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Towey, Laura, "Klipsun Magazine, 1987 - September" (1987). *Klipsun Magazine*. 91.
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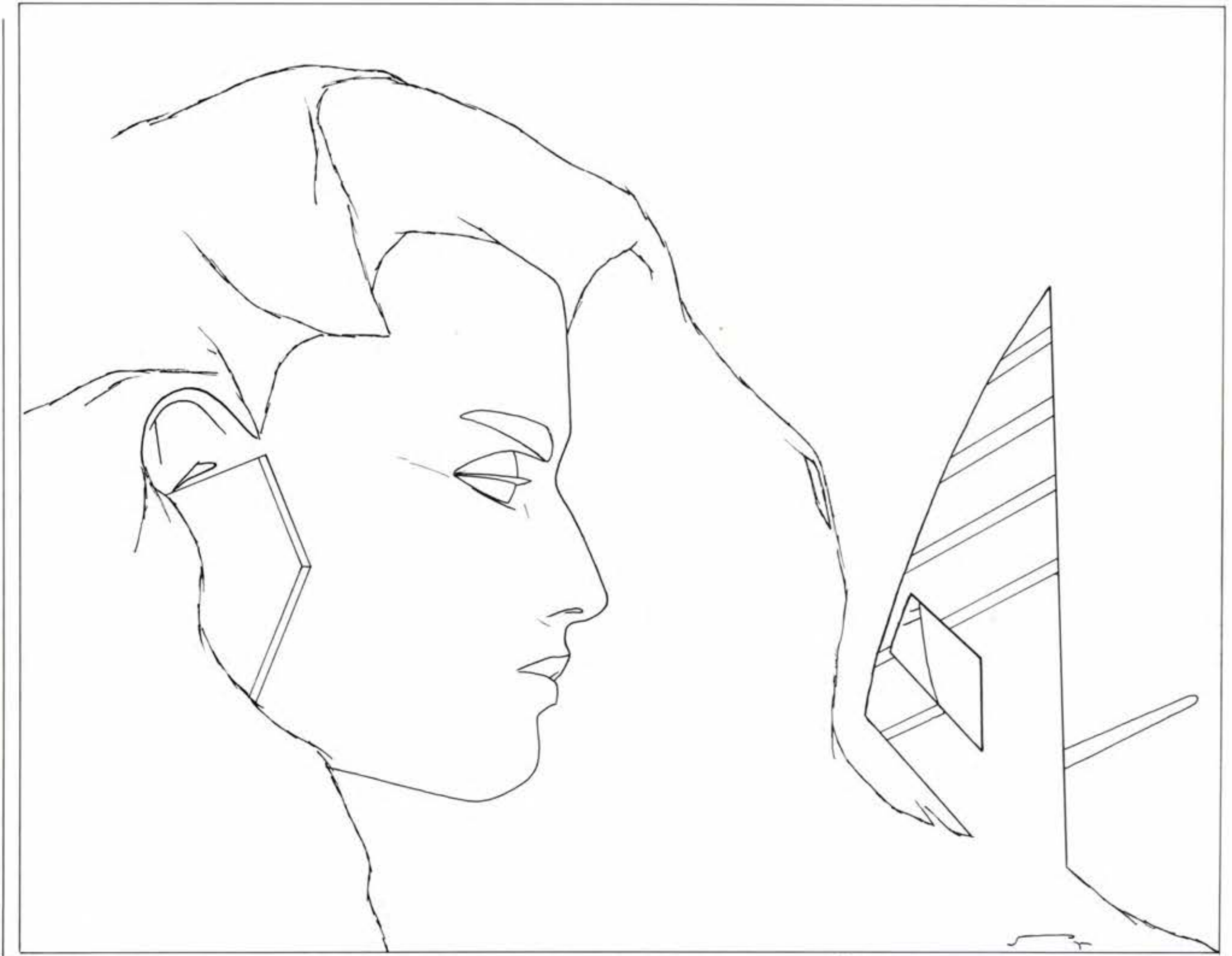
KLIPSUN

September 1987



CHANDLER LEACH

*MEET WESTERN'S CYCLING
SENSATION.*



Byron Mucke

September 1987

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Klipsun is a Lummi Indian word meaning
"beautiful sunset."

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Klipsun magazine is printed by the WWU Print Plant, published twice-quarterly out of College 137, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225, (206) 676-3737. Klipsun is supported by student fees and is distributed free.

