollars to sink a ship, which includes the cost of the ship, labor and operation costs such as tools, insurance and towing expenses, Robins said. Much of the labor is donated, however.

“A lot of local dive shops put together cleaning crews to clean and move things out of the ship,” Akeson said.

These volunteers, along with the community of Nanaimo, worked countless hours preparing the *Cape Breton*.

Akeson said he spent nearly five hours scraping paint off the ceiling in one day, and this was the seventh time it had been done.

“Environmental Canada had changed their rules within the last few years,” Akeson said. “They are becoming much tougher.”

First the Royal Canadian Navy makes sure nothing on the ship still works. Then they remove all bunk beds, shelving, cabinets and other furniture.

Most of these things are sold to businesses and individuals.

“People collect a lot of souvenirs out of these old boats,” Akeson said. “There are many trinkets and tokens on these ships and everyone wants a little memento.”

All the metal stripped from the ship is recycled. The brass and aluminum are separated from the steel because of their value. The copper is removed from all wiring and recycled. The recycled metal is sold to help fund the project.

“All materials known to be unsafe for the marine environment must be removed,” Robins said. “The ships have to be nonpolluting structures. Otherwise it will be an inhospitable environment for marine growth.”

Naval inspectors make sure all PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), hydrocarbons, mercury and lead are removed from the ship.

Once the vessel is sunk it is only a matter of weeks before marine life starts clinging to it. Akeson, who has a degree in marine biology, said that animals are always looking for a place to live. Artificial reefs create a fresh habitat for invertebrates to settle and attract larger fish, which feed off of them.

He explored the *Cape Breton* just two weeks after it sank and already saw lingcod, Dungeness crab and starfish inhabiting the ship.

“They create their own miniature ecosystem,” Akeson said, “But it takes about a year before the (marine) life really explodes.”

Divers wanting to explore wrecks need a specialty wreck dive certification which allows them to dive more than 100 feet deep, Bruce said. Basic certification only allows divers to dive 60 feet, Bruce said.

“It takes a different type of diver to enjoy (the reefs),” said Jason Flake, co-owner of Aqua Sport in Bellingham. “Much more gear is required including, gloves, hoods, lights etc.”

It is really easy to lose visibility when doing wreck dives, Akeson said. This is one of the most dangerous aspects of diving in artificial reefs.

Akeson said when diving a wreck, divers use a line, which is small rope tied at the point of entry of the ship. Divers tie the other end to themselves. This allows them to hold the line and follow it back without getting turned around.

Diving in the Pacific Northwest is different than diving in tropical waters.

“They’re two totally different types of diving,” Flake said. “It is like trying to compare apples and oranges. You can’t. In my opinion (the Pacific Northwest) is the best place to dive in the world, and it is right here in my back yard.”

“The fish might be a little brighter in tropical water but we have more variety around here and the marine life is much bigger,” said Jeff Reinke, Flake’s partner at Aqua Sports. “The colors are the most perfect you have ever seen,” Reinke said, “But you can only see them when you shine a light on them. It is definitely the color that turns me on about (the marine life).”

Akeson has done more dives on his own time and as an instructor than he can count.

“Personally, I like wreck dives best,” he said. “The neatest thing about them is that you can move three-dimensionally through your environment.”

“It is like being a hummingbird”, he said. “You can hover down in and out of the wreck, or just hang motionless in the water”.

“It is the closest way that I can think of for humans to become birds.” ♣

People often visualize funeral homes as dark, gloomy and depressing. However, the showcase room at Jones-Moles Funeral Home portrays a different picture. The displays found here signify life rather than death.

Those who work in the mortuary, known as funeral directors and embalmers, make a living by assisting families in remembering those who have passed.

Jack Westford, owner and funeral director at Westford Funeral Home in Bellingham, grew up in the funeral business. He understands the misconceptions people have about those who work around death.

"The general public drives by a funeral home and they think 'death' rather than the word 'life,'" Westford says. "We deal with the living; 98 percent of the time I'm dealing with the families and the other small percentage I'm working with the bodies."

Darryl Kooiman, a funeral director and embalmer at Jones-Moles Funeral Home and Cremation Services, received a bachelor's degree in human services before becoming a funeral director.

"My father was a medical examiner and he suggested I look into the profession," Kooiman says smiling. "I always wanted to help people and this seemed like another way that I could."

Funeral directors assume the difficult task of interviewing the families of the deceased while arranging details of preparation. Working together, funeral directors and loved ones coordinate the obituary, select the casket or urn, decide the flowers and location of the funeral service.

"Everything must be perfect for the families and we really try to make the experience positive for them," Kooiman says.

