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*Western Washington University*

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# KLIPSUN



WINTER 2017 / FORWARD



Dear reader,

Life is full of the unexpected. We like to think we have it all figured out, predicting and organizing the static nature of our daily lives. Yet, in a mere moment, life can knock the wind out of you and it is suddenly changed forever.

It's hard to cope with change, especially when it is an undesirable outcome. We are constantly fighting with reality, using our denial as a protective shield. We try to face change head on, but there is rarely an instance in which we can prepare ourselves for life-altering experiences.

In this issue you will find stories of grief and loss, the relationship between old and new and discovering brightness in the midst of our weary journey. Each story in this collection encapsulates what it means to look toward the future.

In the face of life's seemingly infinite adversities, there is one constant: life goes on. There is no turning back, what's done is done. We all must decide which path we want to take, but all any of us can really do is move forward.

Truly,

Katherine Misel

Editor-in-Chief

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PROUD TO BE A ***BITCH***

# RECLAIMING AN OFFENSIVE TERM FOR POWER, STRENGTH AND INDEPENDENCE

Opinion piece written by  
Kate Galambos

Nobody wants to be a bitch, right? Well, maybe not anymore. Third-wave feminists have taken back the term “bitch.” Being a bitch now means being strong, independent and fearless, and nobody can tell us differently.

Feminism is a touchy subject. Even after all these years, the word itself still threatens people, regardless of gender. People try to avoid labeling themselves as feminists, presumably due to fear they will be associated with some of the less flattering terms given to feminists. To name a few: man-hater, uptight, over-sensitive, dyke and bitch.

However, young feminists have begun to redefine some of the offensive terms once used against them. Prominent female role models, media sources and women across the United States are redefining “bitch” as a symbol of strength and power.

In 1996, BitchMedia launched the magazine *Bitch: Feminist Response to Pop Culture* and the company has since grown into a major nonprofit that seeks to support female empowerment. The founders made no mistake in choosing the name “Bitch” for their magazine. “We stand firm in our belief that if we choose to appropriate the word [bitch], it loses its power to hurt us,” says founder Andi Zeisler on the magazine’s website.

The term “bitchin” is used to describe something or someone as “cool” or “awesome.” Social media is overflowing with memes that promote the term “bitch” as being a good thing.

Wikipedia defines “bitch” first as a female dog and second as a derogatory term for a weak man, but the third entry then reads, “The range of meanings has expanded in modern usage. In a feminist context, it can indicate a strong or assertive woman.” While Wikipedia’s definitions may not be considered scholarly, the pages reflect people’s everyday use of language.

Regardless of the delivery, the evolving definition is moving toward a similar message. Bitches are strong. Bitches are to be taken seriously.

Comedian and writer Tina Fey has proudly proclaimed herself a bitch. In 2008, Fey told the world, “bitch is the new black,” in the SNL sketch “Weekend Update.” In reference to the public’s negative perception of the then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2008, Fey stood by Clinton’s competency and refused to accept gender stereotypes surrounding strong women.

*“Maybe what bothers me the most is that people say that Hillary is a bitch,” Fey said. “Let me say something about that — yeah she is.”*

*“And so am I and so is this one,” pointing to Amy Poehler. “Know what? Bitches get stuff done.”*

Fey and Poehler were celebrated even more for their unwavering feminism after the sketch and eight years later, it continues to infect the internet.

Prominent women — like Poehler and Fey — do more than just get the message out there; they make it okay, even cool, to be loud and proud to be a bitch. In a time when women continue to be discounted for raising their voices, bad bitches like Fey show girls that they have the right to demand respect.

Regardless of your opinion on this shift of the term “bitch,” it is an impressive display of how language is a powerful tool. Language is entirely subjective. A word acts only as a symbol for an idea that represents something more tangible. Bitch can mean whatever we want it to, so why shouldn’t we make it positive?

The first wave of feminists pushed for our right to vote and for inclusion into the public sphere in the early 19th century. Women of the ‘60s and ‘70s made it clear that “personal is political.” Thank the second-wave feminists for the Equal Pay Act, *Roe v. Wade*, Title IX and countless other legislation.

Women fight to change stereotypes, earn respect and make their voices heard. We’ve always taken back what is rightfully ours, so let’s take back bitch. Let’s get stuff done.

Today, millennial, third-wave feminists are looking at power structures in the broadest and most intersectional perspective yet. Language is a huge part of the patriarchy that plagues our institutions and cultural norms. Through language, we conceptualize and educate each member of society. If we can change our language, we will, without a doubt, change our culture.

Bitch is only the beginning. ■

WRITTEN BY  
HAYLEY ELKIN

PHOTOS BY  
KJELL REDAL



*(left) Grace grabs her prosthetic arm with her real one. She rarely wears it though, seeing the aid as more of an inconvenience. She's done this since she was little. "I would bury it in the sandbox...this very expensive piece of equipment," Grace said.*

# THE STORY OF A WITTY, MULTI-TALENTED YOUNG WOMAN WHO JUST SO HAPPENS TO ONLY HAVE ONE ARM

She sat amused, one arm slung over the back of her chair, smiling as I tried to come up with something she finds even a little bit difficult to do with one arm.

Typing? Easy. Makeup? Easy. Video games, archery, volleyball, opening a jar? Easy. Tying her shoes? She can do it five different ways. I thought I had finally stumped her when I asked about doing her hair.

Proving a point, she reached up and took her red hair down from the ponytail it was in and then twisted each side back into a neat bun better than I can do with two hands.

“This right here is why I’m so lucky to have a stub,” she says, holding her hair back with what’s left of her left arm as she pins it into place with her right hand. “Without a stub this whole thing would suck a lot more.”

Grace Eliason is a 20-year-old amputee from a farm in the small town of Yutan, Nebraska, who is very particular about calling the remainder of her left arm a stub, not a nub.

She lost her arm on June 3, 1999, when she was two years old. She was in the throes of her terrible twos and was the most rambunctious kid on the farm.

Grace was riding in a wagon hooked up to the back of a John Deere riding lawn mower as her mom rode through the farm. Grace somehow managed to crawl up onto the mower and fall off, it ran over her left arm. It was from this point on that she remembers the day’s events.

She remembers being wrapped in a purple, green and black towel, waiting in the farmhouse kitchen for the ambulance to arrive. She remembers being taken to the local high school where a helicopter was waiting to take her to the hospital. The last thing she remembers is a needle going into her arm when she arrived in the emergency room.

She woke up in the hospital, where she spent about a week recovering after her amputation. From there, it was a long healing process. One thing she’s glad she doesn’t remember is the pain.

“After that point, I changed absolutely nothing about myself,” Grace says. “I was still an awful child, climbing everything. I was very defiant and having one arm didn’t really slow me down.”

Having one arm may not have slowed Grace down, but it did come with a few changes — one of which was getting a prosthetic, the first of many arms Grace would have in her life.

Appointments would go on for over six hours. Impatient and always-moving, Grace would have to sit still, training the nerves in her arms so that she could control the mechanics of her prosthetics. In the end, she never found a use for them. The way she sees it, you don’t need two arms to live.

“Grace never really took to her prosthetics,” Beth Eliason, Grace’s mom says. “When she’d get tired of it in school, she’d just set it down somewhere. We were always asking, ‘Grace, where’s your arm?’”

She once buried her arm, an arm that can cost anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000, in the sand box because she was tired of wearing it.

Along with growing out of her clothes like most kids, Grace would also outgrow her arms. Back to another appointment she’d go, to sit for hours while they tailored new arms to fit her unique amputation.

“There was never really anything tough about parenting her, she just made it so easy,” Beth says. “Except maybe the prosthetics. She’s very... strong-willed.”

Grace hated wearing arms then, and she hates wearing arms now. She keeps one cosmetic arm on hand, but almost never wears it.

Back at Grace’s home in Nebraska, her mom has a cabinet in the laundry room affectionately titled, “The Arm Closet.” In it lies a pile of arms that Grace has outgrown over the years.

“You know when you’re away at college and your mother calls you and she’s like, ‘I think I’m going to make your room into a gym?’” Grace asks. “Well, my mom calls me and she’s like, ‘I don’t know what to do with all of your creepy arms.’”

Grace calls little anecdotes like this one “arm stories.” She takes her phone out to show me, “Ways to Lose a Hand,” a long list of stories having to do with her arm. These stories range from the time she and her one-armed friend shared the price of one manicure to her favorite Easter story.

“You know the Catholic stand-sit-kneel, the hey Macarena?” Grace asks. “It was the middle of Mass on Easter Sunday and we were all praying. I was being a little brat, as I often was, and I ripped off my arm and just set it down.”

She goes on to mimic the sound of her mechanical arm being set down on the pew in the middle of an otherwise silent church and recalls her entire family bursting into laughter.

Stories like this, Grace says, are why she loves family get-togethers. She

gets to hear all of the funny situations her arm, or lack thereof, got her into as a child.

