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Western Washington University

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KLIPSUN

MAGAZINE

Burning Ambition

Three Bellingham residents compete in a firefighting and EMT training program

Summer Insanity

Forget waiting tables, fishing in Alaska changes your outlook on life.

Klipsun MAGAZINE

Editor's note

Change is scary. Staying in the comfort of the familiar is always easier than venturing into the unknown.

That is why I am always inspired by people willing to innovate. It takes courage to look toward the new to amend the old.

Stories such as "Wave of the Future" and "Baker's New Breakfast" show how finding new ways to accomplish old goals can be a good thing. From the first bilingual school north of Seattle to an animal shelter that found an alternative to euthanizing, people are thinking outside of the box.

I hope readers, when reading this issue of Klipsun, will find a story that helps them remember where they have been but more importantly inspire them to think about where they are going.

Kate M. Miller

Kate M. Miller
Editor in Chief



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WHERE'S THE FIRE?

25 Three Bellingham residents volunteer to earn their dream job. *By Lorean Serko*



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Scene + Heard

Album and venue reviews by **Eric Sanford**. Photos by **Jamie Badilla**

Then it's Friday night at the Boundary Bay Brewery & Bistro, and a local bluegrass group is starting its fast-picking and twangy set as everyone from the college to the middle-age set enjoys hand-crafted brews.

As a college town, Bellingham has a rich tradition of a thriving and diverse music scene. Despite the closure of the 3B Tavern, The Factory and several other notable venues, Bellingham's scene continues to survive and provide quality entertainment.

Featured on these two pages are album reviews of three unique local bands. Shook Ones, one of Bellingham's hardest-working bands, brings aggressive pop-punk, while The

Educataz, one of the stars in Bellingham's expanding hip-hop scene, basks in its soulful, laid-back approach to rap music. The Braille Tapes continues Bellingham's tradition of producing various types of spastic and bizarre rock 'n' roll.

Now all that's left to know is where to go to see the bands play. Included is a list of selected musical hot spots in Bellingham and what each one has to offer. From the rowdy crowds at The Rogue Hero and The Nightlight Lounge to the mellow, homespun atmosphere of Boundary Bay Brewery & Bistro, Bellingham has the right digs to suit any mood.

It's Thursday night, and a mass of 20-somethings has gathered at The Nightlight Lounge for the infamous '80s Night. Thundering beats from '80s hits reverberate off the hardwood floors and concrete walls as the bar-goers dance.

Above: Sam Alexander, 33, flaunts his green blazer and pink boa at '80s night at the Nightlight Lounge.

THE ROGUE HERO

1313 N. State St. 756-0069

When it comes to college dive bars in Bellingham, The Rogue Hero is the textbook example. It's dark, dank and full of drunken college students on any given night.

Since its opening in 2002, the Rogue has garnered a steady reputation for cheap music and booze. Drink specials such as \$4 Jager Bombs on Thursdays with no cover charge are guaranteed to pack 'em in.

The Rogue features live music every Friday and Saturday with a \$2 cover charge. Music genres range from local funk-rockers such as Below Average Productions and Stacks Getaway to the surf-punk of the All Nighters.

If you like your bars down and dirty and your music the same, The Rogue Hero is your joint.

THE NIGHTLIGHT LOUNGE

211 E. Chestnut St. 527-1531

The Nightlight Lounge, with its swanky interior design, hardwood floors and plush furniture, can make anyone feel like a VIP. Add to that the impressive variety of popular musical acts such as rapper Del The Funky Homosapien, metal band 3 Inches of Blood and jazz artist Hugh Masekela and it's a genuine hot spot.

"We provide all kinds of music and entertainment," director of operations Michael "Zippo" Parzick says. "We host everything from belly dancers to jazz guitarists to local bands."

In addition to being a 500-person capacity music venue, the Nightlight features a variety of specialty nights, Parzick says. The infamous Thursday '80s Night has moved to the Nightlight since the 3B's closure. On Mondays, it's the Lo-Fi Lounge, which features local acoustic

acts. On Tuesdays is the local music showcase for \$3, and on Sundays the Nightlight has a free night of cartoons and The Sopranos screenings in addition to drink specials.

So keep an eye out for upcoming concerts at the Nightlight, because you never know when one of your favorite bands might drop by.



BOUNDARY BAY BREWERY & BISTRO

1107 Railroad Ave. 647-5593

In its 10-year existence, Boundary Bay Brewery & Bistro has become a Bellingham institution faster than you can say. "Save the ales!" Boundary Bay brews its own national-award-winning beer and offers a diverse menu of locally grown and prepared entrees.

"Boundary Bay has developed into a real meeting place," brewer's assistant Anthony Stone says. "Western professors often congregate here with grad students for casual meals and meetings."

Musically, Boundary Bay offers everything from bluegrass to jazz to jam bands. In the summer, it opens its outdoor beer garden and has live local music almost every night.

The restaurant portion of Boundary Bay is all-ages until 10 p.m., with its tap room as the 21-and-older section.

If you like quality beer and warm, friendly vibes, then Boundary Bay will not disappoint. And for the money, the Scotch ale can't be beat.



The music scene that once inhabited the 3B seems to have shifted to Chiribins, a brightly decorated bar and grill that opened July 2005. This is mainly due to the fact that the 3B's main show booker, Joel Myrene, now books all the shows at Chiribins. The bands perform in front of a colorful mural displaying a piano-playing rooster. The story goes that owner Michael D'Anna's grandmother had a pet rooster that would jump on the piano whenever the Italian opera "Ciribin" came on the radio, hence the name and the mural.

"Our music selection is definitely eclectic, with genres ranging from metal to punk to reggae," bar manager Paul Marsh says.

Shows are on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Monday is karaoke night with DJ Poops from the 3B, Marsh says.

Drink specials include Mickey's and Pabst Blue Ribbon 40-ounce beers on ice and a daily happy hour from 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Chiribins definitely has a slightly classy feel to it, but it's still casual. If you're feeling a little swanky and want to hear some good local music, then this is the spot.

THE EDUCATAZ SELFISH AUDIOKIO PRODUCTIONS

Bellingham hip-hop group The Educataz bring an early De La Soul or A Tribe Called Quest jazzy sound to its solid debut EP, "Selfish."

This trio of emcees known as Adjectives, Whiplash and Dave Ahl muse about girls, life and loyalty to hip-hop culture, while DJ Idle Hands interjects some sporadic scratching.

All three emcees have solid flow, and they keep the energy high throughout the EP's seven tracks. The production is noteworthy, with full, warm bass and crisp percussion. The whole album has a soulful and funky feel to it, especially on "Change," which is complete with excellent guest vocals by Amy Crawford.

This record's downfall is that it sounds too businesslike. I feel like the emcees need to loosen up a bit, have some fun and inject more of their individual personalities into the songs. And I was hoping for more Bellingham shout-outs, perhaps about jumping off Whatcom Falls or avoiding bums on Railroad Avenue. Maybe that's too corny. I don't know, I'm not a rapper.

The group finally sounds as if it's having a little fun on the secret track, "The Sean Mayernik Sax Crunk," with its funky beat, burly saxophone bop, rhymes about drunken bears in china stores and a subtle Beastie Boys reference.

Overall, this is an impressive effort for a local hip-hop group, and I look forward to hearing how they progress.

THE BRAILLE TAPES CHAPTER ONE: I WANT TO BE VICTOR WARD KEATON COLLECTIVE

With its bipolar sound, Bellingham guitar-and-drum duo The Braille Tapes gets weird and crazy on its debut album, "Chapter One: I Want To Be Victor Ward." It's a fresh blast of post-hardcore mixed with indie-rock that both pleases and bewilders.

Honestly, the members of this band would seem awfully pretentious if it didn't sound as if they were having such a blast. Laughter and goofy shrieks pervade the album along with strange sound clips interspersed here and there. As a listener, I feel as if I'm in on the joke because of this goofiness.

At times, the songs are spastic and noisy, such as "How Much is a Shitload, Really?" and "The Coat Exchange," both of which end with gnarly, Coalesce-like breakdowns. But then the band comes back with quiet, melodic songs such as "Joshua Young Was My Valentine" that sound a lot like Mineral. They mix both sounds together on songs such as "I Wish Seth Cohen Was My Boyfriend" and "I Want To Be Victor Ward."

The lyrics are rather incoherent. A lyric sheet would have been nice, but I must say I'm impressed by the quirky, handmade packaging — a cardboard case with a Velcro flap.

The Braille Tapes is successful in pumping fresh blood into a tired genre of ham-fisted Thursday-wannabes and 15-year-olds with bad hair and too much eyeliner.

Album Reviews

SHOOK ONES SLAUGHTER OF THE INSOLE REVELATION RECORDS

Shook Ones, Bellingham's reigning champs of pop-punk-influenced melodic hardcore, return with a short, three-song blast of sun-drenched riffs and intelligent, heartfelt lyrics.

The 7-inch record kicks off with the title track, which explodes off the starting line with raging, frantic drumming and vocalist Scott Freeman's raspy yell. Then the song goes into an irresistibly catchy Replacements-esque guitar break complete with call-and-response riffage. The result is pure, summertime bliss.

The next song, "So Grown Up," has a more somber tone to go along with Freeman's strange and foreboding lyrics that call for a revolution of sorts against the status quo. The song ends with an epic buildup to a chanting sing-along as the sweepingly melodic ending riff repeats and slowly fades.