Funeral directors strive to build trust with the families and consistently go beyond the routine duties of making service arrangements. They help families cope with their pain and lend a hand in locating various outlets for them to alleviate grief, such as local grief counselors and support groups.

Both Westford and Kooiman make it their mission to remain strong for the families who need their services and try to help them through a difficult time.

"When families go through a funeral and we are able to help them," Westford says, "that's a good feeling."

Although funeral directors spend much of their time with families they also deal with the dead. Both Kooiman and Westford say that they are never "scared" in situations like these.

"My father told me, 'Jack, in the funeral home you never have to be afraid of someone who has died,'" Westford says. "You should be afraid of some of the people who are walking around."

Although the corpses are not a source of fear, preparation of the bodies is enough to make the average person uneasy.

State law requires that a body must be either refrigerated or embalmed if more than 24 hours elapses between death and burial or cremation. Embalming a cadaver involves injecting a formaldehyde base, coupled with other chemicals, into the arterial system for preservation. These steps are taken after blood and air have been removed from the body and lungs.

the FAMILY business

Two local funeral directors shed light on the business of helping families cope with death. **Sonja Rose** visits local funeral homes, dispelling myths and offering insight to this misunderstood profession. Photos by Katie Kulla.



Jack Westford stands in the front of his funeral home's chapel. A crematory casket and an urn for the storage of ashes are behind him.

“The general public drives by a funeral home and they think death rather than the word life. We deal with the living; 98% of the time I’m dealing with the families and a small percentage I’m working with the bodies.”

—Jack Westford—

Westford Funeral Home owner and funeral director

Darryl Kooiman explains the different options for caskets from which families can choose. The caskets and urns are displayed in professional, clean-looking showrooms.



Embalmers press down on the diaphragm to allow the air to escape. To withdraw blood and other bodily fluids, incisions are made into the abdomen and then the internal organs are probed with a trocar that is attached to a pump tube.

To become a funeral director in Washington state, a person must first become an apprentice to a licensed funeral director for at least one year. They must take two years of science in college and also attend a mortuary science school for two years if they desire to become both a funeral director and an embalmer. The nearest mortuary school is in Oregon.

Upon completion of mortuary school, an individual must also pass a state board exam in order to become a qualified funeral service practitioner.

Funeral director and embalmer licenses are distinctly separate, although many funeral service professionals are qualified to perform both duties. Funeral directors remove bodies from a death scene and transfer them to a funeral home if foul play is not suspected. If suspicion arises, a coroner is responsible for removing the body and taking the corpse to a medical examiner.

Embalmers carry out the task of physically preparing the deceased for burial or cremation.

Stress is inevitable for funeral directors.

Both Kooiman and Westford explain that one source of stress is the fact that they are on-call 24 hours a day. Funeral directors are expected to go to a death site immediately after notification.

“Death comes when you least expect it,” Kooiman says. “It is really hard to plan your day. It can be stressful to get up and go out in the middle of the night and go out to a death site.”

Coupled with the stress of being on call, is the uncertainty of where they may be called to. Funeral directors are sometimes obligated to arrange services for friends and or acquaintances.

“Getting a telephone call and going out to an address, not knowing who it is, and then finding it is your friend, that is stressful,” Westford says.

“One time a family whom I knew came to me for a service and one family member touched me and said, ‘How can you do what you do?’” Westford says. “You try to hold back and then someone does that to you, it’s hard.”

Whether it is a friend or simply a client, the death sites they enter often have a lasting effect on funeral directors. Tragic accidents, especially those of children, stay with funeral directors for a long time. Suicides and senseless deaths also make a lasting impact in their lives.

“My sadness has been mostly on suicides,” Westford says

shaking his head. “A hanging, where you have the scratch marks on the neck because it took longer than they expected and they tried to get out. Those are the eerie situations. I get a real queasiness in my stomach and I think how pathetic and sad it is.”

Westford recalls walking into a specific suicide location. The victim had left a scrawled letter behind with the last line trailing off and blaring music still playing. The victim had jumped from a loft with a noose around the neck and was hanging lifeless in the living room.

Although suicides are difficult, Kooiman is most affected by deaths that make him think of his family life.

“I have a hard time with funerals of young mothers and young children because it is close to home,” Kooiman says. “I couldn’t imagine what I would do without my wife to help take care of the kids or how I would feel if I lost one of my children.”

Funeral directors and embalmers understand that death occurs on a daily basis; how it affects them internally and exactly how they cope is determined by the individual.

Most find talking to other funeral directors is helpful. Others choose to exercise or participate in recreational activities, such as golf, to relieve their stress.