Growing up, Grace was involved in just about every activity

you can imagine. Golf, clog dancing, softball, theater, marching band, basketball, swimming — the list goes on. You name it, Grace probably did it and she was probably pretty good at it.

“I love doing two-arm things,” she says. “I feel very capable of everything I do, a lot of times more capable than my two-armed counterparts.”

Grace is competitive and says naturally, sometimes people underestimate her. She doesn’t mind because she enjoys the challenge and takes pride in proving them wrong.

Since starting college, Grace has taken an interest in weight lifting. Her boyfriend was the first person to convince her to give it a try, despite some obvious obstacles she might face.

“That’s the kind of person I like,” Grace says. “When they’re like, ‘Let’s go do this, we’re not going to even question how yet. We’re just going to go do it and figure it out along the way.’”

There was a bit of a learning curve at first with weight lifting. She’d try several different approaches for each exercise before she figured out which was most comfortable and worked out the correct muscles. But once she did, she excelled and now spends many of her mornings at the gym. She loves the cable machines and can now squat 185 pounds.

“The first time I went into the weight room, I wasn’t intimidated as an amputee,” Grace says. “I was intimidated as a human being. Now, I strut around like I own the place.”

Grace’s confidence is unmistakable — be that with weight lifting or anything else she does, she exudes it. She says nearly everything about losing her arm at age 2 has positively impacted her life. However, she could come up with a few minor frustrations, one being phantom limb.

**“I DON'T IDENTIFY AS ANYTHING. BY DEFINITION I GUESS I DO HAVE A DISABILITY”, GRACE SAYS. “BUT I JUST IDENTIFY AS GRACE.”**

Phantom limb occurs commonly among amputees and happen when sensations, usually pain, are felt in the limb that has been removed. Grace figured out how to relieve the pain pretty quickly.

“Are you ready? Watch this,” she says as she animatedly wiggles the fingers on her right hand. Her amputated arm started to twitch and move. “So whenever something feels really tight over here, I just start to move what isn’t actually there.”

This, Grace says, is the key to getting rid of phantom pain: just moving a limb that doesn’t exist. All the nerves have been moved around, as Grace explains it, so some of the nerves that would typically be further down her arm are up in her stub instead.

Not surprisingly, the other setback Grace has experienced as a result of her amputation has been a few instances of discrimination, like the time she had to move from the emergency exit row on an airplane because she wasn’t wearing her prosthetic, or when a group of girls she didn’t know in high school posted a picture of a girl with her arms in her sleeves captioned “I look like nub girl.”

“First of all, I was offended because it’s a stub, not a nub,” Grace says mockingly.

That’s how Grace seems to take most things. In perfect stride and usually with a good laugh. She likes to lift her arm up right away and make people feel a little uncomfortable so that they can move past it and on to making jokes about getting a lawn mower tattooed along her scar.

“When people come up to me and say, ‘You are so inspirational,’ in my head, I just laugh,” Grace says. “I am very appreciative to people who think that, but I’m just kind of living my life and I’m really enjoying it. If that happens to be an inspiration to someone, then that’s great.”

A million times over, Grace will tell you how lucky she is. Lucky that she was so young when it happened to her, lucky she doesn’t remember the pain, lucky to have a supportive family, lucky to be able to afford the medical care she needed, lucky it was just an arm. Because at the end of the day that’s all it is — just an arm.

“I don’t identify as anything. By definition I guess I do have a disability,” Grace says. “But I just identify as Grace.” ■



*(top) Grace says her mobility isn't affected as much as others think while lifting, though she sometimes has to reach further to grab a bar or handle. "Because I've been using it as a hand for so long, it has developed as a hand," she said.*

*(left) Grace laughs with her friend, Kyra Ozziel, right, while knitting and doing homework in Kyra's apartment. "Once you are accepting of [my amputation] and can laugh about it, you can get to me," Grace said, "if you don't get past it then you can't live. Humor's a way for me to get past it. I want to be on SNL one day making amputee jokes. I have an entire album of arm jokes on my Facebook. I still don't have a handicap parking sticker so if someone wants to start a GoFundMe for that I would totally appreciate it."*



**WRITTEN BY  
SHANNON FINN**

**PHOTOS BY  
DAISEY JAMES**

**LEED**

**THE  
LIGHTCATCHER'S  
GREEN DESIGN  
INSPIRES A  
SUSTAINABLE  
FUTURE**





*The Lightcatcher Building features a translucent wall that is 37 feet high and 180 feet long. The wall captures and illuminates the inside of the building, as well as creating an elegant atmosphere in the courtyard.*

**O**n a rare sunny day in the Pacific Northwest, sunlight reflects through a 180-foot translucent, tiled window, producing soft light within an art gallery.

The Lightcatcher isn't an ordinary art museum. It was designed under a certification system to be built sustainably — the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, system.

Stepping inside, visitors see the natural light and open windows — the building's sustainable features.

The Lightcatcher Building houses the main gallery space for the Whatcom Museum located in Bellingham, Washington. Opened seven years ago, the Lightcatcher was the first museum in Washington state to receive a LEED Silver certification.

The United States Green Building Council awards LEED certifications based on water, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, sustainable sites and other factors within a building. Similar to sports where an athlete can win a medal for their achievements, buildings can achieve a rating of certified, silver, gold or platinum, earning extra credit for innovative design or geographical-specific environmental conditions.

Christina Claassen, marketing and public relations manager at the Whatcom Museum, thinks most visitors aren't aware the Lightcatcher is LEED certified.

"I think they definitely get a sense that it's using some elements of the environment to make it a little more sustainable," she says.

#### **Building certification**

In 2009, Whatcom County voted for all new building projects to be built to the LEED Silver standard or higher.

Buildings consume roughly 40 percent of all energy produced in the United States and account for nearly 40 percent of carbon emissions, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.





*The Lightcatcher Museum, named for its uniquely designed translucent wall meets LEED Silver-Level specifications. The building is the first museum in Washington state to earn this qualification.*

*On the second floor of the museum, guests can venture outside to the living roof and take in the scenery of the elegant building, as well as gaze Old City Hall – a piece of the Whatcom Museum complex – across the way.*



*The Lightcatcher building of Whatcom Museum, located on Flora Street in downtown Bellingham, is masterfully designed to not only be environmentally friendly, but it is a simple yet elegant home for the art exhibits it houses.*

On average, LEED certified buildings have 34 percent lower carbon emissions, consume a quarter less energy, and have redirected more than 80 million tons of waste from landfills, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

### Light wall

During a sunlit or an overcast gray day, the radiant 37-foot wall, the Lightcatcher's most well-known feature, casts a passive soft solar glow, lighting the inside of the building and hallway. At night, interior lights reflect off this wall and allow the museum to illuminate downtown. The way light plays off the wall means less electricity is needed to illuminate the building.

The Lightcatcher's windows regulate the temperature inside. During the summer months, the windows open, but only a crack. During the wintertime, the windows remain closed.

Optimizing air quality and daylight creates a healthy space for visitors.

Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, is a type of depression that changes with the seasons and is common among those who live in the Pacific Northwest. Reduced sunlight can lead to a drop in serotonin, a brain chemical that regulates mood, causing depression symptoms.

The disorder is seven times more common in Washington state than in Florida, according to Achieve Solutions.

Jim Olson, the owner of Olson Kundig architectural firm, designed the Lightcatcher Building to highlight the Northwest's most sacred resource: sunlight.

In the Pacific Northwest, mist and fog are common appearances. With the soft look of the windows, Olson wanted to recreate the mystery of mist and fog by not being able to see through it clearly.

### Ventilation and flooding

Her upper vents, not visible to the public, also regulate the insulation and temperature, as the vents open and close regularly. When showcasing art, keeping bugs and critters out and preventing dramatically fluctuating temperatures is key.

Under the tall, looming light wall, visitors sit at tables in an open courtyard called the Garden of Ancients, a lush space with past and present native plants. To prevent flooding, the courtyard's pavement absorbs rainwater by allowing the water to travel through the pavement to the rocks and soils below the surface. This recharges the local groundwater resources.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency reports that retrofitting one out of every 100 homes in the United States with efficient water features could prevent around 80,000 tons of greenhouse gas releases, which is equal to the removal of 15,000 cars from the road for a single year.

Using rainwater catchment tanks, or what look like huge farm silos, the Lightcatcher reuses rainwater for the toilets in all the bathrooms.

Water is a precious resource, especially in drought-plagued areas. Green building practices can provide some relief on water demand. Buildings use nearly 14 percent

of all filtered water, or 15 trillion gallons per year, but green buildings are anticipated to reduce water usage by 15 percent and save more than 10 percent in running costs, according to a study conducted in 2000 by the United States Geological Survey.

### Sustainable wood

Amidst paintings of Washington's landscapes on smooth wood, small hands and excited eyes play with shapes, color and light in the Family Interactive Gallery where parents and children explore, play and learn in a wood-lined space. The wood is a sustainably harvested material, and is meant to resemble the kind that washes up on Washington's shores.