The last song is an excellent cover of a Leatherface song called "Not A Day Goes By."

This record has barely left my turntable since I got it. Simply put, it's a perfect, short and infinitely catchy release from a band that continues to live up to its high potential.



Left: Jack carved this owl out of catalpa wood.
Below: Woodcarver Rand Jack uses a gouge tool to carve an owl out of spalted maple wood in his Deming workshop.

Dean Brett is a partner at the Bellingham law office of Brett & Daugert, where Jack has worked as an attorney since 1972. Brett owns three of Jack's pieces and says by applying oil rather than paint, Jack accentuates the natural lustere of the wood.

"Most craftsmen who carve birds out of wood paint on feathers to better replicate the bird, making the wood imitate something it is not," Brett says. "Rand doesn't carve birds. He carves wood into the shape of birds, leaving the original grain exposed."

Unlike most artists, Jack doesn't strive to maximize exposure to his work. He sells approximately six birds a year at The Wood Merchant in LaConner.

"I had a gallery in downtown Seattle, but I could never find a parking spot to take in the birds, so I stopped taking them there," Jack says. "The people in LaConner are very nice, and I can always find a parking place."

The nice people in LaConner are Stuart and Laurie Hutt. In the 24 years the couple have owned The Wood Merchant, they've sold hand-crafted furniture, wall carvings and other pieces by hundreds of artists, "and Rand is right up there with the top of them," Stuart Hutt says. He praises Jack's skill, but he says the carvings, which sell for \$400 to \$4,500, begin with Jack's eye for wood.

Jack is a little crazy about wood. He packs logs up creek beds and combs beaches for the driftwood he uses as the base for his birds. Jack says he has a reputation for smelling out and retrieving pieces of maple or chunks of cherry wherever they dwell.

"I've been known to drive by somebody's firewood pile and come to a screeching halt," Jack says. "I'll run up, ring the doorbell and say I've spotted a piece of curling maple in their woodpile."

Jack's obsession is a running joke among his friends, but they are quick to call him when they run across a wood bit or gnarled burl.

"Friends on long kayak trips are always kidding me," says Jack, an avid outdoorsman. "When we get down to the last few days, they know their boats will be loaded with driftwood."

Somewhere in the neighborhood of 1980, Jack called blacksmith Dick Anderson and ordered some custom tools. Anderson estimates Jack has purchased 50 tools since, some of which Jack designed.

"All of us craftsmen are trying to make some connection to nature, some expression of art," Anderson says. "We all do that. I do that. But none do so well as Rand."

Twenty-six years later, Jack's first goose stands in gaunt defiance of the two dozen more elaborate birds in the house. With feet spread wide and its rigid neck lurching forward, the ornery creature might just chase the bunch out of the estuary. The goose isn't going anywhere.

"I like it," Jack says. "It's primitive, but I like primitive things. It's probably the only one I wouldn't part with."

—Zach Kyle

the Woodsmen

Most people start slowly when they take up a new hobby. They take a guitar lesson or read which plants to grow in the shade. When Rand Jack decided woodcarving might be fun in 1979, the Western professor and Bellingham attorney didn't buy a tip book or whittle a key chain. He sculpted a life-size goose from a block of butternut.

The wood shaved from stalking blue herons and preening swans crunches under Jack's feet. Dust from hours spent meticulously sanding coats his cluttered studio near Deming. A single walkway burrows through the wood stumps, wood beams and wood chunks. Jack pans the chaos and smiles.

"It's the nicest place around," he says. "It's a place I can come and do what I want to do without interruption, except the phone rings too often. It's a place where I can lose myself in what I do and not worry when I spill something on the floor."





A new leash on life

Wandering the halls of the Northwest Organization for Animal Help center, **Jackie LeCuyer** comes face to face with the dogs and cats given a second chance at life. Photos by **Chris Huber**. Design by **Megan Lum**.

Brown eyes, wide with excitement, peer out from behind a dog door. Yuna, a brown, white and black speckled hound mix runs to the edge of her kennel. Her loud, distinctive bark echoes throughout the room. Yuna knows it's time for her daily walk on the groomed trails beside the Northwest Organization for Animal Help Animal Adoption Center and is impatient to wander the half-mile trail with one of the center's volunteer dog walkers.

At any other shelter in Whatcom County and surrounding counties, Yuna would not be going for her daily walk. She would be dead. Yuna is one of the thousands of dogs the center has rescued from euthanasia.

N.O.A.H. is a private, nonprofit animal shelter with a no-kill policy. No animals that enter the center are euthanized, and every cat and dog is assured a home. Nancy Gebhardt, Anne Belovich and Fran Osawa founded N.O.A.H. in 1986 on Camano Island. The program outgrew its Camano Island facility and opened the Stanwood facility in April 2003 with the help of local donors.

The center is located off Interstate 5 exit 215 on serene land. Trees surround the four-building facility. The only disruption to the tranquility of nature is the busyness of the center. Last night three new dogs arrived, and the staff is busy grooming, spaying, neutering

"I look at our volunteers and am encouraged. I mean, our hearts are in these animals."

and photographing the newcomers, preparing to advertise them for adoption.

Executive Assistant Melissa Emery stands in the entry of the center petting Buttercup, a black puppy who walks across the front desk. Disgruntled when quickly scooped up by the receptionist and placed in her lap, Buttercup promptly begins to chew on her long, silver hair.

"He came in last night and hasn't been set down by the staff since," Emery says, smiling at the puppy.

Staff and volunteers keep the center alive and thriving. Ten on-site staff members and 250 volunteers put their hearts and souls into the animals and cause of N.O.A.H. on a daily basis.

Volunteer coordinator Laura Sureepisarn is responsible for recruiting and training N.O.A.H.'s volunteers.

"For all of us, working at N.O.A.H. is a different type of career compared to what we started out doing," Sureepisarn says. "Our dog trainer is an accountant; we have teachers and social workers working here. The people who are here are like-minded and passionate about helping animals."

The center's goal is to save the lives of animals about to face euthanasia at local animal shelters. Twice a week, two N.O.A.H. volunteers pick up dogs and cats from animal shelters in Bellingham, Burlington, Everett and surrounding areas. The center has dog suites for a maximum of 17 dogs. N.O.A.H.

Above: N.O.A.H. matchmaker staff member Keri Reynolds shares a moment with Atticus after playtime with owner-to-be Nancy Beale of Stanwood.



N.O.A.H. volunteer receptionist Vicki Hemner holds Buttercup, who was rescued by partner Everett Animal Shelter the previous night, while she answers phone calls and greets visitors.

houses an average of 50 cats because more than one cat can be kept in a large room.

“When our volunteers go to pick up dogs from local shelters, they load vans full of animal crates and a stick with a rubber hand attached to it,” Emery says. “We want to see if the dogs get aggressive when touched or bothered while eating, and if they do we can’t take them.”

The center occasionally runs extra trips when a shelter calls inundated with animals facing the prospect of euthanasia, Executive Director Austin Gates says.

Laura Clark, community outreach director for the Whatcom Humane Society, says she is grateful for N.O.A.H.’s services. The Whatcom Humane Society accepts all cats and dogs brought in by owners and animal control, so it often is overcrowded. N.O.A.H. relieves the shelter of some of the animals it would otherwise have to euthanize. The shelter euthanizes when it is overcrowded or has animals in poor health or with aggressive behavior.

“It’s great to have N.O.A.H. as a resource,” Clark says. “They free up space for new animals here and give animals who have run out of time here a chance of finding a new home.”

When cats and dogs are taken from shelters and brought to the center, N.O.A.H.’s veterinarian, Jennifer Duncan, spays, neuters, vaccinates and implants microchips. The staff and volunteers at N.O.A.H. hope if animals are lost in the future, the microchips will help reunite them with their families.

The center offers its animals a comfortable home, both transitional for the animals that are adopted and permanent for the animals that aren’t adopted.

Light illuminates the cat corridor located to the left of the main entrance, filtering in through the skylights that line the ceiling. Glass walls show a large room that opens into a screened outside pen. Emery calls this the cat colony. Cats that get along with one another are allowed to socialize in the large indoor and outdoor room. Toy mice and cat beds are scattered throughout the cat colony, and half a dozen cats snooze in the midafternoon sunlight. Two-story cat apartments stand to the right of the colony in the middle of a spacious room.

The dog suites are located down a wide hallway painted red and yellow. Colorful paintings of cats and dogs adorn the walls,



and benches face the suites so customers can rest and watch the dogs. The suites are made of glass and open to outside pens, which are lavished with sunlight on clear days. Cots rest in the corners of the suites, and blankets and bones lie strewn across the floors. Clipboards with scribbled messages about each dog hang outside the suites. Customers stop and glance at notes N.O.A.H. employees and volunteers leave about the animals.

Soft rock plays in the background of the main building, almost inaudible amid the barks resonating from the dog corridor. The center's dogs each respond differently to the staff members and customers who walk by their kennels.

Zeus, an Alaskan malamute, lifts his head only long enough to expose one dark brown eye and one crystal blue eye before laying his head back down, his chest moving steadily to the rhythm of sleep. Other dogs charge the 3-inch-round opening in the glass that separates them from the people in the corridor, poking their noses or paws out the hole, seeking attention.