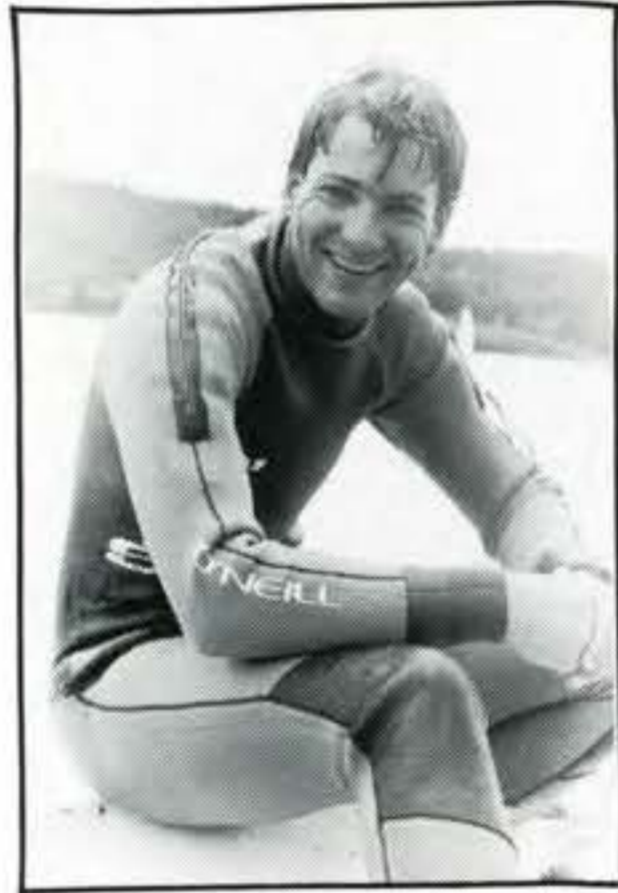


Special thanks to Doug Smith and Betsy Pernotto for their photographs of Nicaragua, Laura Boynton for the No-Doz-Broz pictures, Clay Norwegian for inspiring us uptight journalists, and the King Frog Photo guys.

KLIPSUN

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Cover photos by Pete Kendall



Erik Hauge works to control a board during a gusty race on Lake Whatcom.

Pete Kendall

MAKING WAVES

Sailboard Crafters Discuss Their Art

BY KIM WASHBURN

Erik Hauge was nine years old when he built his first sailboat. It wasn't until his father launched him and his vessel into the water that Hauge realized he didn't know how to sail.

Since his mishap, Hauge learned to both sail and windsurf, and continues to build sailing vessels, including sailboards.

"It's easy to become addicted. You have to be careful or you'll sell everything you own just to get a new board," Hauge, 21, said.

To avoid wind-induced poverty and achieve the highest levels of personal performance and satisfaction, Hauge and several other Bellingham windsurfers design their own sailboards.

Wearing sweats and a T-shirt proclaiming "Sail Naked," Hauge, barefoot, moves around his cluttered apartment with casual assuredness. Fragile fiberglass-shell boards are carefully propped against blank walls in place of artwork. Hauge admits to sleeping with one of his boards because he fears for its safety elsewhere in the apartment. Each board Hauge builds has been for his personal use -- he designs for no one but himself.

But Bellingham native Derek Hilleary will build a board for anyone with the notion for customized windsurfing.

Hilleary, 30, who sports sun-bleached hair throughout the four seasons, originally built boards only for his brother and himself. Now owner

and manufacturer of Gale Force sailboards, he operates out of a boat shack at the Port of Bellingham's Fairhaven terminal. He shapes his boards behind a make-shift partition in a corner of the weather-beaten building, amidst boat carcasses buried in dust, plastic sheeting and fumes from his board-building materials.

The first sailboard Hilleary built five years ago took him a month-and-a-half to complete. "It's the more-you-make, the better-you-get-process, like

anything else," he said. Now he works with speed from experience and can produce between six and 10 boards a month, depending upon the elaborateness of each board -- and upon how many windy days lure him from work to water.

Like many other windsurfers in the area, Hilleary's addiction to the sport causes him to set aside everything and head for the water when conditions are right.

Derek Hilleary inspects each phase of production.



Brian Bean

"It's worse than any drug," he said. "You give up work, family, drive crappy cars, just to get out on a board."

The boards windsurfers ride are usually splashed with outrageously bright colors.

Hilleary prefers to work with fluorescent paints -- red, purple, yellow and green, which he splashes onto his board in wild designs. He favors the bright colors, which he says fade evenly with time and use.



Brian Bean

Each foam body blank is sanded down to a desired shape and length.

But Hilleary will set aside his day-glo preferences to make boards for any variety of customer specifications. He admits the colors are merely cosmetic and have nothing to do with sailing ability of the boards. It may have something to do with ability of the designer, however.

"I make my own shit and it's really ugly," Hauge said, describing the designs he creates. He explained that the resin and epoxy used to protectively coat the boards often produce mind-altering vapors. After a day spent shaping a board and working with the fume-producing substances, Hauge got a bit carefree and decided to fill syringes with paint, which he squirted haphazardly at the newly shaped board. One designer sailboard by Hauge.

A bit more professional with his color and design technology, Hilleary always wears a respirator when working on the boards.

"You got to, otherwise you die at the age of 40," he explained.