"The colors of the exterior and galleries reflect the bark of our trees and the rocks on our beaches. The ceilings reference weathered driftwood, and silver metal details reflect the Northwest's 'oyster light,'" Olson says.

Natural materials and resources fulfill LEED certification, and adding a familiar and local space to those who visit.

### Rain gardens & living roof

The Lightcatcher features rain gardens that filter pollutants as water soaks through the ground, helping sustain local groundwater. They provide habitats for the local birds and bugs and minimize flooding and erosion in streams.

Up above the courtyard area sits a Green Roof with red, yellow and green plants interspersed with several vents. The goal of this green, vegetated roof is to absorb rainwater and decrease runoff and flooding, as well as increase insulation, which decreases heating and cooling costs. Providing a Green Roof and rain gardens allows an urban area to access naturally lowered temperatures and filtered air.

Green buildings are cost-effective, use natural resources in efficient ways, lower utility bills and reduce the negative environmental impact. The United States Green Building Council reports that "green retrofit projects are generally expected to pay for themselves in just seven years."

Global warming is rapidly accelerating, demanding humans take action in their communities. As melting glaciers, rising tides and record-high temperatures increase in frequency, green buildings present a prevention tactic. The Lightcatcher is one such structure, helping pave the way for the future of sustainable buildings. ■

**GREEN BUILDINGS ARE COST-EFFECTIVE, USE NATURAL RESOURCES IN EFFICIENT WAYS, AND LOWER UTILITY BILLS AND REDUCE THE NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.**

# STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

**As an adopted Chinese-American woman, I live a life in the gray area**

Personal narrative written by Hallie Fuchs // Photo by Jake Tull



*I'm not German. I was born in China — I have slanted brown eyes and black hair that I would try to dye with Sun-In.*

- Kanji characters translate to Chinese-American
- Hebrew for Jewish-American

When I was younger, I went to a Jewish school in Manhattan where I was one of two Chinese students. We were both adopted by Jewish parents and raised in the faith. I didn't realize that we were different from our counterparts. People would ask what I was and I would tell them "I'm part German, Polish and Russian," because that's what my mom is. I kid you not, I thought I was German.

I'm not German. I was born in China — I have slanted brown eyes and black hair that I would try to dye with Sun-In. My mom is short and Caucasian with green eyes and light brown hair.

China created its first adoption law allowing foreigners to adopt children in 1992. I was adopted in 1994. According to the U.S. Department of State, I was one of 787 children, mainly girls, adopted that year. Since then, it's been upwards of 60,000.

There aren't many Chinese adoptees in their early twenties. It's hard to relate to others — I still don't totally understand myself or the psychological component that comes with adoption.



According to the Child Welfare Information Gateway, adopted children score lower in areas like self-esteem and self-confidence. With international Chinese adoption being relatively new, the impact on children in terms of identity or lack thereof hasn't been studied.

With all its ups and downs, adoption is a beautiful thing. But you must look at the big picture, not just the idyllic selfless saving. There's trauma — emotions are raw and gritty, some triggered by hearing, "She's not your real/natural mom," or "You're so lucky that you were adopted."

I am not speaking negatively about adoption. However, it has been romanticized: the hero, typically a white family, saving a poor, third-world child in need. It creates an expectation that only harms adoptees and their families.

My mother, brother and I moved to Washington state after Sept. 11, 2001, where my identity, formed in the face of tragedy, was solidified. I was a New Yorker where diversity was nothing new. Even at such a young age after the horror when the twin towers came to the ground, I felt affected by the sense of community and patriotism.

So I, this Chinese-Jewish girl with a fierce love for a state on the East Coast and a bad haircut, moved to Bellevue, Washington. I moved four times after that, ending up in Bellingham, Washington, for college and still not much has changed. I know a handful of people of color, including myself, and even less who are adopted.

In 2014, former president of Western Washington University Bruce Shepard said we needed to diversify the campus. He wasn't wrong. In a sea of white, my black hair and yellow-tinted skin stands out fairly well. According to Western's Student Diversity Statistics, the fall of 2016 saw a record-high enrollment and student retention of minorities at 25.3 percent. I represent the 25.3 percent.

From being called a Twinkie, to a banana (meaning white on the inside, Asian on the outside), to the "most non-white, white girl I've ever met," people completely disregard the complex parts of my identity. Does the fact that I was raised by a white mother in a white community make me a race traitor? I'm not *actually* white, but am I trying too hard to be?

Race has always been a sensitive subject. As we speak, the media is showing police shooting young black men and a president-elect who wants to build a wall along the Mexican border. It feels like a race war. Where do other minorities, especially Asian-Americans, fit in?

My racial identity issues come through microaggressions not only from other Asian

people, but from my white peers. They seem to pale in comparison to what other minorities go through. Are mine still valid? Every Asian person has heard, "Your face is flat," "How do you blindfold an Asian? You use dental floss!" or the great, "No, where are you *really* from?"

Sometimes I forget I'm a person of color because I attribute my attitude and personality to whiteness. Yet, I'll get the constant reminder from my peers and strangers that no, I am not white.

## **"IN 2014, FORMER PRESIDENT OF WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY BRUCE SHEPARD SAID WE NEEDED TO DIVERSIFY THE CAMPUS. HE WASN'T WRONG."**

A study done by the Journal of Community Health reported that 1,130 Korean-Americans between the ages of 18-29 suffered negative mental health outcomes due to the pressure of understanding their Korean background, while also minimizing those same values to adapt to American culture.

As a model minority, we acclimate to white culture the best, we get the most prestigious jobs, and we don't put up a fight. Docile, effeminate, kowtowing to white America.

These studies are only on Asian-Americans whose families have immigrated from Asia. As someone who is adopted, it feels semi-applicable. My family celebrates Chanukah and ate "authentic" food from Chinatown when we lived in New York. I signed up for karate, tap and ballet just like my white peers, but also took Chinese lessons, which I failed at miserably. My Chinese peers automatically learned the language, ate Chinese food at home and no, they didn't celebrate Chanukah.

My identity makes me unique and somewhat of an anomaly. I have never met another person with a similar story. It's like the Scottish-Korean Starburst commercial that aired several years ago — the "walking contradiction." Even though throughout my life I have felt the brunt of racism either by not being white enough or Asian enough, I'm proud to bring a new perspective of what it means to be an American woman. ■

# FROM BELLINGHAM TO BRUSSELS

UNDERSTANDING A GLOBAL ISSUE FROM THE EYES OF AN EXCHANGE STUDENT **A STUDENT'S SOJOURN**

Personal narrative written by Janae Easlon



*The Museum of the City of Brussels, or King's House. It stands in La Grand Place, a famous group of buildings in a plaza dating back to the 17th Century // Photo courtesy of Janae Easlon*

**I**t took me over a year to plan, a month to apply for a visa and 12 hours to fly to Brussels, Belgium, my home for six months in 2015.

Looking back, I realize how little I understood my host country. Run-of-the-mill stereotypes clouded my views. Great beer, breathtaking architecture, memorable cuisine — there was no better place to be an exchange student.

What I didn't know was that it is a country divided.

Belgium has three official languages — French, Dutch and German — due to the country touching the borders of Germany, the Netherlands and France. Historically, the upper class of Belgium spoke French, while the rest of the population spoke Dutch or Flemish. Throughout time, the politics of Belgium became as divided as the class system.

According to census data, 70 percent of the city's population is from other countries.

Brussels is an international city at heart and the proclaimed capital of Europe — it is the center of the North American Trade Organization, the European Union and the European Parliament.

In 2015, members of the European Union disagreed upon how many refugees to host in the wake of the European refugee crisis.

Over 135,000 refugees entered Europe by sea in the first half of 2015, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency. Of the 35,000 applications Belgium received from Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan asylum seekers, the country granted refugee status to close to 98 percent of Syrian applicants, according to the Belgium Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons.

In Belgium — a small country about the size of Maryland — the question of how many refugees to take in became the forefront of the issue.

As a Caucasian, American student, I could move freely, even though I didn't realize it at the time. I was never stopped in an airport security line and wasn't given a second glance at a train station.

My internship supervisor, a Portuguese woman, has lived in Brussels for 15 years. Because of her tan complexion, she is often stopped at the Brussels Airport for a secondary security screening.

"Are you sure you have a Belgian visa?" they would ask her. She told me she began to carry a Portuguese passport from then on to stop the questioning.

My journalism instructor at Vesalius College, a Greek man, has lived in Brussels for more than five years. Because of his darker complexion, he told us stories of the looks he would get on public transportation.

My supervisor and instructor, both legal immigrants, were viewed no different than refugees: both believed to be taking up space.

But I was taking up space, too. People needed to be here for security, while I was there out of curiosity and to learn.

Paris was attacked on Nov. 13, 2015. The attack sparked a political debate as to whether or not the assailants took advantage of the refugee crisis to enter the county. The men turned out to be French and Belgian and 130 lives were lost.