Cadbury, a medium-size black dog, sits two feet from the glass of his suite wall. A bandana hangs around his neck and his stoic brown-yellow eyes watch the passers-by, never moving forward from his spot on the floor to draw attention to himself. The messages on his clipboard say, "Cadbury likes to be brushed

and never yanks on his leash when going for a walk. He would be perfect for a family."

Emery stops in front of a small black and brown dog. She introduces Max, a dachshund with a long snout and short legs. He watches her curiously from the opposite side of the glass suite.

"We think he's diabetic, but our vet is still running some tests," Emery says, pausing for a moment. Taking her silence as a cue to start barking and wagging his tail, Max looks up at Emery with round, hopeful eyes.

"We do know Max is loud," Emery says fondly. "That much we can guarantee his adopters. My office is right next to his suite and I can hear him all day."

To make the adoption process simple for customers, the center color-codes its dogs' name tags that hang on the walls outside the suites. Each color specifies whether the dog is high, average or low maintenance. A dog's maintenance level is determined by how active and friendly it is. If a family is looking for a low-maintenance dog, the center's adoptions coordinator advises them to look for lavender nametags, which represent couch-potato dogs, and avoid orange and yellow nametags, which represent busy-bee and life-of-the-party dogs, Emery says.

"Our goal is to build a bond for life," Emery says. "We try to match a dog's temperament with a family's temperament so they click and the match works."

Besides ensuring owners choose dogs appropriate for their lifestyles, the center focuses on controlling the pet population by spaying and neutering dogs and cats. The center spays and neuters an average of 15 to 16 cats and dogs

Want to help?

Prices:

Cats and kittens – \$100

Dogs and puppies – \$100

Buy one cat for \$100, get a second cat for \$50.

Cats over 7 years old cost \$50 for senior citizens.

Spay and neuter services are \$25 for low-income families Tuesday through Friday.

Business Hours:

Monday through Friday: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

daily. Its spaying and neutering services are open to the public.

"You drop them off in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon," Emery says. "Once they're fixed here, there are no puppies of theirs left in the shelters."

Navigating the maze of hallways and speaking loudly to be heard over the sounds of dog barks, Emery explains the significant role volunteers play in keeping the center running. The center interviews and trains its volunteers and asks for a six-month commitment. Volunteers are expected to spend four hours a week at the center, walking the dogs, socializing with the cats, cleaning kennels, providing fresh food and water and working at the reception desk, Emery says.

N.O.A.H. is funded through various individuals and events, including benefit concerts. Donors can purchase plaques engraved with their names that hang outside the dog and cat suites for \$100.

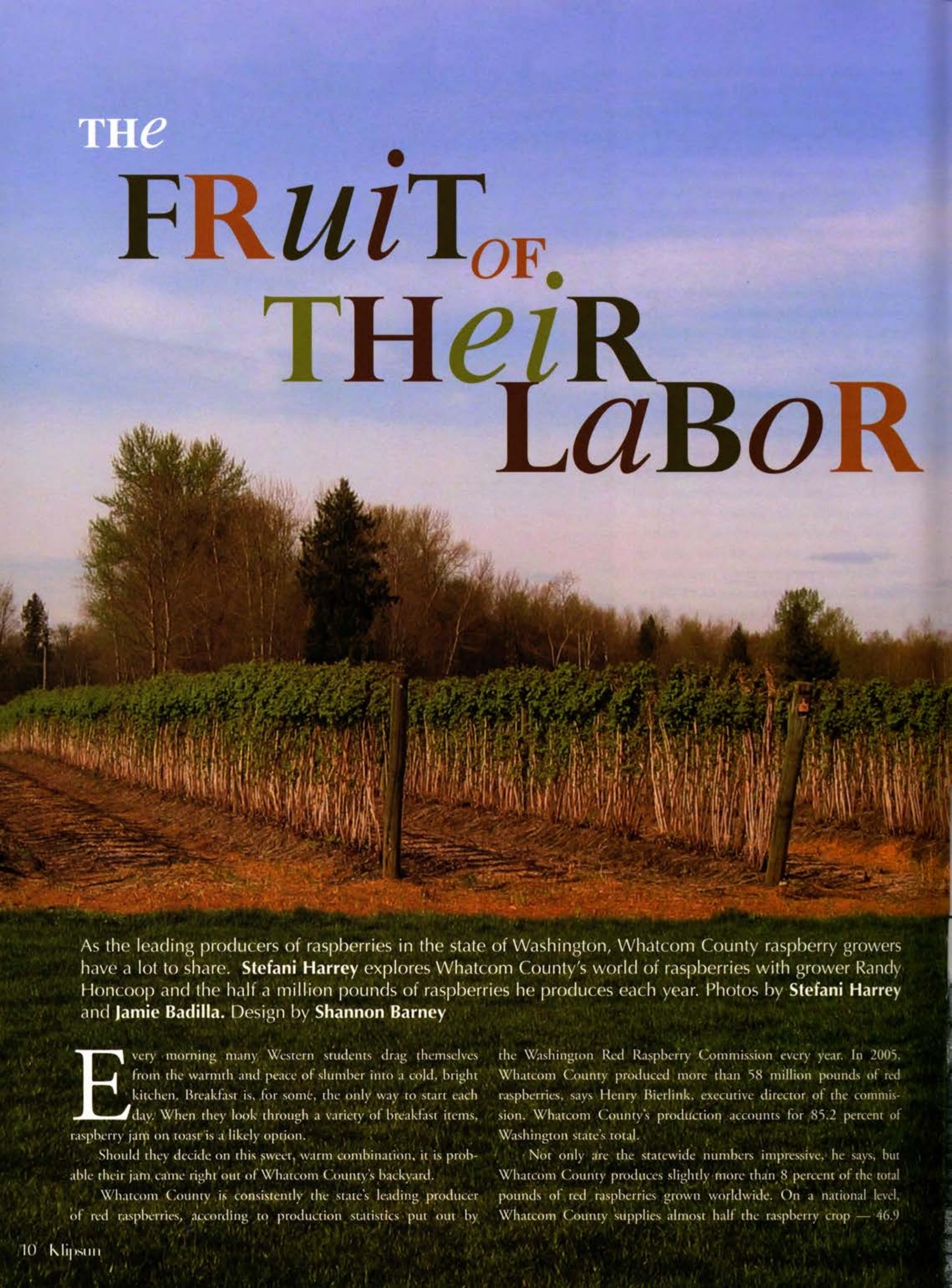
"I get so disappointed with the way some people treat animals," Emery says. "But then I look at our volunteers and am encouraged. I mean, our hearts are in these animals."

Outside the center, Yuna trots happily through the parking lot on her way to the trails, occasionally pulling on her black leash and sniffing something invisible to the human eye. And on this clear spring day, Yuna can rest easily. She has no time limit at the N.O.A.H. Center. She will either be given a carefully chosen home or remain at the center. There is no expiration date on her life. 🐾



Yuna pokes her nose through a hole in the window of her suite at the N.O.A.H. Center as visitors pass by.





THE FRUIT OF. THEIR LABOR

As the leading producers of raspberries in the state of Washington, Whatcom County raspberry growers have a lot to share. **Stefani Harrey** explores Whatcom County's world of raspberries with grower Randy Honcoop and the half a million pounds of raspberries he produces each year. Photos by **Stefani Harrey** and **Jamie Badilla**. Design by **Shannon Barney**

Every morning many Western students drag themselves from the warmth and peace of slumber into a cold, bright kitchen. Breakfast is, for some, the only way to start each day. When they look through a variety of breakfast items, raspberry jam on toast is a likely option.

Should they decide on this sweet, warm combination, it is probable their jam came right out of Whatcom County's backyard.

Whatcom County is consistently the state's leading producer of red raspberries, according to production statistics put out by

the Washington Red Raspberry Commission every year. In 2005, Whatcom County produced more than 58 million pounds of red raspberries, says Henry Bierlink, executive director of the commission. Whatcom County's production accounts for 85.2 percent of Washington state's total.

Not only are the statewide numbers impressive, he says, but Whatcom County produces slightly more than 8 percent of the total pounds of red raspberries grown worldwide. On a national level, Whatcom County supplies almost half the raspberry crop — 46.9

percent of the total on average.

From the popular Smucker's brand jams and jellies to the Ocean Spray Cran-Raspberry juice drink, Whatcom County's red raspberries travel the globe in well-known consumer products, says Rob Dhaliwal, president of the commission. The state commission is made up of approximately 140 raspberry growers, most from Washington.

Production numbers of such significance however, do not come easily, Whatcom County raspberry grower Randy Honcoop, 50, says. Growing raspberries is a yearlong job that takes careful calculation of air and soil temperatures as well as a close watch of weather patterns. Although the harvest lasts only a few weeks each summer, the growing process continues all year, he says.

Honcoop, who grows approximately 55 acres of raspberries each year on his Lynden farm, says he considers himself a small farmer — only producing between half a million and three-fourths of a million pounds of raspberries each year. Besides row after row of raspberry cane, Honcoop's farm is also home to a horse barn, although he has no horses right now. The home that he and his family live in and a large garage he built also sit on the property. Inside the garage, Honcoop keeps the sizeable harvesting machines, a variety of John Deere tractors, and mud-caked four-wheelers for quick transportation between the raspber-

ry rows. The garage is also home to countless tools and supplies, all arranged neatly in boxes and on shelves, Honcoop uses to do all the maintenance on each of the vehicles himself.

profitable in the area is dairy products.