Before a custom sailboard is painted, however, it must be shaped. Custom board builders order prefabricated foam blanks which bear only an amorphous resemblance to the slim silhouettes of finished sailboards. The blanks come in various sizes and are shaped, planed and sanded down to the precise angles and size specified by the designer. Only when their shapes are thoroughly customized and they no longer are shapeless hulks of foam, are they given the personality of a paint job.

Hilleary's painting methods can be described as refined.

He carefully tapes off areas to be painted, similar to the process of taping off chrome and windows when painting a car. His *Gale Force* logo is strategically painted onto each board he produces.

After the paint is dry, fiberglass cloth is applied to the board and saturated with resin -- usually two layers on the bottom and four-and-a-half layers on the top of the board.

"I make my own shit and it's really ugly."

-- Eric Hauge --

The heavier coating is applied to the top because "Water is real forgiving, the body is not," Hilleary said, explaining that the movement of water has little effect on the board compared to the stressful toll the body takes on the finish.

Next, a coat of resin without fiberglass is applied over the entire board. The housings for the foot straps and fin are installed before the board is resanded. Another thin fiberglass coat is applied and then the board is lightly sanded and buffed. Finally, a non-skid surface is applied to the area where the rider will stand.

The shape and length of a board determines its use. The greater the volume of a board, the greater its flotation will be. The boards come in the categories of "short" and "long," with short boards ranging in length from eight- to nine-and-a-half feet, and long boards between 10- to 12-feet-five-inches. Short boards, known as "sinkers," require high winds to remain afloat. Because longer boards float better in slower winds, most people learn to sail on these.

Regardless of length, boards are made either from molds or shaped by hand. The molds used to form production boards are expensive to make, Hilleary said. Sailboard companies can produce more boards at a cheaper cost, but each company tends to market only a few of the mass-produced designs because of the cost of the molds. Production boards usually come with mast and sail and cost about \$395, Pete Nygren, owner of Washington Wind Sports, said.

Hilleary shapes each prefabricated foam body blank by hand to form a custom sailboard to suit the specific needs of its rider and doesn't shape boards over nine-and-a-half-foot long. When crafting a board, he considers the rider's experience in high wind and the sizes of any previous boards the customer has owned. Where the boards will be used is another factor in board size, because locations with high wind speeds are more ideal for shorter boards. Hilleary said custom sailboards range from \$595 to \$1500.



Brian Bean

Tools of the boardmakers' trade.

Boardsailers around Bellingham who design or shape their own boards are not building long boards for slow winds. They want short performance boards that will enable them to master high winds and the accompanying rough waves.

Jeff Davis, a former Fairhaven student who is now caretaker at



Derek Hilleary trims excess resin and fiberglass from one of his sailboards.

Brian Bean

Lakewood, has also built his own sailboards. He's been boardsailing for five years and owns four boards -- three he made and one he bought. Riding a board you have built or designed is different from riding a board you've had no hand in making, he said.

"It's difficult to make a good one, but not to make one you can use," he added.

Dressed in his insulated surfing gear, Davis padded impatiently around the boathouse deck at Lakewood, waiting for the wind to pick up so he could go out onto Lake Whatcom. He described boardsailing as, "...being in power of an overpowering force, sometimes...you balance a lot of force with finesse...it's a lifelong pursuit of that."

When asked what designs he splashes onto his boards, Davis shook his head covered with dark curls and replied, "Absolutely nothing. I really don't care for a lot of colors and designs on boards and sails." He attributes this attitude to his traditional sailing background of white sails on white boats.

Davis did make one board with cedar veneer across the top and was pleased to find it was functional as well as decorative. The veneer was on the part of the board where he stood and held up well against the pounding and stress he exerted on it.

To build a board to his specifications, Davis measured boards, similar to what he thought he wanted, and also read books and magazines to get design ideas. He then bought the

materials, including a foam body that roughly resembled the dimensions of the finished board he wanted. It took some work, but he was pleased with the results.

Paul Greene, an environmental studies major who graduated from Western in 1987, lives in an apartment stocked with equipment for almost every sport ever invented. Like Hauge, he's carefully decorated his home with gear; skis, snowboard, sailboard and sails, a bike, wet and dry suits for windsurfing, and posters clutter the rooms. His outgoing charcoal-gray alley cat sleeps amid the equipment. Green's white Volkswagon van was bought to accommodate his windsurfing addiction and equipment. He has been through all the stages of windsurfing, including sponsored racing, and is now content to own only one board -- a board he helped design.

"I built myself a board I'd be happy with in all conditions." He said he doesn't like to boardsail unless the wind is blowing 20 knots (about 25 mph). His eight-foot-three-inch board was designed to maximize those conditions.

Greene, 26, who has been windsurfing for five years, designed his board by reading about windsurfing technology and applying his personal experience. He created the designs and arranged to have three boards built for him by a board crafter from Sun Valley, Idaho.

The vibrantly colored board Greene sails took about a month to complete. "There's quite a bit of menial labor involved," he said. But

even the menial labor must be performed with exactness. As a result, he's had help applying thin layers of fiberglass, which protect the board's inner foam body.