Brussels went on lockdown on Nov. 21, 2015, after a car, reported to be owned the attackers, headed to the Belgian border.

I was on a plane from Stockholm to Brussels after a holiday with a friend. My email inbox flooded, my phone kept ringing, all messages from people back at home.

I was escorted on a bus from the airport to my friend's apartment in the center of Brussels. All taxi services and metro rides in the city were halted. The view from my apartment window showed no sign of my neighbors. All shops on my street showed *fermé* or "closed" signs.

The way I experienced the lockdown versus what American media were saying did not match up. At the time, I wished my French was good enough to understand the local Belgian news.

The American media showed tanks and panicked people at the airport. Headlines such as, "Brussels on high alert rate over terror attack" caused people overseas to see the situation as life or death. My parents asked if I could come home as soon as possible after they learned school was canceled for almost a week.

My host mom would tell me, "It is better that you are here than walking out there." To her, the attack was only a facet of the larger issue. Brussels had lockdowns in the past for similar incidents, and this event did not phase her as much as it phased me.

My time in Belgium began to feel like a countdown — how much more could I take before I felt intimidated enough to go home? Would I ever want to come back?

I didn't come back to the U.S. before I was scheduled to, but many of my peers decided to leave before our program ended.

Now that I am home, I feel like a piece of me was left in Brussels. I knew my feelings of the events around me, but it wasn't until I was back before I became aware of my privilege.

People live in fear every day. What I experienced was only a sliver of what others live their whole lives. My experiences shouldn't be valued more than someone trying to immigrate for their safety or someone who lives in a city their whole life, never to be treated like a citizen.

I plan to return to Brussels one day. While I will always be an American, witnessing an event like the Brussels lockdown gave me solidarity with the Belgian culture during this time.

Brussels, je t'aime. ■



# Advocating for Myself

## WESTERN STUDENT LEARNS TO EMBRACE HIS DISABILITY IN A WORLD THAT SAYS HE'S BROKEN

Written by Kaelyn King // Photo by Daisey James

Forrest Gump was nearly rejected from public school for having an IQ under 75.

Rain Man had an extraordinary memory that allowed him to count toothpicks as they were falling from the box.

Western junior Elmer Carampot is a real person. Sure, he hasn't shaken hands with John F. Kennedy and he can't help count cards, but he does share one trait with these characters: an intellectual disability. His disability isn't the thing that has held him back, but rather the stereotypes he's faced throughout his entire life.

Elmer Carampot was born in Fremont, California. His family moved up to Bellingham, Washington, shortly after he was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in the first grade. His pediatrician began prescribing anything from Ritalin to Adderall, but his mother, Cheryl Carampot, decided against any form of controlled substance.

"Kids put on that stuff grow up to be little meth heads," Cheryl says. "When he was under that medication, he was like a zombie. All zoned out."

At the age of 13, Elmer's parents divorced, triggering a wave of anxiety. Doctors began speculating that his disability extended beyond ADHD, but didn't diagnose him. He began putting on an excessive amount of weight and closed himself off from any potential friendships.

In elementary school, he was separated from other students and placed into a special education classroom. He became socially withdrawn and his self-esteem plummeted. After graduation, he attended Whatcom Community College, but the pressure to socialize triggered his anxiety.

He dropped out and took a year off, entering a deep depression.

"He would hide under a blanket like Linus [from Charlie Brown] so I got tired of him doing that," Cheryl says. "He would run to the bathroom and throw up. It was that bad."

Elmer completed his first full quarter at Whatcom in spring 2011. He passed two courses, but despite his passion for the written word, English 101 turned out to be too overwhelming.

"At one point I locked myself in my room for seven hours just constantly rewriting an essay," Elmer says. "I just kept rewriting and editing. I became my worst critic."

It wasn't until he began regularly volunteering at the Bellingham Food Bank in 2015 that passion lit its way into Elmer's soul. There he met other adults with disabilities. He wasn't alone. In fact, there was a whole community of people with disabilities. People who had faced the same stigmas throughout their lives. It was then that he decided to major in communications.

"Communications found me," he says. "I had to unwind many of these narratives that were given to me. I used to be really unreflective. I had to develop this analytic personality over time."

Contrary to how most students choose a major, Elmer hasn't chosen a path that reflects his strengths. He's chosen a path that completely counteracts the crippling social anxiety he's faced his whole life.

At the age of 25, Elmer has finally accepted his disability and wants to understand why it has taken him so long. It wasn't until Aug. 13, 2015, that Elmer was finally diagnosed with a

mild intellectual disability. This means he has adaptive behavior skills (conceptual, social and practical) that are significantly lower than average. His doctor used the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale IQ Test and found that although he has an IQ lower than 98 percent of the population, he has a higher than average verbal reasoning ability.

Elmer became exceedingly driven when he began school at Western during winter of 2016. Although pursuing a bachelor's degree in communication studies has improved his verbal skills, his focus is on breaking down the barriers ableism has set up around his life. Ableism is the discrimination against those with disabilities.

“People create stereotypes to help make order in their lives,” Elmer says. “Unfortunately, ableism is a product of people’s negative or misleading views about people with disabilities. It can be minor things or it can be downright hateful things.”

**“A LOT OF ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES ARE TREATED LIKE CHILDREN. MEDIA CAN PRESENT ALL SORTS OF IDEOLOGIES SO THAT WHEN PEOPLE CONSUME MEDIA, THEY BECOME THOSE STEREOTYPES.”**

- ELMER CARAMPOT

The ableism Elmer has faced throughout his life has mostly been self-inflicted. Falling short of society’s expectations for “normal” cognitive behavior, he has struggled with self-esteem.

He compares this phenomenon to the doll test used during *Brown v. Board of Education* to study the effects of segregation on self-esteem of African-American children in the 1940s. Psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark placed four dolls that were identical except for skin color in front of children ages 3 to 7 and asked which doll they preferred. The majority of the subjects chose the white doll. The study concluded that societal prejudices had deeply affected how African-American children saw themselves.

Similar to news coverage during the Civil Rights Movement, Elmer blames the media for setting up stereotypes for people with disabilities. “A lot of adults with disabilities are treated like children,” he says. “Media can present all sorts of ideologies so that when people consume media, they become those stereotypes.”

The way the medical field discusses disabilities also reinforces these stigmas, Elmer says. The constant push to find a cure leaves Elmer and people like him feeling as though their disabilities are diseases instead of characteristics to be embraced.

“The worst thing for a child with a disability is to feel that they’re separate,” he says. “You start losing the ability to express certain emotions when you’ve been isolated like that. I even lost the ability to laugh in public.”

Once he began attending school consistently, Elmer found outlets to cope with his anxiety. He began exercising and lost 90 pounds, relieving him from obesity. His passion for creative writing made its way back into his life and now he’s hoping to complete a novel sometime in the near future.



# THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY WHO ATTEND A

## COLLEGE WENT UP BY 42 PERCENT BETWEEN THE YEARS 2000 AND 2008.

- HARVARD REVIEW OF PSYCHIATRY

"I often write about a character who is lonely," Elmer says. "An author often creates characters who reflect aspects of their own personality."

Elmer admits that although he has found ways to manage stress, loneliness has still lived inside him throughout his entire college experience. He has recently reached out to the disabled community for the first time and attended The Arc of Whatcom County's Young Adult Self-Advocacy (YASA) support group.

The Arc is a nonprofit organization that helps adults with developmental disabilities learn to be independent within their personal lives and the community. They provide workshops on topics ranging from sexuality to voting rights, so anybody can become active members in their community.

Elmer met with YASA Coordinator Jessika Houston and expressed his concerns about feeling isolated as a person with a disability in an abled society. Houston says his story isn't unique.

"I think for Western students, being surrounded by neurotypical people who are out partying, you might not feel like you have a place in that," she says. "You need to find how you fit in that culture because we all have those desires for social engagement and sexuality."

Sexual violence is a major issue within the disabled community and Houston is making it her priority to educate YASA members on the importance of identifying abuse. Twenty-five percent of women with intellectual disabilities are sexually abused at least once in their lifetimes, according to a study done in 1991 by the Human Sciences Press. Although the chance of women being victimized is much higher, men with disabilities are twice as likely to be sexually abused compared to men without disabilities. Houston stresses that people with disabilities have the ability to maintain healthy relationships with the right sexual education.

"It's unfair and unrealistic to think that people with disabilities don't have sexual drive," Houston says. "I hope that love can happen for everybody as long as they know how to be safe. Unfortunately, there are a lot of predators in the world, so teaching about sexuality is really important instead of just shoving it under the rug."

Since sexuality and other self-advocacy issues often become relevant in the lives of college students, Houston encouraged Elmer to create a support group at Western.

"Having a support network for anyone just feels better," Houston says. "When you know that there's someone else walking a similar path, it's reassuring. It's easy for a lot of people to feel isolated in general in the world."