"A lot of people don't get out of Bellingham into the county," Bierlink says. "And if they do, they go south to Seattle or

"I like playing in the dirt. I like growing things."

— Raspberry grower Randy Honcoop

"Nothing thrills me more than walking the fields doing all the different jobs of a worker," Honcoop says as he squints in the late afternoon sun peeking through the clouds. Looking out over the rows of cane waiting to bloom into berries later this spring, he adds, "I like playing in the dirt; I like growing things."

Farmers like Honcoop live throughout Lynden, in northern Whatcom County. Four of the eight members of the commission's board of directors reside there as well. Many people who live in the south county, such as residents of Bellingham, don't understand how important the raspberry industry is for the county, Honcoop says. The raspberry industry accounts for 13.5 percent of agriculture in Whatcom County, according to the 2002 agriculture census. The only industry more

north to Vancouver. They don't even know we're up here."

Residents unfamiliar with the importance of the raspberry industry to Whatcom County might ask what makes this area so plentiful for growing. The answer, Bierlink says, lies in three things.

First, the soil here is resistant to root rot of the raspberry canes because it drains well. Second, the climate is suitable for year-round growing most years; and lastly, generational farmers have the know-how of many years of raspberry farming passed down through families.

"Put those three together, and you've got a lot of raspberry growing," Bierlink says.

Dhaliwal, who does both growing and production on 225 acres in Lynden, says the climate is the most important factor for growing raspberries.

Below: Randy Honcoop explains the growing process on his Lynden raspberry farm.



"Raspberries don't like real cold winters and don't like really hot summers," he says. "If we see three to four straight days of 90-degree weather in the summer, we can see it in the fruit."

After machines pick the berries off the bushes in the field, the production cycle starts. Production of raspberries is a combination of all the processes that take place after the raspberries are harvested to prepare them for sale on the market. The berries are sent down a long belt that shakes off the leaves and small bugs before they are cleaned. After that, they are cleaned thoroughly and dumped into pails to be frozen or juiced.

Dhaliwal sells the majority of his raspberry crop to Smucker's, he says. He supplies approximately 1 million pounds of block frozen raspberries for Smucker's to use in various products. Raspberries in Whatcom County are grown for three distinct markets: individually quick frozen, block frozen and juice. Since the California markets dominate fresh raspberry production, Whatcom County produces few fresh raspberries.

Honcoop says most farmers grow their raspberries with a specific market in mind, then produce a majority of their crop for that method of production. Because he mostly produces berries for the individually quick frozen market, he takes extra care to grow a high-quality product.

"I don't want a mushy berry that is odd shaped or has mold spots," Honcoop says. "I take precautions to get the best possible berry."

The best possible berry he describes as one that has a rich red color, ripens evenly, shakes off the bush easily and is not too large or too small.

Although a lot of Whatcom County raspberries are grown for individually quick frozen and block frozen markets, Honcoop estimates close to 2,000 acres worth within the county end up in juice. Bierlink says 20 to 25 percent of Whatcom County's raspberries are grown to be individually quick frozen, 30 to 35 percent are grown for block freezing and the remaining 40 percent are for juice.

The juice market, unlike the other two, competes with foreign production, Honcoop says. The Chilean raspberry market is a major competitor with Whatcom County, commission research coordinator Tom Peerbolt says.

"Ten years ago the vast majority of (frozen) raspberries in the U.S. were from the Northwest," Peerbolt says. "Now, global competition makes it a tough, tough market."

One aspect that can greatly affect Whatcom County's ability to compete on a worldwide scale is the weather, Honcoop says.

Local newspapers reported this past winter that cold weather in February had lower than normal overnight temperatures, and they were likely to hurt the raspberry crop Whatcom County depends on.

The start time of the harvest is dependent on the weather and temperatures. Growing is triggered by soil temperature, Dhaliwal says. After the weather starts to warm up in February and March, if a cold snap occurs, the growing will slow down and severe damage can occur to the raspberry canes.

"You can't change the weather," Honcoop says. "You have to deal with it."

Honcoop says newspaper predictions aren't becoming a reality, and he is on about the same schedule he uses for harvesting each year.

No matter what the weather holds, the harvesting has to be done when the berries are ready, otherwise growers will lose a lot of produce, Honcoop says.

"Mid-July to the first of August can be doggone hot," he says, wincing at the thought of harvesting in the beating sun. "But some days it's not the heat. It's crappy for picking berries in the rain, but if you don't get them, they're gone."

Honcoop says it is impossible to manipulate the weather, but drip irrigation, a hose running alongside each row of raspberry cane buried a few inches down in the dirt, can solve the water problems in dry seasons. Using drip irrigation keeps the soil happy and healthy, he says.

With drip irrigation Honcoop can decide when to water the field and when to let nature do its work, he says.

"Why pump water onto my field when a big deluge is coming?" Honcoop says. "That's stupid."

Like in any other agriculture or farming industry, the price growers can get for their raspberries goes up and back down again every season, Dhaliwal says. Raspberry farming is capital intensive, meaning a lot of production and effort goes into producing the final berry. The price a grower can get for each raspberry depends on competition with the world's markets.

"Some years we make a lot of money," Honcoop says. "Some years we lose our shirts."

Honcoop is just one of the many growers in the small community of Lynden who, together, create such an important industry in the north county. Their livelihoods depend on the crop every year. Day in and day out they watch the weather scanners, check for soil temperatures and hope above all that the harvest will be plentiful. 🍷



Whatcom County's raspberry production

86.5% of statewide

49.9% of nationwide

8% of worldwide

Katrina

Boats jammed into living rooms and kitchen appliances strewn across front yards are still the sight in Waveland, Miss., one of the places hit by Hurricane Katrina this past September. While many college students went to tropical locations to relax after a quarter of hard work in classes, Western junior Allyson Wardlow, 21, traveled south to serve those in need. Wardlow joined a group of 21 Western students and Bellingham residents who ventured to Kiln, Miss, approximately an hour and a half north of New Orleans, to volunteer. More than 1,000 people died in this area, which is still devastated by Mother Nature's hands. The team stayed in Kiln but drove daily to give aid in Waveland.

What inspired you to go on a trip to the Gulf Coast for spring break?

I figured most people were going to go to Mexico or fun places, and I wanted to go somewhere and come back and be able to say I made a difference. I wanted to go when Hurricane Katrina initially happened, but school was starting. I got connected through Christ the King Church in Bellingham, and they worked with Samaritan's Purse, a non-profit organization that helps others in need.

What was the most shocking thing you saw on your trip?

The people that stayed in their houses during the storm went up into their attics as the floodwater was rising and got stuck there and didn't make it out of their houses. We didn't see any bodies, but when you drove past the houses, you saw spray-painted numbers that showed if bodies were found by searchers' teams. Most of the numbers were 0's, but at times we saw 4's and 6's. These were homes where entire families died. One house we drove by was totally caved in, and a family portrait was placed on a pole in front of the house. Our group was assuming the family that lived in that house was lost.

What is the basic thing they are lacking from the disaster?

I know a lot of the people down there went without running water for a month

and lived five and six people in trailers. We all came back and thought to ourselves, "Wow, we have a shower."

Now that you are back from the trip, what are your thoughts on the current situation on the Gulf Coast?

The main thing that bothers me is the ignorance people have for the situation in the south. Because the media doesn't talk about Hurricane Katrina anymore, people don't realize the situation is just as bad as it was when the hurricane happened.

The reactions of the residents we helped stand out in my mind the most. We met a lady named Renee. She was a mother of two and lost her house, and she didn't waste any time thinking she had no place to live. The week after it happened, she was organizing and rallying people together and calling insurance companies. Her whole attitude was really inspiring. She received \$15,000 from her insurance company, which only provided enough funding to fix her front yard. The insurance companies claimed that the majority of the damages were from the flooding caused by Katrina, and many homeowners only had insurance coverage for hurricane damage.

After this experience, would you consider doing something like this again?

Yeah. I am going to get a group of

people together this summer because I am definitely going back. I feel that since I have seen the condition, it is my responsibility to take part. I can't just be quiet about this. I need to raise awareness because the damage cleanup for Katrina is far from finished. We think to ourselves that our problems are huge, when they are nothing compared to what the people have gone through that were affected by Hurricane Katrina.

—Kristen Larzelere



Right: A house remains intact after being blown off its foundation. It was found at the side of the freeway.

Below: "We shall return" is spray painted onto the foundation of a million dollar home.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALLYSON WARDLOW



Q&A

AMIGOS BILL BILINGUAL BUDDIES





INGÜES

West View Elementary School's dual-language program teaches curricula in both English and Spanish. **Chris Huber** talks with administrators, students and parents about the program and its impact. Photos by **Chris Huber**. Design by **Elana Bean**.

As students trickle in through the double doors at West View Elementary School in Burlington, many of them head for Room 116, Mrs. Lopez's class. Twenty-eight first-graders from English and Spanish speaking backgrounds huddle on the rug in front of a rolling whiteboard with giant lined paper attached to it. The bell rings to announce the beginning of the school day. Most, if not all, of the antsy 6- and 7-year-olds have found their places, sitting cross-legged, scrunched together shoulder to shoulder. A buzz of youthful energy resonates from the group in a mix of laughter and random words in Spanish and English.

Today is Spanish Day.