Kooiman says the most difficult aspect of his job is the pressure. The service and presentation must be precise; there is only one opportunity to make it right for the families.

Regardless of how the professionals view their profession, it is difficult to gauge the reactions of others. Kooiman says he has experienced an assortment of reactions by people after telling them he is a funeral director and embalmer.

“A lot of people will have a joke that they tell, others will just stop talking to you and become less interested in you,” he says. “There are different reactions and feelings about funeral directors and it impacts your life.”

In spite of the varying reactions they receive, many men and women make their living as funeral directors and embalmers.

Funeral directors in Washington state make an average of \$35,000-\$45,000 a year. Managers and owners of funeral homes make a little more. The expenses for funeral services can vary, depending on the options the family settles on. A traditional burial or cremation ceremony ranges from \$3,000-\$4,000.

Although often misunderstood, people in this profession perform an important duty for those families affected by death. Their contributions and expertise allow grief-stricken families some closure and peace during tragic times. ♣

Ready to Run

Every winter people from all over the United States compete in the Alaskan Iditarod, a 1,150-mile dogsled race. **Stephanie Kitchens** accompanies Jim Malin, a local dogsledder, to Mount Baker as he tells of the journeys he has taken with his dogs. Photos by Katie Kulla.



After an hour of preparation, Jim Malin and his team take off. The dogs will sprint for about ten miles before slowing into a steady pace for the remainder of the run. On this day, Malin planned to run his dogs for an hour.

Low whines and quiet barks of 10 dogs are muffled in the surrounding snow. Each dog is hooked to a cable that is connected to a brown Chevrolet truck. In front of them and in plain sight sits a dogsled. Moving around the sled is dogsledder and owner of the dogs, Jim Malin. Soon his preparations bring him closer to putting the dogs in their harness. The dogs' barking increases to high-pitched yelps.

He moves over to his team and has to wade between the leaping canines to get to his lead dog, Pilot. Malin unhooks Pilot and pulls him up onto his hind feet to get him to the sled. Pilot eagerly kangaroo hops all the way to the front harness. Malin ties him in and the process is repeated with each dog. The ones in harness leap into the air in anticipation of beginning the run.

When the dogs are finally in their harnesses, Malin lets go of all restraints and the dogs' pent-up energy is released in a burst of strength. Within seconds the sled is out of sight.

Malin, 40, of Bellingham, has been dogsledding for the past 16 years. Every Saturday and Sunday he brings his dogs up to Mount Baker for a run and exercise. A rectangular kennel, which he uses to transport his dogs, sits on top of his Chevy truck. He designed the wooden kennel to carry 10 dogs at once, five on each side. Each dog has its own sawdust-lined compartments.

He designed his kennel with separate compartments for safety reasons.

"If you were to get into an accident with the dogs all in one container, they would die," he said.

He also designed it this way for temperature reasons. When the truck is driving down the road and the temperature is zero, the wind chill factor would be huge, he said. So each dog has its own compartment to allow for better insulation. In the summer, the compartments can be opened to allow for a breeze flow through the kennel.

For this trip up to Mount Baker, Malin sleds with what he affectionately calls an "eight-and-a-half-dog team"; eight big dogs and one smaller dog.

Malin is only one of many that have been drawn into dogsled racing. A famous dogsled race is the annual Iditarod, set in Alaska. The race begins in Anchorage and ends in Nome. It is 1,150 miles long and is a revival of the dogsledding tradition.

Dorothy Page, a planner for the 1967 Alaska Centennial celebration thought of the idea of a dog race to help save Alaska's mushing heritage. It has now become so well known that the best mushers, or dogsled drivers, can receive thousands of dollars a year from corporate sponsors.

Although Malin does race, he prefers taking his dogs out on Mount Baker's glaciers instead of running them in a race. The longer snow season at Mount Baker and the close proximity of snow make sledding here more appealing to him.

"For races I often have to go to Montana or Idaho," he said.

The view and the challenge of the descent of sledding on glaciers are perks that add to its appeal.

Each of his 14 dogs has different personalities. One jumps in the air and begs for attention and another sits quietly in



Two of Jim Malin's dogs waiting to be attached to his sled.

the snow. The dogs reside in a quarter-acre kennel on Malin's property and are adequate announcers of any intruders onto his land. However, he said, they are not guard dogs.

"If someone broke into my place, they'd help carry everything out," Malin said, smiling at his team.

To prevent injuries, he trains his dogs in the fall at slow speeds to build up their tendons before racing them at high speeds. Although he has one four-year-old dog, Zero, who had to have surgery on her knees, Malin has been fortunate as far as an injury to his dogs is concerned.