That support network can become possible on Western's campus with the help of the A.S. Disability Outreach Center (DOC). Elmer has been working with the center coordinator and Western student Courtney Manz to create a club specifically for students who have disabilities to discuss stigma and advocacy on campus.

The number of people with an intellectual disability who attend college increased by 42 percent between 2000 and 2008, according to a 2014 study by the Harvard Review of Psychiatry. The surge is expected to continue.

Unfortunately, only a few of the 1,400 students with disabilities at Western have actually reached out to the DOC and Manz doesn't yet have enough people to establish a club.

Manz says that although it's great to see so many students concerned with social justice issues, disability issues often get pushed to the side. Manz suggests starting the conversation by offering support to people with disabilities when they seem like they need a hand, whether it's studying or navigating a gravel path if their disability is physical, and then respecting their decision if they decline. She'd also like professors to be more informed about offering accommodations to students who need it, using the educational video about accommodations for professors currently being made by the DOC.

Because Manz is the only member of the DOC, it has been difficult to put on events as an independent entity. With Elmer by her side, Manz is confident that the DOC has potential to reach more students who need it.

When Elmer graduates next year, his motivation will be disability advocacy. His heart is set on a career in helping other people with disabilities, possibly in the nonprofit sector, so that people with disabilities don't have to struggle for acceptance as much as he did.

"I want to help my peers," Elmer says. "They need community. They need to understand that they aren't broken. They aren't defective. They're full-fleshed human beings." ■



*Junior Elmer Carampot sits on the stairs at the entrance of Western's Haggard Hall library. Carampot will graduate next year and plans to pursue a career in which he can help others with disabilities.*

**“I WANT TO HELP MY PEERS, THEY  
NEED COMMUNITY. THEY NEED TO  
UNDERSTAND THAT THEY AREN'T  
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THEY'RE FULL-FLESHED  
HUMAN BEINGS.”**

**- ELMER CARAMPOT**



THE ART OF  
GRUENWALD

# DEFINING

## **WHATCOM HOSPICE CONNECTS PEOPLE WITH MEMORIES OF PASSED LOVED ONES**

**WRITTEN BY JANA EASLON**

**PHOTOS BY DAISEY JAMES**

**P**ale sunshine hits the back wall of a Whatcom Hospice conference room, illuminating a quilt with autumn colors. Four houses made of fabric squares make up the middle of the quilt, each with its own personality and shades of green, red and orange.

The quilt itself has a story, one that fills Bereavement Coordinator Michelle Walsh's face with a large smile, the skin around her bright gray eyes crinkling as she sits across from it at the grief support table.

Originally donated to a local food bank, the quilt made its way to the hospice. No one knew who the creators of the quilt when it was hung up on the wall. Then one day, Michelle witnessed what she calls a miracle.

"Three women, two sisters and a friend, came in here for the grief support group and noticed it. You could see them staring at it for a long period of time," Michelle says. "They told me after spending over an hour here, they were the very people who made the quilt."

The world of grief support is so small, so she thought the women seeing a quilt they donated many years ago was a way to bring the women full circle, she says.

After being in social work around the country for more than 25 years, Michelle felt this was one moment being a part of bereavement services made a difference.



# GRIEF SUPPORT IN BELLINGHAM

PeaceHealth Whatcom Hospice is one of the few grief support groups in Bellingham, Washington.

The brochure Michelle hands to all new families who are offered grief services rests in her lap. The cover depicts a flower losing its petals, with the words “When You Are Grieving, a guide to understand loss.”

Inside, the first page reads: “Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve.”

The effects of grief encompass two separate strands — the emotional and the physical.

Physical effects of grief and loss include shortness of breath, empty feelings in the stomach, sleep disturbances and sensitivity to noise and lack of energy, according to the National Association of Social Workers.

The grieving can experience the emotional waves of disbelief, confusion, trouble remembering and lack of concentration.

“Most people think of grief counseling as being sad, depressing and heavy,” Michelle says. “That is only a part of it.”

Michelle describes death as having a history of dark symbolism in the United States. “Back then, you would hang a veil on your door to signal a death. People would tip their hats if you walked down the street. It isn’t like that with the hustle and bustle of today,” she says. “It is like today you have a ‘get over it’ stage and you need to move forward.”

Bereavement services are covered by Medicare, Michelle says. It is required to have additional support services available to family members of people who have died within the hospice.

For a consistent resource, Michelle mails out newsletters titled, “Leaves of Change” to grieving families four times a year. In a newsletter article about memory workshops, the beginning sentence states, “Death ends a life. It does not end a relationship.” This is one of the misconceptions of death, Michelle says.

Members of the support group at Whatcom Hospice are a part of the program for 13 weeks, and attend additional sessions if needed. The length of the program allows participants to create trustful relationships with one another.

Some sessions are filled with silence, and that is okay. There is no rush to talk through feelings, Michelle says.

The support group’s mission is to instill calmness as soon as the person walks through the door.

## Ways to express grief creatively

Keep a journal

Work in a garden

Meditate or do yoga

Write poetry or a story

Sing and play an instrument



*Terri Temple, a Whatcom Hospice volunteer, holds onto her teddy bear named Dale Jr. after her late husband. Temple made the bear in a memory teddy bear workshop at Whatcom Hospice in 2016.*

## COMMEMORATING THE PAST

To evoke feelings of connectedness to the passed loved one, the grieving will find ways to link objects and their memories to the deceased. Reliving memories is one coping mechanism to alleviate stress and uncertainty.

Whatcom Hospice conducts a memory workshop several times a year for individuals to attend. The purpose is to teach attendees to use clothing scraps of loved ones and make them into something new.

“Sometimes having an object can just feel very comforting. That object can be a photograph, a pillow,” Michelle says. “We invite people who are experiencing loss to create a linking object like a teddy bear or pillowcases made from a loved one’s clothing.”

From the hospice lobby to Michelle’s office hangs a wave of brightly colored paper cranes from the ceiling window. “Every crane represents a person we have lost at the hospice,” Michelle says. Over 500 cranes hang above the office, and many wait to be hung.

**“GRIEF IS NOT A DISORDER, A DISEASE OR A SIGN OF WEAKNESS. IT IS AN EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL NECESSITY, THE PRICE YOU PAY FOR LOVE. THE ONLY CURE FOR GRIEF IS TO GRIEVE.”**

- PeaceHealth Whatcom Hospice

Dianne Gillespie, the Whatcom Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, shares the office with Michelle. She holds up a photo of a brown bear in a pink outfit.

“This bear was made by a woman who lost her baby,” Dianne says. “She made it from her baby’s blanket.”

Dianne has worked at the office since 1995 and has attended the majority of the teddy bear workshops, which began in 2011. Today, she works with Michelle to use creativity as a tool for grief for members of the grief support group.

“The hardest part for people is the first cut,” Dianne says. “That is the first step in letting go — understanding this isn’t going to be his shirt anymore, it is going to be a teddy bear.”

Attendees are not only learning to make a bear, they are sharing stories and being with each other, she says.

“We aren’t performing therapy in these groups,” Dianne says. “We are offering them an opportunity for people to share their grief with others.”

A University of Utrecht study reported that grief support comes in different models depending on the grief experienced.

Feelings of shock, and using acceptance as the way to combat the grief is the first model. In the second model, grief support uses speaking about feelings of pain to evaluate yearning for someone who is gone. The third model aims to channel overwhelming feelings of despair into something positive, like artistic activities.

Terri Temple, a hospice volunteer, attended a bear workshop a few months after losing her husband in 2015.

Terri sits with Dale Jr. closely beside her. A blond-haired teddy bear with a pinstripe shirt and dark pants, his hazel eyes resemble her late husband’s.

“I tried to pick a teddy bear closest to my Dale as possible,” she says. “We would have been together fifteen years this year.”

Dale’s aunt bought him a teddy bear when he was born and kept it on his shelf. Once Terri saw it, she decided to buy him teddy bears wherever she went to add to his collection. When he passed, Dale owned more than 10 bears on his shelf from places like Canada and Scotland, Terri says. “All over the world, you can always seem to find a teddy bear,” she says.

As a hospice volunteer, Terri saw family members differ on how to grieve over a loved one. “I think you should go with what you feel. There is no right way to grieve,” Terri says. “People will or won’t understand, but you have to do what works for you. It is the loss of something familiar, but suddenly it isn’t there anymore.”

For Terri, her grief ebbs and flows, peeling back little by little. “[It’s been] almost a year now, I still miss him intensely and there is this pain in my body,” she says. “Other days, I feel at peace because I know we had good years together.”



*Whatcom Hospice holds memory teddy bear workshops a few times a year. These two bears serve as examples for the grieving when using meaningful fabric to craft their own bears.*





Bereavement Coordinator Michelle Walsh, left, and Whatcom Hospice volunteer Terri Temple, right, stand in front of a sculpture at Whatcom Hospice together. The sculpture is made of leaves paid for by families to engrave and memorialize patient's names.