"I had the concept of what I wanted, but didn't have the hands with 17 years of experience."

All the boards Greene has had designed for himself have been distinct. He said he has frequent offers from people wanting to buy his boards and believes the designs are the reasons why. "Each is unique, all have stunning paint jobs."

Davis said professional boards can weigh as little as 12 to 15 pounds, but his weigh about 20. Lighter boards are better performers, but weight is not a major factor, he said. Davis has used expensive materials, but doesn't think the quality of his boards is equal to the boards built by people with more experience. He isn't disappointed by this. "Trying to make a real light board can be expensive -- especially for one that'll last awhile," he said.

"I don't feel bad about not getting everything that I should, the money that I get from working goes into play. For what I've got -- for the kind of things I can do and the places I can go -- I can do much more than a person with a Hobie on a trailer."

The range of available board and sail sizes means the boards have a wide range of abilities, limited only by the rider's skill level, desire and interest. Although Greene owns three sails to cover the variable wind speeds, he says he doesn't sail in light winds.

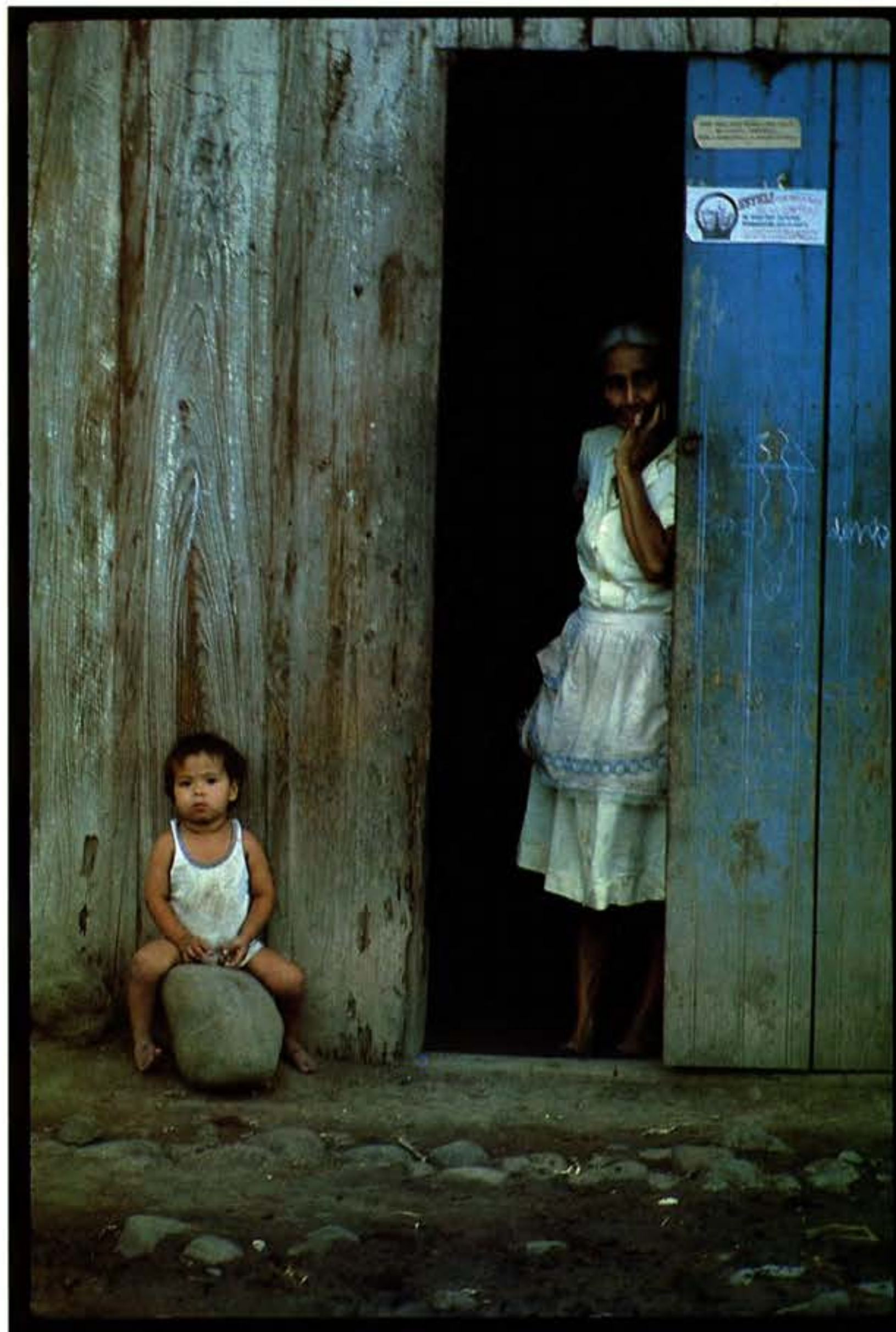
"If I just resolve myself to only going out when it's really windy, it's less expensive and more fun," Greene said. "All my equipment is kind of a compromise to make me do the best thing. It can get pretty complicated."