"My time will come," he joked. "I'll turn a corner and a moose will be there."

Malin begins training seven-month-old dogs by having them pull firewood, he said. He trains the puppies turning techniques by taking sharp corners and having the race dog in training follow him. At nine months, the puppy can run with the full team. From there, Malin lets his team take over the training. The experienced dogs will keep the puppy in check.

Much like parenting, Nikki, a retired leader, had a sort of "count to three" system she would implement. The first time a puppy mangles the harness, she would growl at the puppy. The second time warranted a nip at the heels, and a third incident instigated a maul of the puppy.

Malin starts the puppies out running a quarter of a mile so they don't get overly tired but have run enough to be excited.



Jim Malin attaches his "dog bag" to his sled. The bag is used to carry dogs that become too tired to complete the trip with the team.



**"Never, never slap a dog in harness or they will be scared for life."
—Jim Malin—
local dogsledder**

He ties his dogs to his truck while preparing his sled and equipment for a run.



Preparing his sled for the day's run; setting up his equipment is an essential part of the exercise.



Jim Malin's distinctive truck. The kennel holds ten dogs and was built by Malin himself.

They are positioned just behind an older, experienced dog so that the puppy can follow the older dog's lead.

For discipline, Malin relies on a combination of positive and negative reinforcement for his team. When a dog does something right, it is rewarded, he said. When the dog does something wrong, he grabs them and yells at them.

"Never, never slap a dog in harness or they will be scared for life," he said.

Elaine Hamilton, 54, of Omak is also a veteran dogsled racer. The race that sticks out in her mind is her first win.

The race was in Coleridge, Mont. She was racing with her team when she suddenly noticed that nobody was ahead of her and nobody was passing her.

"I remember thinking, 'I might get to win this race,'" she said.

As she crossed the finish line, people swarmed around her wanting to know how she trained her dogs. She was suddenly somebody, she said. Her grand prize was \$45 and two liters of root beer.

"After that I started approaching the line with confidence," she said. "I wasn't wondering if I had my lucky socks on or not."

Her interest in dogsled racing began about 20 years ago when her kids decided they wanted a puppy. A search through newspapers resulted in the purchase of her family's first Siberian husky.

After a few months with their puppy, Hamilton noticed vans passing by with dogsleds on the top.

Hamilton decided to find out what the people were doing with them.

She discovered a couple who judged dogsled races. The husband had learned the art of driving a dogsled in Greenland during World War II where he trained the dogs to carry supplies to different places.

Intrigued by their conversation, Hamilton and her two boys were hooked on dogsled racing. By the end of winter, the family had four dogs and a dogsled. It became something that she and her sons did together. But the novelty eventually wore off for the boys.

"After scooping poop in the rain and having to walk the dogs, they lost interest," Hamilton said.

With the boys no longer interested, it became her passion. In order to learn each dog's capabilities and strengths, she said a special bond is necessary between her and her team.

"It's a real relationship with the team," she said. "It's very rewarding."

In a climate like the Northwest, Hamilton begins training her dogs in the winter. When winter arrives, the dogs are exercised to get them back into shape.

Hamilton starts her puppies out the same way Malin does, by strapping them to lightweight objects and having the puppies pull the objects around the house. To get them used to running with the team, she straps the team together in their harnesses and hitches them up to the sled. She then has a puppy run alongside them. Even this, however, has its perils.

She recalls a winter when she trained Sepp, a 4-month old puppy. The team was running on a path lined with woods when out of the woods zipped three coyotes. She said she could tell they had been watching Sepp because one streaked out in front

of the team and one fell behind the team while the third coyote went across the road and onto the other side of the woods.

It was obvious they were trying to distract and lure Sepp away from the protection of the team by playing on his natural puppy curiosity, she said. Hamilton could only call the puppy over and over again to keep him close to her. Luckily he listened and the coyotes were deprived of a hoped-for meal.

Hamilton introduced Western freshman Victoria Weyer, 19, to dogsledding.

Weyer compares dog training to parenting, but methods vary with each trainer. Some trainers are more strict than others, she said, some allow their dogs to sit on couches and other trainers don't let their dogs inside the house.

Roxy, one of Hamilton's 15 huskies, has been trained with less strict methods.

"If you sit on the couch, it'd better be OK with Roxy," Weyer said. "She's the head dog."

For nutrition, sled dogs rely on fats and protein as their most important sources of energy. Their diet usually consists of a quality dry dog food that is supplemented with ground chicken, fish, liver or other meat products. In long distance races, sled dogs may require 10,000 calories per day to sustain them in their journey.