**“WHAT PEOPLE DON’T REALIZE IS WE GET A GIFT FROM EVERYONE WE WORK WITH AND IT IS A TWO-WAY STREET. THE BEAUTY IS THAT WE CONNECT IN THAT SPACE AND TIME, AND THEN YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO LET IT GO.”**

- PeaceHealth Whatcom Hospice

After Dale’s funeral, Terri says she felt like she needed to be alone, but later felt ready to talk about Dale with her loved ones. The scent from Dale’s clothing and leaving a picture of him on his recliner became ways for Terri to begin healing, she says. After traveling to all seven continents, Terri says she will continue to travel and do what she loves, like painting and reading.

“For our anniversary this year, I booked a trip to Iceland,” Terri says, holding her bear.

Michelle sees people finding their voice as they attend grief support. “What people don’t realize is we get a gift from everyone we work with and it is a two-way street,” Michelle says. “The beauty is that we connect in that space and time, and then you have to be able to let it go.”

In the grief support room at Whatcom Hospice, many bears lay on the table, each carrying their own story, much like the quilt on the back wall.

Clad in stitches and mismatched textiles, the teddy bears and quilt have one thing in common: they were made with love and hope. ■



*The former Georgia Pacific Pulp Mill & Tissue Processing Site will be redeveloped in six sections for cleanup and waterfront restoration.*



**W**hat makes the town of Bellingham, Washington, so special? Is it the countless breweries or the quirky shops aptly named Third Planet or The Lucky Monkey? Is it walking down Kentucky Street and seeing Velveeta Jones, the brightly colored chicken guarding the equally bright Homeskillet? As the City of Subdued Excitement, Bellingham evokes a small-town feel, where everyone says hello when walking along the Interurban Trail and the server at your favorite brunch spot probably knows your face and that yes, you would like a mimosa.

However, the City of Subdued Excitement is expanding as far as the eye can see. In 2005, the City of Bellingham and the Port of Bellingham decided to create a Waterfront District by redeveloping the former Georgia-Pacific Pulp Mill & Tissue Processing Site (GP). The abandoned buildings on the outskirts of downtown can be seen best from areas like Boundary Bay, The Upfront Theatre or Jalapeños on West Holly Street. One of the more famous buildings, the granary with its ivy heart, will finish being remodeled along with nearby roads by 2018.

#### **The Waterfront Redevelopment Project (WRP)**

The WRP plans to redevelop 237 acres of property in the cultural and downtown district of Bellingham. Recently, the Central Business District Neighborhood Plan said much of the downtown area had “turned its back” to Bellingham’s waterfront.

The WRP is produced by the Port of Bellingham, that owns all 237 acres where redevelopment will take place. Supporting organizations include the City of Bellingham, which provides building development and permits; Western Washington University, that wants to invest in a future for Western that coincides with Bellingham’s growth; and the Whatcom Working Waterfront Coalition, that fights to keep the fishing community’s rights and lifestyle alive and well.

According to the master plan of the WRP, there are six sections that make up the WRP: Marine Trade, Aerated Stabilization Basin/Marina, Downtown Waterfront, Log Pond, Bellingham Shipping Terminal and Cornwall Beach. Twenty-nine acres of land will be dedicated to the maritime industry, 33 acres to parks, 60 to streets and utilities and 111 acres for mixed-use (meaning multipurpose buildings, such as restaurants, shops, hotels and conference centers).

#### **Waterfront District Environmental Cleanup**

Even though these plans began over a decade ago, they are on schedule with the environmental cleanup that started this year. Out of the six contaminated sites dispersed throughout the various sections of the

WRITTEN BY  
HALLIE FUCHS

PHOTOS BY  
KYRA TAUBEL-BRUCE



BELLINGHAM  
BAY FACES  
REDEVELOPMENT  
AFTER MORE  
THAN A DECADE  
OF DISCUSSION

# BREAKING GROUND





*Glass Beach and the neighboring site of a former municipal landfill will undergo cleanup and renovation to create Cornwall Beach Park, which is projected to be Bellingham's largest waterfront park.*



*In the summer of 2016, construction began on the Granary Building as part of Bellingham's waterfront renovation project. Built in 1928, the Granary functioned as a cooperative market for farmers until it was purchased by Georgia-Pacific in 1970.*



*The Granary Building is the first waterfront building to undergo renovation and restoration to house restaurants, commercial and office space.*

WRP, the Whatcom Waterway cleanup is the biggest project, at over 200 acres and \$35 million worth of cleanup.

Phase 1 was recently completed in summer of 2016, making it one of the biggest cleanup projects in state history.

“It was a different time. We did not have the regulatory framework in place to prevent industrial pollution on our waterfront or an overall awareness about the value of a clean waterfront,” says Mike Hogan, public affairs administrator for the Port of Bellingham.

This cleanup will not only help the bay’s current environmental crisis and reduce future pollution, but it will allow the Waterfront District to develop with the city’s growing population.

Kurt Nabbefeld, development services manager for the City of Bellingham, works in the Planning and Community Development Department and oversees land use, permitting and building processes.

“Bellingham is going to grow and we want to manage that in a sustainable way that allows us to take advantage of what’s to offer but also maintains what makes Bellingham so special,” Nabbefeld says.

The Growth Management Act requires Bellingham to plan accordingly for growth of the city, which includes having land and jobs to accommodate. Nabbefeld believes the project will connect downtown, old town and the waterfront and help create more industrial and living-wage jobs.

Itek Energy will be moving downtown and All American Marine, a local boat builder, will be hiring once their 57,000 square foot facility is completed by the end of 2016.

### Western’s Role

Is the sense of community what makes Bellingham so special? What about for Western? Students make up nearly 20 percent of the total population of the city. The rich and vibrant scene that permeates through every nook and cranny of Bellingham screams young, hip culture. Thanks to the countless students who have flooded this sleepy town since Western opened in 1899, Bellingham is like a living, breathing Birkenstock. Western enhances the atmosphere of the city and is undoubtedly one of the most important communities in the area.

Western’s approach toward the upcoming project involved exchanging property and creating a nonprofit corporation called Western Crossing Development, formerly known as Viking Development. Six acres have been set aside specifically for the school. According to development plans, the three-phase process includes the creation of a Center for Community Engagement and Innovation (CCEI), a multi-use conference center for Western and Bellingham.

Looking at the plans regarding Western Crossing, brightly colored sketches show sunny days with people walking by the water. Everything looks new and unfamiliar compared to the beauty and vastness of the bay and barren buildings that are most certainly eyesores.

Steve Swan, vice president of university relations and community development, is excited for the changes the redevelopment will bring. Even though this is his last year at Western, he has been working on the project since its early days on a commission board.

“It is a rare opportunity to develop on a waterfront. I think that it could be a destination point for people from our county, region and state because it’s such a special location. Look one direction and see the

San Juans and the other, Mt. Baker,” Swan says. “We always try to seek out the student voice, [they] are one of numerous groups who need to benefit from it.”

### Industry

While the public might be most intrigued about the new shops, parks and restaurants in the Downtown Waterfront and Cornwall Beach area, the marine working waterfront sections are also important to the project, with seven percent or 6,000 jobs supported by the maritime workforce, says Jim Kyle, president of the Working Waterfront Coalition of Whatcom County.

Looking at the Working Waterfront Coalition’s website, their front page includes information such as “shipyards giving way to condominiums and ship chandleries replaced by boutiques.” These threats to the maritime community lifestyle are those most desired by the public and tourists.

Kyle sits at the Weblocker Restaurant, a home port for the maritime community. Older men sit in groups wearing heavy outer coats and knit hats, an embodiment of the sea and hard labor. Among the maritime community, there were reservations about the project.

“The danger is that since pressure leads the port and city to favor mixed-use development, they could take some of that portion and convert it to mixed use,” Kyle says.

After the last Port meeting, the maritime community came away with a more positive outlook on the WRP. Harcourt Development, a Dublin-based construction company, introduced the project timeline for the next several years, putting community members at ease, Kyle says.

Working on the mixed-use area, Harcourt plans on having the first building, park and road scheduled to open in 2017, and “new” Bellingham will emerge in the not-so-distant future.

—

Imagine, several years from now, even several decades, when young and old will be flooding the streets of the Waterfront District. A sea of green and blue, the Bellingham flag, as far as the eye can see will be held up high and proud. The sun will be right above the boat-filled bay on a bright and busy Saturday; families go for a walk at the new Cornwall Beach Park, others will be waiting outside one of the many new brunch spots where yes, they will want mimosas.

The uniqueness of Bellingham, the pride, care and a pinch or five of quirk, makes this waterfront redevelopment not only an exciting adventure, but one that should be embraced with open arms. ■

# STAGE 0

TREATING THE BEGINNING STAGE OF SKIN CANCER

— *Personal narrative written by Kaylee Botting* —



“OK, so that will be \$300 today and \$300 next week,” the receptionist said, catching me a little off guard.