Plenty of boardsailers around Bellingham would rather sail than race, and are unconcerned with competing against anything besides the elements.

"A boardhead will do anything for wind and water. It doesn't matter if it's snowing, I'll still go sailing. I do it 'cause it's fun," Hauge said.

He said he likes windsurfing independently because "(It) is more spiritual just to go out there without the pressures of racing.

"Playing around, you can sail six hours until you die. Wave sailing on the coast is spiritual, a big adrenaline rush. Freeze your ass off, but it'll keep you high for a couple of days."



Doug Smith

“ There is not a day that goes by, where I don’t wake up and think about going to Nicaragua. I have also fantasized about naturalizing myself as a Nicaraguan. I mean, it would be hard. As a whole the society is poorer...but mentally and psychologically everything is different.”

-- Erin Corday --

BEYOND THE BORDER

Locals Visit Nicaragua

BY DAVE EINMO

Sixty people concerned about the U.S. intervention in Nicaragua huddled in a tight circle in front of the Federal Building in downtown Bellingham. Some were waving protest signs, while others cradled white candles in their folded hands, bowing their heads toward their feet, quietly singing peace songs.

Standing on a small platform, Erin Corday played her guitar and led the group through their songs. Corday, who visited Nicaragua in January, 1987 and returned in March, fixed her eyes on the flickering candles as she softly strummed her guitar.

Among the members of the crowd were Betsy Pernotto and Doug Smith, who also recently experienced Nicaragua first hand.

Smith, 28, arrived in Nicaragua in September, 1985 to study Spanish at the Nicanuva Institutio de Centro America in Esteli. He returned to the United States three months later. Sitting at a table outside Tony's Coffee in Fairhaven, Smith recounted what he had seen in Nicaragua.

He said he went to Central America to find out what was *really* happening in Nicaragua.

"I had done a lot of reading about Latin America. I figured that I really wanted to go and see and experience Latin American culture for myself."

He said the Nicaraguan people he met are not supportive of the Contras. "Most people really, really support the Sandinista revolution. Rather than just a feeling against the Contras, there is a feeling for Nicaragua -- a feeling for the revolution that is very strong and very obvious to anybody who goes there."

Wearing a loose fitting black T-shirt and worn blue jeans, Smith pulled his chair toward the glass table. He scratched his short, brown whiskers and adjusted his glasses. His cocoa-brown hair curled up under his ears.

He leaned his long, thin arms onto the table as he spoke. The sun reflected off his glasses, when he glanced up into the sky.

Referring to the Somoza government, which fell from power after the 1979 revolution, Smith compared the Contras to Somoza's National Guard.

"When I was in Nicaragua...I talked with people who were telling me about a time a year before the triumph of the revolution. The repres-



A statue in Nicaragua memorializing the overthrow of the Somoza government.

Doug Smith

sion was so bad that young people, young men and young women between the ages of 10 and 30, couldn't be together at all in groups larger than two or three. You couldn't have five

friends playing kickball in the street because the National Guard, if they saw that, they would think that those kids were conspiring against the government. The National Guard would pick them up and jail them or, as was very common in the later months before the triumph...would simply murder them.

"The Contras have not made a very good case for themselves...because they are repeating the same types and methods of human rights abuses and atrocities that the National Guard did."

Leaning back in his chair, Smith said the American public is being deceived by President Reagan's support of the Contras.

"Reagan says that the Contras are the only way the Nicaraguan people can experience democracy. It is another example of the idiotic right-wing rhetoric that he uses to gain support from the people within the United States. The Contras are anything but democratic. The Contras represent the worst of Latin American totalitarianism.

"He says that the Sandinistas are repressing the people worse than Somoza did. This is nothing more than a bold-face lie."

"They've been denied education, denied land. They know what they're fighting for."

-- Erin Corday --

According to the Nicaragua Appropriate Technology Project, a Bellingham-based group that sponsored Ben Linder, the first North American killed in Nicaragua, the quality of life has improved since Somoza was overthrown in 1979. More than 50,000 landless families have been granted land, health clinics have increased from 56 in 1979 to more than 400 today, adult literacy has increased to 88 percent, and infant mortality has dropped by more than 50 percent.

To experience Nicaraguan life firsthand, Smith lived with a couple and their five children during his stay in Nicaragua. The father was both a private clothing merchant and a Sandinista, which discounts the idea



Mira Brown

Community spirit is alive in Nicaragua.

that Sandinistas are communists, he said.

"We lived in a very poor house with dirt floors. It was actually a new house. It had new walls and a new roof, but dirt floors and a pretty trashy outhouse out back, cockroaches everywhere...that was a new house. The (Sandinista) government built them a new house. In fact the entire neighborhood was full of new houses...because Somoza, prior to the triumph, had bombed the city of Esteli from the air...for six weeks straight, and obliterated the whole neighborhoods of the city.