Anything teachers and students say to one another during transition periods, such as recess and lunch, and between the passing bells must be spoken in Spanish. Tomorrow they will use English.

"¿Cómo empezamos el día?" asks María Moreno, a full-time instructional assistant.

They start by writing the day, the month and the year on the board. "Hoy es miércoles, el 12 de abril, 2006," she writes in big, orange letters on the board.

Moreno calls on Rachel Omdal, near the back, speaking to her only in Spanish. Rachel attempts to explain with her limited vocabulary that she will be starting Girl Scouts next week, but she soon defaults to her native language, English. All the while, Moreno repeats in Spanish what Rachel says. This helps the class learn the parallels between the two languages without confusing one with the other. They gradually discern the meaning of a Spanish word in English by repetition and word association, teacher Valerie Lopez says.

Multi-colored bilingual signs, labels and posters cover every inch of the classroom. They even hang from the lights, designating specific learning centers, such as the "computers/computadoras," "art/arte" and "listening/escuchando" stations.

In effect since the 2004-2005 academic year, West View's dual-language program has become somewhat of a focal point of the Burlington-Edison School District.

"It's the program that provides the greatest amount of hope for improvement," Principal Craig Madsen says. "The other thing that just floors me all the time is [the students'] language acquisition."

The program has become popular in Washington as studies have proved the effectiveness of teaching core curricula in two languages, starting at the elementary level.

Elementary schools in Yakima, Olympia, Manson and Seattle have already implemented the dual-language model to accommodate the trends in immigrant and transitional populations in the state.



Above: First-graders Amayrani Sanchez and Francisco Sanchez, native Spanish-speakers, work on a writing exercise.
Above right: First-grader David Lopez looks to teacher Lynda Gonzales for support during morning reading time.
Below: Surrounded by books, Allison Segura, (left), and Rachel Omdal react to a passage in "The Big Surprise."



Schools that use this program tend to improve the test performance and subject comprehension of native speakers of both languages, according to Wayne P. Thomas and Virginia Collier's School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students study in 2001.

West View's school counselor, Diane Sue, heads the dual-language team. She says the program is modeled after nearly 50 similar programs that Dr. Richard Gómez, Washington state director of bilingual and migrant programs, implemented while he was director in Texas.

She says this program is best for a school like West View because more than half of its 470 students are Hispanic.

Sue says a variety of program models exist, but since West View has such an even linguistic and cultural mix of students, its goal is for each of the 151 students enrolled in the program to be bilingual and biliterate when they complete the fifth-grade.

Part of the reason students can learn certain subjects in their second language is the bilingual buddy system. Every two weeks, the first-graders choose a classmate who speaks the other language fluently. For example: Jackie, a Spanish-native, picks Rachel, an English-native, and Miguel picks Adam. They are each other's "expert," helping the other with class work they may not completely comprehend.

The bilingual buddy system is used for math, which is only taught in English, and science and social studies, which are always taught in Spanish. Sue says the aim is to have zero translation in any subject area.

During the yearlong planning period before the program began, administrators faced skepticism from some native-English-speaking parents, Sue says.

"[Parents said], 'Will my child fall behind in science and social studies if they're totally taught in Spanish?'" Sue says. "The answer is we make that information available to them."

Sue says that few parents opted their children out of the program, which requires a five-year commitment, before it started.

"When they come in [to the district], they know it's a bilingual program and they're very aware of the program," she says.

Rocio Michel, the mother of first-grader Erik Michel, says she has noticed the change in her son's learning abilities since the beginning of the program. She says Erik has made new friends through the bilingual buddy system, and he demonstrates much of his abilities in both languages at home.

"[El programa] significa mucho en nuestra vida," Rocio Michel says. "[Erik] convive con niños Mexicanos y Americanos o que hablan español o inglés."

She says her son gets along well with Mexican and American classmates who speak English and Spanish, and the program means a lot to their family.

With the first two years of the program nearly finished, Sue speaks confidently of the progress the school as a whole has made.

"We've just been getting great feedback because the parents see the progress," she says.

The only program of its type north of Seattle, West View's success has caught the attention of the neighboring Mount Vernon School District, Sue says. Administrators at Madison Elementary School are in the planning stages for implementing the same system, starting at the kindergarten and first-grade level during the first year.

During their writing time after recess, Miguel Gomez and Adam

Manrique glue squares of paper with Spanish vocabulary words next to corresponding drawings.

Lopez lingers near two buddies who need help focusing, while Adam scatters blue memory cards across the desk and waits for Miguel to begin playing. They collect the cards within a minute or two. Miguel is the expert here, but Adam recites the words in Spanish as he picks up each pair of pictures.

Down the hall, Lopez's partner teacher, Lynda Gonzales, reads with two students on the floor as Rachel and buddy Allison Segura, sitting among a pile of books, react to a passage in "The Big Surprise."

Soon both classrooms will empty and 52 hungry first-graders will scamper down the hall to the lunch room. Lopez and Gonzales talk about the program's effects on cultural barriers in the classroom.

"They see each other in their language," Gonzales says. "There's a big emphasis on working together."

Lopez says she is happy to be working in this kind of program. The children feel successful instead of frustrated by the learning style in which they have been immersed since kindergarten.

"The kids are benefiting tremendously," Lopez says. "There's such a cohesiveness working."

Although the program is slated to show results by helping to raise Washington Assessment of Student Learning scores and overall academic performance at West View, Madsen says school administrators have only anecdotal evidence of the budding students' comprehension. Administrators can look at the progress of the students through their own observation, but they have no official statistics yet.

When the students take the WASL in the fourth grade, the district will have tangible results to work with, Madsen says.

In the meantime, teachers and family members of enrolled students continue to see progression among the kindergarten, first- and second-graders.

Oscar Morales-Rivera, a senior at Burlington-Edison High School and brother of kindergartener Julie Rivera-Hernandez, says he noticed his sister's improvement immediately. Julie is not focused solely on learning English, as Oscar was when he took English as a second language classes, he says.

"What I was busy trying to learn was English," he says. "I was just playing catch-up for a couple of years."

When asked where he sees the dual-language program in five years, Madsen says he hopes the district will have adopted a plan to implement the system into the middle-school curriculum. He says the district should feel obligated to the opportunity to continue cross-cultural and bilingual education after the fifth grade.

Even if the district chooses not to continue the program through middle school and high school, Madsen says the same students who are in the program now will choose to remain at West View, thus making it a school of choice. Parents will seek out this program for their children's benefit.

Lopez and Gonzales, along with Madsen and Sue, say they see the program working in powerful ways. Their students are becoming bilingual and biliterate, and at the same time they are learning to honor diversity, to value teamwork and to transcend stereotypes and cultural borders.

As Gabino Maclovio and Rachel finish gluing the arms on their paper cut-out hugging earth during bilingual buddy time, their classmates hustle to cut out the last hand and clean up their table.

Moreno announces that the room is not tidy enough for anyone to go home, and suddenly half of the students dive under their desks, searching for every last bit of paper and trash. Moreno voices her satisfaction and everyone lines up at the door.

On her cue, the class sings.

"Adiós amigos, adiós my friends. Hasta la vista, until we meet again," they chant as a goodbye to substitute teacher Donna Harlow.

"¡Vámonos, hasta mañana!" Moreno shouts as they spill into the hallway on their way to the buses.

To students like Julie, this was just another day at school. But to her big brother, it was another day of progress for her future.

"It used to be 'read to me,' now it's 'read with me,' " Morales-Rivera says. 🌟



Left: Bilingual buddies Rachel Omdal and Gabino Maclovio finish coloring a paper earth.

Below: As students file out of their classrooms, the sign on the wall is a reminder of which language to speak during lunch and recess.



Players



COACH

Above: Sehome High School baseball head coach Gary Hatch watches the field with the rest of his team.

Above right: Hatch checks his roster and scorecard during a game against Bellingham High School. PHOTOS BY CHRIS HUBER

With the count at one ball and one strike and 12,000 eager college-baseball fans on the edge of their seats, Gary Hatch anxiously steps back into the batter's box and focuses on the pitcher. The first baseman from Brigham Young University may appear rattled, but he has faced this pitcher before and knows exactly which pitch is coming next.

Thirty-five years later, Hatch sits in the coaches' office at Sehome High School and recites the memory from the 1971 College World Series as if it happened yesterday. On this sunny spring morning, he slowly puts on his practice shoes while he tells stories of his glory days as a baseball player and prepares for another day of coaching the Sehome High School baseball team.

Hatch has preached hard work and hustle since he ended his play-

ing career and began coaching at Sehome in 1973.

"We can all hustle if kids can just understand that it's not an ego thing," Hatch says firmly. "That's just the way the game is played."

Hatch says he grew up in Bellingham and learned to play the sport he loves during neighborhood pickup games. From the time he was 12, he knew he was interested in coaching. Throughout high school he worked as a little-league coach, making \$1 an hour.

"The kids today are no different from when I first started," Hatch says as his current players filter into the locker room. "They are absolutely the same, but they need discipline. Sometimes they don't realize it, but they appreciate it once it's stuck in there."

After Hatch graduated from high school, the legendary college baseball coach Glen Tuckett offered him a scholarship to play baseball at BYU. As first baseman, Hatch's hustle was exemplified at BYU because he had to overcome a serious football injury to keep his spot

in the lineup. A quarterback on the high school team, Hatch suffered a dislocated knee that nearly ended his playing career in both sports.