During the summer, when dogs are exercising less and don't need the extra energy, Malin's dog food bill totals about \$75 a month. However, during the winter the dogs need more energy and food, he said, so he uses what he calls a champagne race diet consisting of meat, fish, chicken, liver and egg. His food bill for the dogs can be as high as \$100 a month.

For sledding, the most a dog should weigh is 60 pounds, Malin said. This is sufficient weight to pull the sled, yet the dog is lean enough to be able to run with energy.

Malin said that keeping the dogs hydrated on the trail and during a race is the hardest and most important part of racing. Each dog consumes about one gallon of water per day.

Often the dogs will be so tired that they won't drink a lot of water. He has learned a trick to get them to drink — by placing meat at the bottom of the water bowls. However, the dogs have learned a trick as well.

"Yeah, they just tip the bowl over and eat the meat without drinking the water," Malin said. "Unfortunately one of my dogs learned that and taught it to the rest of them."

A team of six dogs can cover 62-65 miles in a three-day peri-

od, Malin said. A team of 12 dogs can cover 140 to 145 miles in the same time. A team of nine to 14 dogs is a typical sized team. Team size and trail conditions determine how fast a dogsled team can go. His team has gone as fast as 25 miles per hour.

When Hamilton first began dogsled racing 20 years ago, sleds were traditionally made of hardwood such as ash. At that time there were only a few dogsled makers in the United States and they were considered very skilled.

Now dogsleds are more high-tech, Hamilton said. Many are made with aluminum or other sturdy metals. Hamilton, however rides and races with the traditional wooden dogsled.

Sleds can weigh 30 pounds, Malin said, but the sled he uses is 40 pounds. Metal runners line the bottom of the sled. Drivers place one foot on each runner and need to have enough balance to push with one foot between the runners giving the dogs more momentum. The standard width is one inch, but can be wider depending on the size of the driver.

The sleds have a curved handle to aid in the balance of the racer. Drivers must grip the handle with both hands and use their entire body to maintain control and flexibility with the sled and its movements on the trail.

Extra weight can be put in the sled to make it heavier for the dogs, Malin said. He uses concrete blocks and rocks.

Sleds can also be outfitted with a drag trace, a simple metal slab that falls between the runners to slow down the sled on ice and rock.

Weyer has yet to race with a team of dogs but has driven a dogsled and said she knows how hard simply staying upright on a moving sled is. From her experience, she also knows how curious dogs are.

Hamilton's dogs are no exception. During a training run, Hamilton saw what she thought might be a porcupine in the middle of the trail. Understanding how curious dogs are, she stopped the team

before they reached the prickly creature and tied the dogs up to a tree so she could inspect it.

"The dogs got all excited because they don't like me to get far away from them," she said. "But once they saw what I was walking towards they really got excited."

Upon further inspection, the ominous object in the trail turned out to be nothing more than a clump of pine needles that had fallen from the trees. As soon as Hamilton untied the team, they raced up the trail to inspect what it was. Once they discovered that it was only a bunch of pine needles, Hamilton said they gave her a look as if to say "what were you were so concerned about?" ❖



Jim Malin stands in front of his truck at a location off of Baker Lake Road where he will exercise his dogs.

April 2002

One used to do it, one still does. Both know just how dangerous it can be. **Jennifer Jennings** talks with two Western students about the subculture of illegal street racing. Sharing space, food and other resources with a neighbor doesn't appeal to everyone.

Camille Penix visits Bellingham co-housing and finds a place where people share a common ground and enjoy it. Dogsledding has increased in popularity following the conception of the Alaskan Iditarod race. **Stephanie Bitchens** accompanies Jim Malm, a local dogsledder, as he tells of journey's he has taken with his dogs Jack Westford, Westford Funeral Home owner and director sheds light on the business of helping families cope with death. **Sonja Rose** visits local funeral homes, dispelling myths and offering insight to this misunderstood profession.

Karla Tillman uncovers the tradition and heritage of Joe's Garden, a 7.7 acre farm on Taylor Avenue. Locally owned and operated since 1961, Joe's Garden offers Bellingham residents peaches, apples, hand-picked produce every summer. The Church of Dying Man exercises its clairvoyant power to detect reporter Tessa Allison's spark of negative energy before its Bellingham location closes this spring. Students often pass through campus in a rush to seek shelter from the rain and to get to class on time, never noticing the sculptures scattered around them. **Brooke Geery** slows down her walk through Western to check out the university's world-wear display. The waters off Nanaimo, British Columbia are the final resting place for a growing number of ships.

Alashia Freimuth finds out from Nanaimo and Bellingham scuba divers that not all shipwrecks are accidents.