I nervously handed her my debit card, hoping she wouldn't notice that I was praying the transaction would go through. As she was typing my card numbers into her outdated computer, I unlocked my phone and quickly looked at my bank account.

\$312.42.

OK, that's fine, I can survive off \$12.42, I thought. Then I remembered it was the 24th and I got paid the next day. I felt a brief wave of relief, until I realized I would still have to pay the remaining \$300 next week.

The last time I had a cancer scare, my parents paid for the procedure, but I was on my own for this one.

My insurance covered 80 percent of the procedure, but I was responsible for the remaining 20 percent. It cost \$3,000 to remove about two inches of tissue from my neck. Both my parents had the financial means to help cover the cost, but neither were willing. Because it was my dad's insurance that was paying for the procedure, he justified that as his contribution.

Even though I was picking up extra shifts at work, the procedure was still swallowing my savings. Being a college student is hard enough financially, but this was only making it worse.

The receptionist handed my card back along with a stack of papers on an old clipboard. As I was signing the paperwork, I noticed that each signature got worse and worse. I told myself it was just because my hand was getting tired but I knew it was because my nerves were kicking in.

I stood up and handed the receptionist my paperwork then sat back down on the plastic chair. The green cushion felt like concrete pillows against my back. I nervously scrolled through my Instagram feed, trying to keep my mind from wandering back to my finances.

When I was 32 weeks deep in my best friend's Instagram profile, a nurse called me back. She made small talk then handed me a gown, a hat and a bag to put my clothes in. I went into the bathroom and changed. I looked at myself in the mirror, and realized for the first time that this was really happening. I was having surgery.

## **BUT NOW, A YEAR LATER ON THE RARE OCCASION THAT I WEAR MY HAIR UP, I EMBRACE MY SCARS BECAUSE THEY REMIND ME OF HOW UNCERTAIN LIFE CAN BE.**

When I came out, dressed in the itchy blue hospital gown with my hair in the hat, the nurse must have noticed I was nervous and said, “I like your socks,” with a warm smile. “Thanks,” I said, nervously looking down at my pink Seattle Seahawks socks. I could tell she was trying to make me more comfortable and for some reason it almost worked.

She led me to a pre-surgery station where I got to sit in a much more comfortable chair. As she started my IV, I began to relax. I knew it was the medicine kicking in, but all of a sudden I was a lot less nervous.

The nurse with the warm smile left and a surgeon sat down next to me to talk about the procedure.

Two months earlier, I had two moles removed, each from one side of my neck. The dermatologist was comfortable with leaving them and just monitoring the moles, but I urged her to remove them because they looked like the cancerous mole I had removed when I was 17 years old.

She removed them and they were sent to the lab for a biopsy. A few weeks later I got a phone call saying they came back with stage 0 melanoma. The survival rate for people with stage 0 melanoma is 99 percent. However, the surrounding tissue still needed to be removed to make sure the cancerous cells didn't spread beyond the moles.

The surgeon explained that he was going to do a re-excision where the two moles were removed and take out a couple inches of tissue, leaving me with a two-inch scar on either side of my neck. He then shook my hand and said, “I'll see ya back there.”

The nurse with the warm smile came back and went over a few more things with me before wheeling me back to the surgical room.

I was expecting the room to be nice and warm, but when I arrived I was instantly taken off guard by the frigid air and oddly plain, white walls. I looked around the room. “Huh. This doesn't look like Grey's Anatomy,” I thought to myself. “Not quite,” the nurse responded with a chuckle. I guess I didn't think it to myself.

An hour or so later, I woke feeling groggy, hungry and cancer-free.

The scars are usually hidden behind my blonde hair. It took me a very long time to wear my hair up without covering them with makeup or a scarf. I thought they were ugly because they symbolized an ugly time in my life and I didn't want people to see that side of me.

But now, a year later on the rare occasion that I wear my hair up, I embrace my scars because they remind me of how uncertain life can be. ■



# NEW HEIGHTS

How camera drones are expanding perspective



Written by Stephanie Cheng

Photos by  
Kjell Redal and Jake Tull

The sound of loud whirring fills the otherwise quiet, brisk fall air. Phillip Wu stands in the Performing Arts Center Plaza at Western Washington University, holding a large white remote controller in his gloved hands. His jet black hair is wind-blown and messy, his cheeks pink from the cold. His white vans stand out, the rest of him clad in all black.

“I’m trying to get a shot of campus,” Wu says, brown eyes darting from the drone hovering in the air and his phone that’s attached to the remote control. “It’s kind of hard though because it’s a little windy today.”

Bellingham, Washington, while beautiful, is notorious for its wind blowing leaves out of trees and now just as easily, drones out of the sky. As drone cameras increase in popularity, the world has started to shift to accommodate the new technology.

Wu controls the drone, a DJI Phantom 3, with his phone and the remote controller, working

in unison to both pilot the drone and record footage.

A sophomore at Western, Wu has always been interested in landscape photography, which played a significant role in his choice to attend Western. “It’s, like, really pretty here,” he says, shrugging his shoulders, as his eyes focus on the drone.

Wu’s Instagram profile is filled with pictures of the Pacific Northwest landscape along with other photos from his travels. He normally shoots with his phone or his Canon Rebel T3i. Drone photography is his latest venture.

“It’s always been super frustrating when you know there’s a shot that would be really great from above, but you obviously can’t go that high without paying for a helicopter,” Wu says. “I was watching this vlogger who uses a ton of drone stuff in his videos, so I bought one.”

The vlogger Wu talks about is Casey Neistat, a professional filmmaker and YouTube



The Nooksack River flows next to Highway 542 in Washington state.



The DJI GO app shows the view of downtown Bellingham as seen from a drone 41 meters up.





*A DJI Phantom 3 4K drone sits in the grass waiting to be flown.*

creator, known for his viral videos and his nontraditional storytelling. Neistat's more recent work heavily features video from different drones, such as the DJI Phantom series, GoPro and the recently released DJI Mavic.

Wu considers Neistat a big influence. "I don't really make videos, but the pictures are worth it, I guess."

But achieving dynamic pictures involves a hefty price tag and the difficulty of operating the drone.

"I have a carrying case, but it's so heavy that I kind of stopped using it. I tried making my best friend carry it, but he always complains," Wu says, laughing.

Wu says that the overall price of the drone, the carrying case and the protection plan cost him around \$710. "It was a big investment. It cost so much money."

Learning how to use the drone was a beast of its own.

"I crashed it so many times," he admits. "But it was really lightly. And I only broke it, like really broke it, once."

Wu uses the DJI GO app on his phone to pilot the drone and has had some trouble with functionality. "The really bad crash I had was when I tried to use the 'return to home' function and it just crashed into a tree."

He shakes his head, remembering the event. "All I could think about was \$700 in the sky, but it's fine now. I'm better at it."

Another caveat that Wu has run into is Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations on drone use. Drone users are required to register their device as an unmanned aircraft with the FAA if it weighs between .55 and 55 pounds. Wu's DJI Phantom 3 weighs 2.82 pounds.

Guidelines for those flying for fun differ from those flying for work. A commercial drone user must obtain an airworthiness certificate to prove responsibility, whereas recreational users need only fly under the Special Rule for Model Aircraft, which sets rules on flying nearby airports and keeping drones within visual lines of sight.

In June 2014, the National Park Service launched a temporary drone ban in America's national parks to protect wildlife, visitor experience and fire management operations. Due to concerns about mid-air collisions, firefighting aircraft cannot take off if drones

Estimated value of the drone industry  
**\$3.3 BILLION**

Estimated value of the drone industry by 2025  
**\$90 BILLION**

—  
UAV Systems Association

fly over wildfires, according to the National Interagency Fire Center. Last August, public drone use grounded wildfire water drops in the Olympic National Park.

National parks have long been a destination for many photographers, including Wu.

Users can consult “Know Before You Fly” to find out where they can fly their aircraft. The website provides airspace maps showing airports, heliports, temporary flight restricted areas such as wildfires, prohibited or restricted airspace, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration marine protection areas and national parks.

“[The drone] is hard to travel with so I don’t take it too far,” Wu says. “I have to be really careful because the parks are really big and I don’t want to lose it or get in trouble.”

Wu is one of many photographers and videographers who have embraced the ever-changing nature of technology. Drones are only the most recent installment of photo and video equipment, allowing individuals to introduce new perspectives and widen the scope of their work.

Only a drone can see what’s around the corner. ■



*Klipsun photographer Kjell Redal shows how settings can be changed from a phone app.*

# More Than a Choice

BEYOND POLICIES, POLITICAL BANTER AND OPINIONS,  
REAL WOMAN MUST MAKE A LIFE-CHANGING DECISION.

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*Written by Anonymous*  
*Photos by Jake Tull*

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*The ultrasound photo taken on the day of my abortion is the only physical thing I have left from my experience.*

The warmth of the summer sun was shining through my bedroom window, beaming on my skin as I lay in bed with my boyfriend. He said to me, “Whatever you choose, I will support you,” as I hugged him, my eyes full of tears and two positive pregnancy tests in my hand.