"I was a player that knew I had to go 100 miles an hour every day," Hatch says as he clamps his weathered hands around his left knee. "I had to push myself because there was always going to be someone faster than me because of this darn thing."

Hatch feeds his ambition from his playing days into his players' young minds in hope that the hard work and hustle will carry over.

"The competitiveness he instills in us is something we will be able to use for the rest of our lives," Sehome senior pitcher Michael Cozad says. "We all have to compete to play."

Doug Melland, another senior player for Sehome, says the preparation Hatch requires is intense.

"He makes you prepare for everything," Melland says. "You have to accomplish something every day."

The competitive spirit comes out once again in Hatch when he describes his favorite at-bat in the '71 College World Series. Down three runs, the junior from Bellingham was called to pinch hit against the defending national champions, the University of Southern California Trojans.

Hatch says Tuckett, the BYU coach, remembered that Hatch hit this particular pitcher well earlier in the season. After working the count to one ball and one strike, Hatch stepped out of the box and smiled to himself.

"I knew he was going to come back at me with that goofy little slider on the outside corner, and I was going to drill it," Hatch says as he demonstrates a slow-motion swing.

The bat made a loud crack after he guessed right, and the white pearl of a baseball soared through the early-summer night sky. The ball clunked against the left-center-field wall and Hatch stood on second base after two BYU runners touched home plate.

"I cannot remember running to second base," Hatch says. "It was a blur. It was such a tremendous thing — the adrenaline, the excitement and all of that."

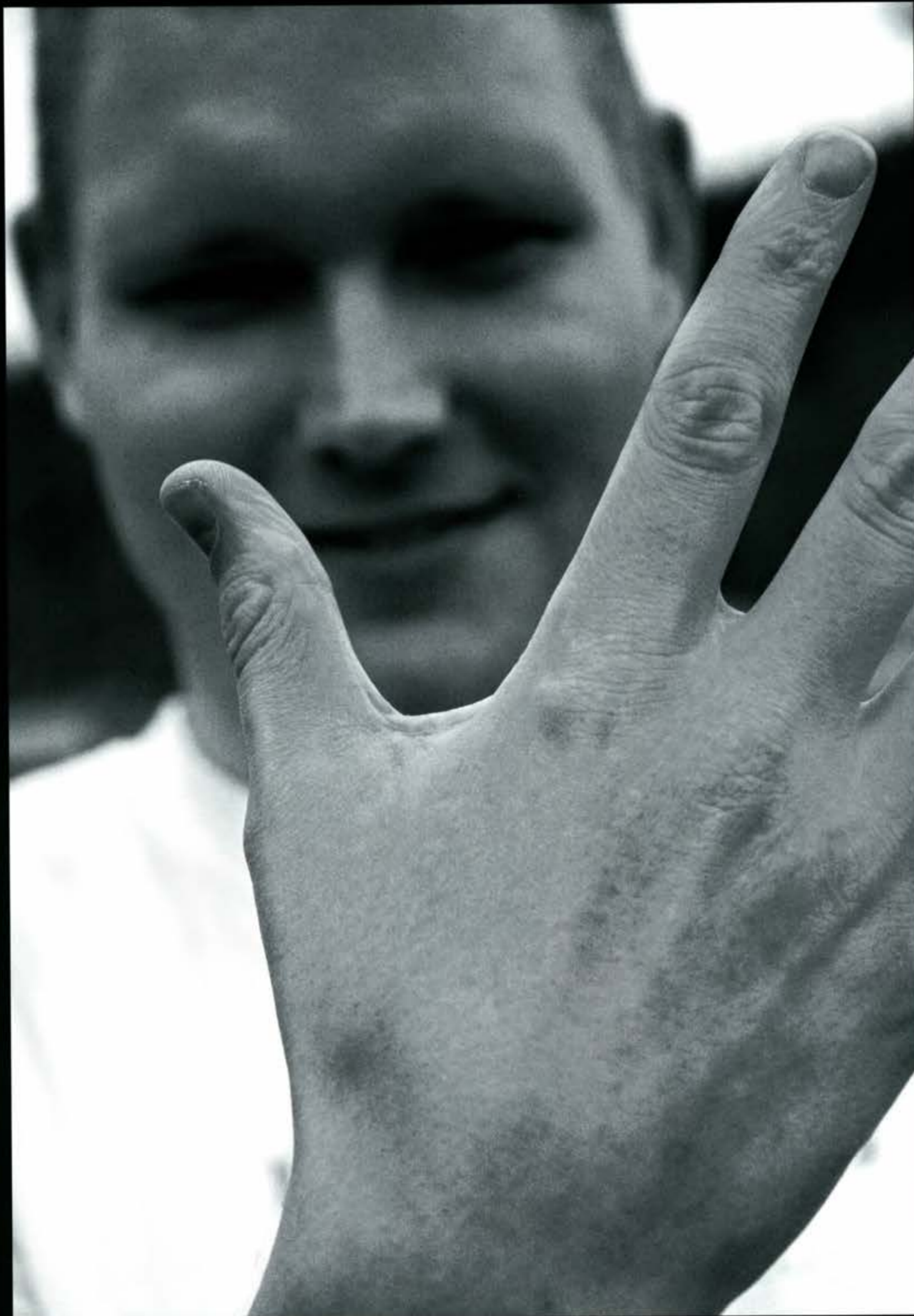
His players sometimes refer to Hatch as "old school." He says that hard work and hustle are on the decline in baseball. But, as long as Hatch is at Sehome, those two aspects of baseball remain as well.

—Andrew Irvine

Right: Sehome High School baseball head coach Gary Hatch watches the field at Sehome High School.



WASVE



Bellingham entrepreneur Amal Graafstra has chips implanted in each hand that allow him to perform daily tasks with a hand gesture using radio frequency identification.

of the **FUTURE**

Microchips implanted under people's skin to perform remedial tasks such as opening doors and booting up laptops seem like the plotline from a science-fiction novel or a movie set in the future. **Adriana Dunn** finds out that for Bellingham resident Amal Graafstra, the future is now. Photos by **Jared Yoakum**. Design by **Megan Lum**.

With just a wave of his left hand, Bellingham entrepreneur Amal Graafstra can unlock his car and apartment doors without turning a key and can log in to his home computers without ever touching the keyboard.

An implanted chip the size of a grain of rice allows him to put virtual keys in his gesture using radio frequency identification, a technology that has been around for years. The 1/4-inch-long chip is visible to the eye and can be felt under the skin. Graafstra has two implants — one in each hand, located between the thumb and index finger.

Veterinarians have used the technology to chip animals to ensure that a lost pet can be returned to its owner, and for more than a decade livestock have been implanted with RFID chips because it is cheaper than branding or tagging. Only recently have people found applications for it in their daily lives, and some have even started implanting it under the skin.

Jennifer Tomblin, 23, who has been dating Graafstra, 29, for two years, says she was hesitant to get chipped because she didn't know what health risks were involved or what could be done with the chip. Graafstra then started projects with practical uses such as logging in to the computer, unlocking the doors to his 2004 Volkswagen GTI and opening his safe.

She says she realized that the chances of the glass capsule shattering are slim to none and decided to get implanted in December 2005. She says the amount of pressure it would take to shatter the capsule would be enough to break the bones in her hand.

"He got his done at least a year before I got mine," Tomblin says. "I didn't think I'd ever get it."

She now has access to his apartment and car as well as her apartment. The couple splits their time between Bellingham and Vancouver, B.C.

Is it just a short time before couples who would have given each other keys to their houses just get each other chipped?

Graafstra doesn't think so. He says biometric technology, such as retinal scanning and fingerprint recognition, will likely be used in the future in place of keys.

Graafstra installed a sensor on the passenger side of the windshield of his silver Volkswagen so that when his hands are full, he simply moves his hand within two inches and it unlocks, without his having to dig for keys.

The technology has become inexpensive and easy to use, and the range of chip readers has increased, allowing for more experimentation.

The chips were implanted by Dr. Virginia Stevens of Woodinville, who also implanted Phillip Beynon last month for a demonstration at a Seattle Dorkbot event, in which local electronic-arts enthusiasts exchange ideas. Beynon says she first disinfected and numbed his hand, then inserted an injector needle in the flesh between his index finger and thumb. Stevens, a cosmetic doctor at the Hypatia Clinic, then implanted the chip and removed the needle. Beynon says the procedure took about five minutes and was nearly painless.

Beynon, an electronics student at Vancouver Community College, set up his Windows-based computer to read his chip. He completed the process in less than an hour.

His second project, an RFID-enabled lock for his vintage briefcase, was more complicated.

Beynon says he hopes to eventually store data such as files, programs and MP3s on the chip once the storage capacity increases from 64 bits. He says Europeans have been early adopters of the human-implantable chips. He estimates that 8,000 people have been implanted worldwide, 85 of whom reside in the United States.

"It's very much to each his own," Beynon says. "I think my generation is a lot more re-



These quarter-inch chips can be implanted under the skin between the index finger and thumb.

ceptive to it. However, I don't think it will ever be adopted by my parents' generation."

Beynon says beginning or intermediate computer users can use RFID in their daily lives.

"The day is rapidly approaching when you're going to see consumer-grade products for your front door and stuff like that, but right now it's more in the hobbyist realm," Graafstra says.