"After the triumph, one of the first things the (Sandinista) government did was to help the people rebuild the houses in those cities that were bombed."

Corday, 22, a local folk guitarist majoring in music at Fairhaven College also went to school in Nicaragua. While taking classes at the Nicaraguan House of Spanish in Managua, she studied the events taking place in the Central American country.

Reflecting on her trip, Corday squinted her eyes, shielding them from the sun, while sitting outside of a store in Fairhaven. Her chocolate-colored hair glistened in the sun.

Most Nicaraguan people are not hostile toward Americans despite the U.S. support of the Contras, Corday said. They are upset at the U.S. government, she said, not at its people. While living in the home of a

Nicaraguan family, she befriended many Central Americans.

"I met this group of (Sandinista) soldiers in Managua and I hung around with them a lot. They would play music, and we went over and played songs. And I had a tape of them," she said. "The last night I was there, we recorded a bunch of music and I said, 'Wait, wait. Tell my country what you want to say to them.' And they all got on the microphone and said, 'Hi, my name is... Victor,' or whoever it was...And they would say, 'We just want peace just like you guys do.'"

One of the soldiers Corday befriended had been injured in an ambush by the Contras before she met him.



Doug Smith

"When he was in the mountains fighting the Contras, one time they were all sitting in a circle, he and his buddies. All of a sudden there was this explosion, he was lifted off the ground, knocked unconscious, and when he woke up, all his buddies were dead around him," she said.

Corday was in Nicaragua during the signing of its constitution in January. As she recounted the event, her somber expression grew into an open-mouth smile.

"It was so exciting. The whole plaza was filled. I don't know how many people there were. I think like 100,000 -- just lots and lots of people.

"It was an overcast day and there was no sun. Right when they were signing the constitution, the sun went behind -- down, down, down -- and it finally got below the clouds. Then all the light hit the tops of the clouds. You know what kind of light that makes on people. And everybody's just glowing. It was so beautiful."

"I really wanted to see a country that was being transformed."

-- Betsy Pernotto --

The people were pounding their fists toward the sky, and chanting, "no pasaran, no pasaran," which means "they (the enemy) shall not pass," Corday said, simulating the crowd by thrusting her fists above her head.

"Everytime the speaker would mention anything about the U.S. aggression, the crowd erupted into these cries. The U.S. just doesn't understand that the world is mad at us for what we're doing to (Nicaragua)."

Corday said that while visiting in Nicaragua, she never met anyone who expressed support for the Contras. Some of the Contra opposition stems from the attacks these rebels have made on civilians, and as a result, many Nicaraguans are armed to protect themselves, she said.

"They've had their fingernails ripped off by a U.S.-supported dictatorship, they've had their parents killed, they've had their children die of diarrhea, polio and all this shit. They've been illiterate. They've been denied education, denied land. They know what they're fighting for."

Betsy Pernotto also visited

Nicaragua. Drawn by an interest to help the people in the Central American country, she arrived in Nicaragua in August, 1986 to work on a project called Integrated Pest Management. The project attempted to develop methods to control insects biologically as an alternative to chemical fertilizers. She spent most of her four-week stay in Nicaragua growing tomatoes and marigolds together to produce a compound that would deter parasites from infesting the roots of the tomatoes.

She lived in the New World Agriculture House in Managua for one month with other people involved in

similar projects. Sitting in an office in Artzen Hall, Pernotto, 36, recounted her trip. She sat comfortably in a chair with her legs folded up on her seat cushion. Her short, coal-colored hair was parted above her glasses. "No pasaran, no pasaran" was emblazoned in red on a pin attached to her shirt.

"I was interested in seeing Nicaragua, to see what it was like after the revolution. I think for a lot of Americans, to read about the revolution is pretty inspiring, and to read about all the positive social changes that have taken place in Nicaragua. I really

A downtown view of the Nicaraguan village of Esteli.

Doug Smith





Doug Smith

To experience Nicaraguan life firsthand, Doug Smith, second from left, lived with a Nicaraguan family.

wanted to see a country that was being transformed," she said.

She added she was surprised to see how many Nicaraguans are politically active.

"There was a tremendous amount of participation by a lot of people. There were political slogans written everywhere, not just supporting the Sandinistas, but other political parties as well. There were a lot of advertisements for other political parties, and it seemed clear that there was a lot of political pluralism going on. It was not a one-party country as the Reagan administration has portrayed. There was a lot of participation by a lot of different groups."

Smith said the Reagan administration wants the American public to believe the Sandinistas are a "communist reign of terror" and to support the Contras, so the United States can regain its economic power in Nicaragua.

"I believe they have a kind of a sinister approach to this. They know they are lying to the American public, and they do it because...they have an attitude of nostalgia. The United States has essentially controlled the destiny of Latin America since 150 years ago."