The words “whatever you choose” kept running through my head while lying there. I was about to enter my senior year of college, the only one of my four siblings to get this far. The potential looks of disappointment from my family members flashed in my head.

I knew what he meant when he said it was my decision, but I couldn’t speak. I didn’t want to accept my options and what the best choice for me would be.

I grew up loving children and witnessing the joys of motherhood. I awaited the day it would be my turn, and here it was. But, I had a few things working against me: my long distance relationship, lack of income and an unsuitable home for a newborn. But I was willing to work for those things for the next nine months because it was my turn to be a mother.

I thought this would be clear to my partner, but “whatever you choose, I will support you,” came out of his mouth only once, and from then on, persuasive language saying I should abort my baby spewed from his thin lips as his blue eyes became stern and unloving.

He reminded me of everything that was working against me and my chance at motherhood.

“Where are we going to live? Are you even healthy enough to have a baby? That kid will have a bad life,” were among the things he would say to me. I laid still, in shock and silence. With every word that came out of his

mouth, my inner anxiety grew. I was tired of hearing it all, but a part of me knew he was speaking the truth.

The next morning, I lay in the same bed, with the same boy who had the same language spilling from his mouth. The only difference was the increase of tears from my eyes.

“You’re going to keep this baby, aren’t you? *Fuck,*” he said, growing agitated at my silence.

So fed up and filled with failure, the words “No, no I’m not,” were shouted from my mouth as tears rolled down my face.

Did I think an abortion was the best option? Yes. Did I want to have an abortion? No.

But this was now my reality.

This is my story. I cannot speak for every person who has gone through this experience, but I hope I can bring an understanding of the hardships that are often overlooked when talking about abortion.

An abortion is not something any woman wants to go through, but sometimes it’s the best option for them. It is important that they have the right to a safe procedure because no situation is the same. The only constant is the process being difficult and enduring. It takes a toll both mentally and physically.

This decision does not start and end with the procedure. There’s the time and patience when deciding if it’s what’s best, the constant support needed throughout and especially the long time it takes to heal afterwards.

One of the hardest parts was choosing not to tell my mom. Because of her strong religious beliefs, I thought she wouldn’t be able to look at me the same. The few people I told offered

their support and were there for me, except for my boyfriend.

The person I saw a future with faded away and became an emotionless figure. His job that made him travel constantly was now an excuse for him to not deal with *our* situation.

I was making the choice that he wanted, and somehow he still found a way to detach himself from me when I needed him the most. He left me physically and emotionally. He never displayed empathy or tried to understand my position as a woman. I may still love him, but I can’t help resenting him for that.

“Are we all squared away then?” he asked as he handed me the \$550 for the procedure. Four days after the abortion, he broke up with me. I laid in the same bed but this time alone, trying to hide all the pain I was in.

“Do you love me?” I asked him over the phone.

“Yes, I love you.”

“Do you still want to be with me?” my voice quivered.

Silence.

At this point, my uterus was in pain, my back hurt, my hormones were all over the place and now, my heart was shattered. He expected me to be strong, but he couldn’t be. He broke up with me because life hit him hard and he chose to run.

Through the pain, I flung myself out of bed and drove to the nearest lake. After pacing and sobbing my way through the trail and into the seclusion of nature, I rested on a rock while listening to the water flowing by. I searched my mind and core for the strength to keep going. I



**THE HEALING PROCESS IS NOT LINEAR. IT HAPPENS  
IN WAVES WITH SHARP HIGHS AND STEEP LOWS, AND  
REMINDERS OF MY DECISION ANYWHERE IN BETWEEN.**



*The writing I did after I found out I was pregnant vary from calm and thought out to rapid and irrational. They remind me of the different emotions I felt and will be a part of me forever.*

wanted to act like the river, constantly flowing no matter how many rocks were in its way.

I stayed there until the sun was gone and only darkness filled the sky. The time I spent thinking there alone made me realize it was all up to me. I had to pull myself through this. I could no longer rely on the boy who ran away from what was difficult.

Looking back, I realize I let him influence my decision more than he should have. I knew that if he showed any desire to keep the baby, I would have. If I could go back and tell myself anything, it would be to find this solitude from the start. To think and act alone, because eventually that's what I would be.

I learned I need to be selfish because I will be the only one experiencing my pain. Only I would feel the tight and sharp cramps as my uterus was cleaned out, the bleeding of my body that would last months as a daily reminder of my decision. Only I would deal with the backlash of my decision and the secrets I now had to keep.

In the two months that have passed since my abortion, the few ups were overshadowed by more breakdowns that I can count.

"Why dwell on it?" was my now ex-boyfriend's response to a drunken text I sent him, filled with the anger that I was the only one who had to deal with the repercussions.

This response let me know he didn't understand that everything I was feeling was inevitable. I did not have the option to not "dwell" on it.

People tend to ignore there is healing that

needs to happen after an abortion. The pregnancy symptoms may be alleviated, but the hormones can be left over for weeks or even months.

Before the procedure, I did some research and knew I'd feel sad for a while, but I was not prepared for the amount of grief to come. It was on my mind 24/7 afterward, bringing tears to my eyes and sadness to my heart while I was trying to go about my normal days. It's hard to move forward from something like this, but I had no choice.

Classes began 10 days after my abortion, and I felt myself emotionally deteriorating. I was alone again, so I aimed to be busy. I've had days of pure productivity and days where I tried to go about my routine – gym, school, dinner, homework – but there were moments of major grief between each activity that left me exhausted and unable to move. I was rarely successful in living the way I wanted to.

No matter what, I found myself crying to sleep every night. I would drink a bottle of wine or two with the goal of it putting me to sleep. Sometimes it worked, and other times it left me thinking about everything, and the thought of throwing myself off the I-5 overpass on the walk home grew increasingly more appealing.

But the next day always came, and maybe I would be fine again.

The healing process is not linear. It happens in waves with sharp highs and steep lows, and reminders of my decision anywhere in between. These reminders aren't direct and sporadic, but are attached to every birthing center I see, every daycare I pass, every toddler

that waddles in my direction, every baby on my bus ride home and every mother out with her kids. All these little things bring back a reminder of what I could have, but made the decision not to. They fill my heart with hurt, and tears that are often inevitable.

I don't see the effect of the reminders dissipating anytime soon. However, I have noticed that as I pick myself up after every fall, the crying has become less frequent. My ability to care for myself is slowly coming back, and I am starting to flow into a new routine of life. I will never be the same as before, but I will heal. Everything I have gone through was hard, but I do not regret my decision, and I do not think it defines me as a person.

Eventually, I returned to that same rock and sat next to the flowing river. I brought my journal and my ultrasound picture. I stared at it, and I wrote:

*I cannot believe I made the decision I did, and while I think it was for the better, I will never do it again. I never want to make a decision like that again. So here is my promise, to my past and future unborn children: I will always be ready for you from here on out. I promise to work hard to be stable and healthy, and able to take care of you at any and all points in my life.*

This promise has guided my healing process. I keep my promise in mind, regardless of how low I get, and it reminds me that there's no place to go but up. I cannot lose myself again because at some point in my life there will be someone who relies on me, and I will be ready to give them everything they deserve. ■

# ONLINE EXCLUSIVES

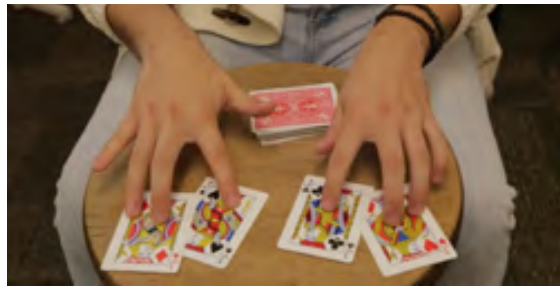
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## The Importance of Horror

*Randee Matthews*

Each year, the Bleedingham Film Festival features the work of Pacific Northwest filmmakers and special effects



## Magic Dom

*Hayley Magee*

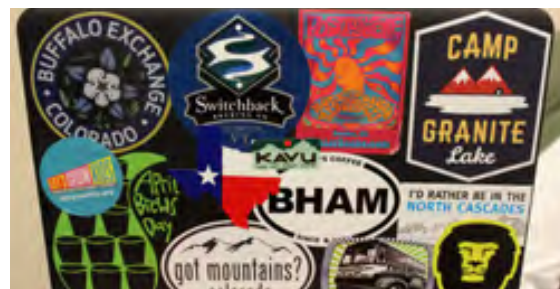
For Dominick Lucero, magic is more than a few silly tricks - it's a organic, limitless form of performance with a rich history.



## Off Road Wheelin'

*Jared Rusk*

The off-roading Subaru community is a tight-knit group of adventurers where no man gets left behind.



## Personalized Laptops

*Amy Page*

What do your computer stickers say about you?



## Circus Guild

*Christina Becker*

A look into the Bellingham Circus Guild and the people who use their space.



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