Graafstra's book "RFID Toys: 11 Cool Projects for Home, Office and Entertainment" was released in February by Wiley Publishing.

Previously, all literature on the subject discussed implementation in business, such as how to buy a system for a small business or how to track inventory, but Graafstra wrote his for a niche market. People with no previous experience can pick up his book and

learn how to use the technology by following his step-by-step instructions.

"There's no book out there, except for this one, that covers the hacker, hobbyist, do-it-yourself community," Graafstra says.

He first had the idea to get implanted while working at his previous job, where he frequently carried large servers in and out of buildings. He did server and site management for medical companies and constantly fumbled with his "jailer's key ring" jammed with keys.

ExxonMobil uses this same technology in its SpeedPass, which allows customers to pay for gas using a key fob. Other uses include key cards for building access and payment at exclusive clubs such as the Baja Beach Club in Barcelona, Spain. Several states, including Massachusetts, New York, Virginia, Maine and Illinois, use it as a fast payment method at bridge tolls.

Radio frequency identification systems consist of three parts — an antenna, a transponder or tag that has been programmed with the data, and a receiver that can interpret the data.

To be implantable in humans, a biocompatible glass capsule surrounds the tiny coil and silicon chip, where the information is stored. Graafstra chose the EM4102 chip, manufactured by EM Microelectronics, because it's inexpensive and finding the reader hardware is easy. The reader for the EM4102-type RFID chip costs \$40 to \$60, and the chips themselves cost \$2 to \$5. Benyon says the cost to implant the chip is about the same as a regular doctor's office visit.

The chips in Graafstra's hands are visible to the eye and move around with ease. He says the EM4102 is uncoated, unlike the implantable chips being marketed by VeriChip Corp. for medical uses, including implanting dementia and Alzheimer's disease patients.

The VeriChip implant, which was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2004, uses a porous substance on half of the capsule to ensure the chip doesn't move around after being implanted, Graafstra says. The muscle and skin tissues create a bond with that area, preventing movement.

Benyon, Graafstra and Tomblin made the choice to have the chips implanted, but soon American passports will be chipped with RFID, which some critics say can pose a threat to privacy.

Since those implanted are using their own nonstandardized systems, Doug Klunder, privacy project director at the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington, says he doesn't see any problem with individual applications of RFID.

He says that the ACLU does take issue with government-issued forms of identification that include RFID and any other large-scale-operations use that would allow the pos-

Is it just a short time before couples who would have given each other keys to their houses will just get each other chipped?

sibility of being tracked.

"Since RFID is the hot technology of the day, there is going to be a push to include it in various forms of ID," Klunder says.

The REAL ID act, which Congress passed in 2005, requires states to change driver's licenses so they are equipped to share information between states.

One requirement is the use of a common machine-readable technology in licenses, which could be in the form of a two-dimensional barcode such as those on Washington state licenses, a magnetic stripe like those on credit cards, or an RFID chip.

"You might as well just be walking around displaying your driver's license on your forehead all the time," Klunder says.

The possibility of stolen identities also exists with the new American passports, Klunder says, in which the state department is planning to incorporate a form RFID by the end of this year.

He says legislation is needed to protect individuals from these potential invasions of privacy.

Rep. Toby Nixon introduced House Bill 2521 in the Washington state House of Representatives in 2005 that would have prohibited the use of RFID in government-issued documents. The ACLU assisted Nixon in drafting the bill and testified in its support, but the bill failed to get out of the Technology, Energy and Communications Committee.

He said the ACLU will work with legislators again this session to try to stop the widespread use before it becomes more popular.

Klunder says biometrics and RFID should be concerning to the public.

"In both instances, what you have is the standardized government use of characteristics, possibly for surveillance purposes, opening up the possibility of identity theft," he says.

Graafstra says that this kind of Orwellian society where people are tracked is more possible with biometric technology than RFID.

If people have a choice whether to carry the chip, Benyon says, he doesn't see any problem.

"I'm not willing to put my personal information on my chip," he says. "It all comes down to that — how it's used and what's stored on it."

Graafstra says he isn't worried about his applications of the technology.

"The bottom line comes down to me actually taking control of the technology instead of the other way around," he says. 🌟



Amal Graafstra points out the details of the RFID reader he adapted for his computer.

Baker's NEW BREAKFAST COOKIE



PHOTO BY JAMIE BADILLA

A traditional American breakfast table is covered with plates of pancakes, eggs and bacon. Times have changed because cookies can be added to the list of breakfast foods. Baker's Breakfast Cookie, a Bellingham-based company, replaces conventional breakfast meals with cookies that hold more nutrients than typical breakfast foods. The cookies also act as a meal replacement and diet aid, says Erin Baker, 35, president and CEO of Baker's Breakfast Cookie.

Baker says she chose the cookies as her business because she noticed there were many coffee shops in Washington state, but none of them carried a tasty, low-fat cookie. The initial inspiration for Baker's Breakfast Cookies was Baker's knowledge and concern about the health of America. Her cookies can be found across the country now.

"People are eating unhealthy food or lack thereof, especially at breakfast," Baker says. "I wanted to make something that was healthy.

I didn't want to contribute to the disease and the obesity in this country. I wanted to contribute to the health of the country. So I created a product

that was actually healthy but good tasting. Tasting good was very important."

Baker compares her breakfast cookies to a candy bar. She says a candy bar is equivalent to a match — it's in you, it's out of you and its job is done. She says Baker's Breakfast Cookies are more similar to a Duraflame log.

Western senior Anna Jewel Miller, 21, says she eats the cookies often because they not only are delicious but sustain her through long days on campus. Miller has seen the cookies throughout town and on campus for a while, but on a recent trip across the country, she noticed the cookies in an airport and realized the popularity they had gained.

Baker created the cookies while living on Whidbey Island. She opened her first accounts with Whidbey Coffee Company, Star Store & Mercantile and Mukilteo Coffee.

"At the time I wanted to expand, my mom was living in Bellingham. I relocated because there were a lot of potential places to sell to in Bellingham," Baker says.

The company now employs 50 staff members at the headquarters on Meridian Street, which houses the bakery store and factory.

"We went from a lot of employees and no equipment to a lot of equipment and less employees," Baker says.

Thirteen original flavors have filled shelves since the company opened. Flavors such as apple pie and banana walnut are an adequate breakfast substitute because they contain balanced amounts of daily recommended proteins, fats and carbohydrates that the Food and Drug Administration recommends, Baker says. But the secret to the cookie is prunes.

"Prunes act as a superfood," she says. "They are the magic ingredient in my cookie. They preserve and add an amazing amount of antioxidants. You get a ton of iron from prunes and they replace butter and dairy ingredients that are normally in cookies."

Baker says she tries to accommodate to people who don't regularly eat healthy, when developing products.

"I am not too concerned with people who shop at the co-op because they already have the health thing figured out. I am trying to reach someone who pulls up to the latte stand and is used to buying a muffin," Baker says

Baker explains that a muffin is sheet cake in a muffin cup.

"When consumers think of muffins, they think it's healthy. I am trying to get those people who are used to eating sugar and white flour for breakfast. It's like weaning

people off the junk," she says.

Customers at The Coffee Hound on Lincoln Street enjoy the cookies for breakfast.

"We sell a good amount of them daily," barista Raina Hlebachuk says. "We have carried Erin Baker's Breakfast Cookies at this stand since the company opened."

The future of Baker's Breakfast Cookies is promising as the company is changing packaging and adding to the product line.

Baker says she is lucky to do what she does.

"This business is my calling, I have no doubt about that," Baker says

"People are eating unhealthy food, or lack thereof, especially at breakfast."

—Erin Baker



Erin Baker, president and CEO of Baker's Breakfast Cookies

PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIN BAKER

—Kristen Larzelere

DEAD ALASKA

DEAD
ALASKA

“Ben! We’re sinking!”

Urgent screams pierce the quiet Alaska night on an anchored fishing boat. Leaden eyelids open. Fast. Peril. What’s going on?

Frantically, I peer out of my bunk and see Abe writhing below me, fighting with his blanket. He’s asleep. And shrieking.

“Ben! We’re sinking!”

“Not again,” I think as I soundproof my head in my pillow. “The things I go through to pay for college.”

Another night I might wager with the bemused crew whether Abe will sleepwalk or take slumbering swings at James in the bunk next door. But after 23 hours of hauling gear and unloading the catch, tonight I’m too tired, even for Abram Anderson LateNite Theatre. Seconds later, I’m asleep and back to dreaming of fish.

The good, clock-punching folks back home can’t fathom how Alaska tweaks the fishermen working her pristine waters. Alaska, they think — the rugged frontier, the romance of the sea, the shiny lure of hefty pay.

They cannot grasp the idolatrous fish dances, the spankings with fish tails, the nimbly interplaying profanity, the maniacal cackle of the slaughter.

Their ignorance is bliss. Dead-fish-puppet Macbeth productions are best left unwitnessed. The same goes for sleep-deprived debates on how to dispose of a human body. Some minds don’t wrap around snow angels warped into fish Gabriels on salmon-strewn decks.

Nobody wants to see the schism in a loved one’s mental landscape. In all jobs, the psyche follows a natural course. The fisherman’s meanders south.