Beginning in the mid-1850s, U.S. Marines periodically landed at Nicaraguan ports to protect economic interests, and in 1912 U.S. troops arrived to end one of the tiny country's revolutions. Satisfied with the incumbent government, the U.S. forces left

in 1925, only to return again in 1926. The troops left in 1933, after they had created the National Guard led by Somoza, who came to power three years later.

In 1979, the Somozan government was overthrown and a coalition government, consisting of a Sandinista majority, assumed control. From 1981 to 1986, Congress has approved \$189 million in covert and overt funding for the Contras, according to a study from the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division of the Congressional Research Service.

"Rather than just a feeling against the Contras, there is a feeling for Nicaragua."

-- Doug Smith --

This century-and-a-half of U.S. control has caused the Nicaraguan people to live in poverty, Smith said. Leaning over his table at Tony's Coffee, he recounted what some villages were like in Nicaragua.

"People living in little shacks made out of scavenged, broken two-by-fours and tin, on dirt floors with gutters of urine running down the streets in front of their houses. Their kids with no shoes and extended bellies, and flies everywhere and outhouses in the backyards that have thousands and thousands of cockroaches living out

of them and also getting into the house. No sanitation system. No good water available, so the people have to deal with parasites."

Despite the harsh living conditions in Nicaragua, Corday said she hopes to return to Nicaragua someday.

"There is not a day that goes by, where I don't wake up and think about going to Nicaragua. I have also fantasized about naturalizing myself as a Nicaraguan. I mean, it would be hard. As a whole the society is poorer...but mentally and psychologically everything is different."

She said most Nicaraguans are more generous than the typical American -- not just monetarily, but with their time and help.

The first thing she said she noticed when she came back to the United States was the emptiness of American streets. Villagers in Nicaragua stand outside of their homes along the roads and interact with their neighbors. In the United States most people don't even know their neighbors, she said.

The experience of being in Nicaragua has changed her perspective on life. Referring to the slower-paced Nicaraguan lifestyle, she said, "When I came back I walked different, I was calmer, I was relaxed."

When Smith returned to the United States, he said he suffered culture shock.

"I get off the Honduran Airlines, and I come into the airport. And immediately there is a shop there selling about 37 different kinds of candy bars, and all these *frivolous* things that we take for granted," he said, shaking his head and smiling. "It's like coming from a place where nobody can even dream of 37 different kinds of candy bars. The contrast set me into a state of shock for about three weeks."

As the demonstration at the Federal Building continued, the protestors began moving closer together. Some traded their protest signs for the comfort of a companion's hand. Singing quietly, a group of people leaning against the brick building swayed their bodies from side to side, like a series of waves sweeping against the wall. "All we are saying is give peace a chance; all we are saying is give peace a chance..." Their voices joined, becoming one. Curious motorists peered out of their windows as they drove past the intersection.

Candles burning, voices uplifted, the demonstrators brought the feeling of the Nicaraguan people to Bellingham.



Glenn Marzano

Shelter From the Storm

BY ANN MACKIE

Central American refugees seek refuge from the political chaos of their own homelands.

The small gray house enclosed by a white fence is identical to others in the rural housing development of Laurel, Washington. Bicycles and trikes litter the front sidewalk, and a nearby lawn sprinkler can be heard pulsating in the early summer heat.

The family of five has just returned from their 10-year-old's baseball game. The tub is running, and the children are lined up for their evening baths.

But unlike the other families in the neighborhood, living the American dream won't be as easy anymore for Chris and Steve Mellroth. They have been shaken out of comfortable rural America and into another world -- the world of their 35-year-old house guest and her four-year-old son, refugees from El Salvador.

The Mellroths are one of the many Whatcom County families who have housed Central American refugees waiting to immigrate to Canada, and the experience has changed their lives forever.

A new Canadian immigration

policy requires case-by-case hearings to determine each refugee's need for asylum in Canada. Previously, refugees had only to declare they were from one of 18 countries listed on Canada's repressive government list and they would be admitted automatically.

The new procedure has caused delays of up to two months for the hearings. With no money, and nowhere to go, many refugees spend those two months in Bellingham.

"...if we really believe what is happening in Central America is wrong, then we really have to do something about it."

-- Chris Mellroth --

Twenty-five refugees arrived during the first two weeks of May. There were already approximately 50 refugees here waiting for their hearings.

Two of those people were the Mellroths' guests -- Maria and her son

Fernando, whose names have been changed to protect their identities.

For Maria, the two-month stay at the Mellroth's was nearly the last stop on a long journey that began in 1982. The San Salvador public school teacher was one of eight children from an affluent family.

Today, she is one of many El Salvadoran refugees who seek asylum in Canada, the United States, or Mexico. They have fled a country racked with political unrest, torture and repression.

In May 1982, Maria was sitting in a San Salvador park discussing student evaluations with a group of women teachers.

"The teachers would get together in the park to grade the children," she said. "There were about 18 of us when the soldiers came up. They started asking, 'What are you doing?' and we told them, 'Nothing.' They started dispersing the group by pushing us and hitting us with the ends of their rifles."