Commercial fishing is about thresholds. After fishing 10-week seasons in southeast Alaska for eight summers, I can pinpoint my breaking points with researched precision. The gap between lunch and dinner widens during a 20-hour workday, and I get crabby at eight hours without eating. Around hour 14 of hauling gear, I get the tired giggles. The first twinges of lunacy flash around noon on the third straight fishing day. Mental

“The bathtardth,” he said, holding his bleeding tongue, “have tharp theeth.”

fractures show around week six, when my equally neurotic crew members no longer respond to observations that salmon mouths look softer every passing day. They see no reason to acknowledge the obvious.

I also numb to the killing. We sell pinks for 10 cents a pound, and my crew share is 8 percent. Fall tuition is paid by spilling 42,500 humpies across the deck, their lidless black eyes staring, gills dry-heaving. Life is as precious as its market value.

But I appreciate the lives I’m taking. Like vintners at the vine, fishers develop a deep rapport with their quarry. As per custom, the first salmon of the season is returned to the sea. Yet, at times what anthropologists classify the hunter-gatherer relationship with fish overreaches into the physical realm. In a bag of 1,000 gator-green chum

salmon, the single ocean-bright sockeye, with that sleek racing stripe down its trim side, looks mighty sexy. Once, crewman James Perez of Bellingham cut himself French-kissing a

humpy. “The bathtardth,” he said, holding his bleeding tongue, “have tharp theeth.”

As in any courtship, salmon demand wooing. Singing to the fish is tried and true, especially show tunes. Sometimes the tough love, “Get your skinny tail into this net RIGHT NOW” approach is appropriate. If that fails, try cooing, “Baby, you know Daddy didn’t mean it. Come back. Come on back into the net. I need you.” However, fish often settle for nothing less than old-fashioned dirty talk far unsuitable for these urbane pages. Especially chum salmon.

After each fishing season, I’m always afraid I won’t make the social jump back into the mainstream. Red jellyfish in the eye stings, but civility is excruciating. The transition is sudden, and few understand how sanity blurs in Alaska. They spend summers home in Normalville to wait tables and mow lawns. I migrate north because I can’t.

So we fishers return home knowing some stories will never leave our crude fraternity. I think that’s what Abe was getting at when he stood in his sleep one night, his blanket shrouding his gangly frame like a Halloween sheet ghost. In one awkward lurch, Abe ripped off the blanket, pulled the light string, awoke and, with eyes wide, stared at me.

“Dude, don’t worry,” he said as if I were the ridiculous one. “I won’t tell anybody.”

He never did.

—Zach Kyle



Left above: James Perez executes a perfect fish angel. Left: Ben Kyle, James Perez (behind net) and Zach Kyle strike a pose while hauling gear. PHOTOS COURTESY OF ZACH KYLE



balancing

with

FIRE

Everything revolves around firefighting for the young volunteers at District 10. **Lorean Serko** catches up with three men fulfilling their dreams and making Whatcom County safer. Photos by **Jamie Badilla**. Design by **Megan Lum**.

The constant beeping of the pager reverberates in the head of Mark Mellein, 22, at 2 a.m. one weekday morning. He springs from the warmth of his sheets and begins his routine as a rush of adrenaline takes over his body. Mellein tries to put his gear on straight and make it out the door in an efficient manner, all while paying attention to the voices coming from his pager. He must listen closely to assess

the situation he is about to face.

When he arrives on the scene of the heart-attack call, he takes vital signs, administers oxygen and tries to calm the patient. The paramedics arrive, and Mellein assists them by riding with the patient in the ambulance. After the patient makes it safely to the hospital, medics compliment Mellein on his knowledge and thank him for helping save a life, Mellein says.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Mellein, a Western senior, became involved with Whatcom County Fire District 10 a year and a half ago as a volunteer firefighter.

"I absolutely love serving my community," he says. "Doing something that I have a passion for is not something that a lot of people can say they do on a daily basis."

Mellein's uncle and grandfather were firefighters with the Seattle Fire Department, and Mellein decided he would volunteer to find out what firefighting was all about. He says volunteering is the best way to learn about the lifestyle of firefighting and give back to the community.

Volunteer firefighters often are forced to balance busy schedules. This is no different for Mellein. A typical winter-quarter

day included classes from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., homework and eating from 1 to 3 p.m., track practice from 3 to 6 p.m., emergency medical technician training from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. and then a shift at the fire station from 9:30 p.m. through the night.

"Staying busy is how I stay focused," he says. "I find if I stay focused on what's ahead of me, I get things done. If it's track practice, I only think about track, and so on. It's all about prioritizing."

Mellein is one of six firefighters with District 10 who are Western students. The district is 100 percent volunteer.

"Without us (young volunteers) this district would be nothing," Mellein says. "We are a young department but everyone has really stepped up and is learning the skills so fast."

after graduating from Western in June with a degree in business management.

Mellein estimates a single firefighting job nationwide typically will have 100 applicants.

"This is many people's dream job, which makes it insanely competitive," he says. "You have to do whatever you can to stand out against the competition, and you really have to have a passion for firefighting."

HOLDING A LIFE IN HIS HANDS

As he slips on his black aviator sunglasses, Western senior Pat Zemel, 22, does a last check of the gauges on the outside of the truck. As he fires up the rig, he turns with a large smile and says, "The aviators are key."

Zemel recently took a class and earned the right to drive the fire engine.

"Driving and turning on the lights and

"This is many people's dream job, which makes it insanely competitive."

Mellein's dream is to eventually make a career out of being a firefighter. He is interviewing with the Seattle Fire Department, which is where he hopes to land a job

sirens of the engine is an intense feeling," he says. "It's a rush that I can't explain."

Zemel, a 2002 graduate of Sehome High School, says that ever since he was 5 years old

Western students and volunteer firefighters Mark Mellein (left) and Pat Zemel drive the Whatcom County Fire District 10 fire truck.



he has dreamed of being a firefighter.

Zemel says he decided to study communication at Western because it gives him the necessary skills to relate to the public as a firefighter.

"Having a four-year degree and moving out of the volunteer system and into being a paid firefighter will be a big plus for me," he says. "It's a competitive market and you have to do what you can to get ahead."

Each volunteer firefighter is required to attend Whatcom County Fire Recruit Academy training, which is three months long and comprises 108 hours of in-class work as well as an eight-hour field training each Saturday. The field training involves real-life scenarios, he says. Volunteer firefighters get the same training as any full-time paid firefighter.

Volunteers also have the option of taking EMT training, a 128-hour course at Bellingham Technical College that involves the medical aspect of firefighting. In fall 2004, Zemel took the 11-credit course on top of his 12 credits at Western.

"Through volunteering, we are all gaining the necessary skills that it takes to make it in the competitive firefighting world," he says.

District 10 volunteers must be at least 18 years old, have a high school diploma or equivalent, sign a contract with District 10 for about a year, pass a drug test, take a physical agility test and attend 60 percent of the Monday-night trainings.

"Going on calls is exciting, but you always have to expect the unexpected," he says.

During the Monday-night trainings, volunteers practice scenarios they may face in the field. In District 10, firefighters take tours of locations within their boundaries, such as the radio station, and practice ways to attack a fire at that location.

"The likelihood of something happening is low, but we need to be prepared for any situation that may arise," Zemel says. "It's all about knowing your district in order to be prepared."

On top of volunteering with District 10 for about three years, Zemel works for Ace Beverage in Bellingham as a beer merchandiser and is a member of Western's club tennis team. On a busy day he works from 4 to 10 a.m., attends classes from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., goes to tennis practice from 4 to 6 p.m. and tries to fit in at least a one-hour workout, all while keeping his ears open for when his pager may go off and he goes on call for District 10.

"Balancing my ridiculous schedule seems



Above: Mellein detaches a hose after participating in a drill at the Whatcom County Fire District 10.

Right: Mellein prepares his self-contained breathing apparatus in less than 60 seconds.

to be my biggest struggle these days," he says.

District 10, which is located on Yew Street, receives an average of 10 calls per month, he says. Calls range from fires to medical emergencies. In recent months, District 10 has worked with Districts 2 and 9, in Sudden Valley and Lake Samish, responding to calls.

"With that few calls, there is a lot of sitting around," he says. "It gives us more to do when we are able to work with other districts."

While Zemel was sitting in his living room one evening, he recalls his pager, began to sound. As he jumped in his car, the dispatcher over the pager said, "woman, 35 years old at the Agape House, contractions five minutes apart." At that moment, Zemel says, all he could think about was all the training he had gotten and how he was going to handle the situation he was about to face. He thought about how exciting it might be to help deliver a baby.

FULFILLING HIS DESTINY

Volunteer firefighter Josh McBride, 22, has been with District 10 for one year and says his dream is to be a career firefighter.

McBride works at the Silver Reef Casino as a security officer and an EMT. He says he spends about 30 hours per week at the station and on calls for District 10. He says that if he receives a call while on the job at Silver Reef, he usually drops everything to go help.

"Firefighting is my number one prior-



ity," he says.

The Bellingham native attended Skagit Valley College in its fire-protection program before joining District 10. He says that he always knew he wanted to be a firefighter.

"Helping others is what I was raised to do," McBride says. "I am basically just fulfilling my destiny."

McBride, who is the equipment manager and vice president of the firefighters of District 10, says he enjoys having Western students involved with firefighting at the station.

"Western students bring a different personality and ideas to our team," he says. "They all come from different areas and backgrounds, which makes us a unique and diverse group." ❖



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