The women ran, separated and went to their houses. Later that evening, soldiers arrived at Maria's home.

"They burst into my house. They began to search, to throw things around. When I asked, 'What are you doing?' they beat me with their rifles and arrested me. I was taken to a subterranean jail where I was held for 10 days with 12 other women."

Maria's ten-day ordeal was filled with repeated beatings, rapes, torture with an electric prod put inside her vagina, and she was strapped into a chair with metal bacelets attached and given more electric shocks.

"I survived because of a miracle of God."

-- Maria --

Her "crime" was that she belonged to the wrong family, was a member of the teachers' union, and had a brother who was active in the insurgency movement.

Her torturers were Americans, she said, not Salvadorans. "They were white and did not speak Spanish. They were tall, blonde and wore green uniforms with a patch on the left arm with English words," she stated.

Although she is convinced these soldiers were from the United States, activists in the U.S. sanctuary movement have mixed opinions about the identities.

Barbara Hiebert-Crape, co-chair of the University Baptist Church Sanctuary Project in Seattle, said she has heard similar reports from Salvadoran refugees.

"I know Green Berets have been teaching interrogation techniques to the Salvadoran army. One woman who underwent torture and interrogation by Salvadoran soldiers told us she heard American accents and voices in another room," Hiebert-Crape said.

John Fife, pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Tucson, Arizona, said he doubts the soldiers Maria identified as Americans were in fact U.S. troops, but he did acknowledge U.S. advisors have been in El Salvador to train the army in psychological and physical torture.

The Tucson church made national news last year during the trial of many of its members who were charged with illegally transporting and housing Central American refugees.

"I have been around for a long time and have heard thousands of refugee stories," Fife said. "Originally, Salvadoran forces were trained by Argentinians, which might fit the description Maria gave. Also, Israeli military advisors have been used in El Salvador," he continued.

"Maria's assumptions might not

ing to their homes. Some were forced to leave their children behind. Maria, who was not married, did not know she was now pregnant with her first child as a result of the rapes in jail.

The women fled on foot into Guatemala, and in a month's time, walked the length of the country through the Sierra Madre mountains.



Glenn Marzano

Chris Mellroth: "Our family has learned to share in a new way."

be valid as to who these foreigners were, but she certainly experienced the torture at the hands of someone," Fife said.

Maria's right arm still shows a large, black bruise four years later. On the back of her neck is a six-inch circular bruise, which is still sore. Her left wrist was broken and shows lumps of bone from improper healing.

"I was taken to a subterranean jail...where I was held for 10 days with 12 other women."

-- Maria --

After 10 days of repeated torture and no food, she and the other women were turned loose and told they had 24 hours to get out of the country.

"We were released probably because they thought we'd die," she said. The women left the city of San Salvador immediately without return-

"We had nothing with us -- no warm clothes, blankets or anything. We used large banana leaves to wrap up in at night because it was very cold," she said. They stayed only in the mountains, never walking in the streets.

The women ate raw chicken and the leaves of guava trees to survive. Two of the women, weakened from the torture and beatings, died near Escuintla in Guatemala.

When they reached the Guatemalan-Mexican border at the Suchiate River they were taken in by a woman who nursed them back to health. Maria's broken wrist was set, as was the broken leg of another woman. Six of the women returned to El Salvador to join the guerillas, "to avenge," Maria said.

"I survived because of a miracle of God," she said. Maria worked her way through Mexico as a dishwasher and eventually made it to Mexico City, where she was able to get a factory job.

On March 1, 1987, she left Mexico for Los Angeles, where she waited eight days for her birth certificate from El Salvador, which she would need to

ask for asylum in Canada. She finally made contact with her mother and a brother who were living in Vancouver, B.C. They assumed she had been killed by the soldiers in El Salvador and had held a funeral for her before fleeing the country. Other family members fled to Venezuela.

"We were pretty Main Street America."

-- Steve Mellroth --

Finding places for people like Maria to stay to wait for hearings has become the primary task of a local Bellingham organization called CARA, Central American Refugee Assistance. Shirley Osterhaus, a Franciscan sister and director of the Catholic Campus Ministry at Western's Shalom Center, said the Bellingham community responded well to the need.

"We enjoy having them here, and it's always a little tug to let them go," she said. "It's been good for our community." Western students, local church congregations and the Whatcom Opportunity Council have all provided homes and funds for the Central American refugees, Osterhaus said.

When Chris Mellroth read about the emergency housing need in her church bulletin she knew she had to get involved.

"It really struck me. I had an initial gut reaction that I really needed to help somebody," she said. It took a few days to reach Osterhaus, and during that time the fears began to creep in. Taking total strangers into her already cramped home seemed like a crazy thing to do.

"We have a small house, we're already overcrowded -- all these things came to mind. It was the human side of me eroding the spiritual side.

"But I thought if we really believe what is happening in Central America is wrong, then we really have to do something about it," Chris said. Her husband agreed.

"We were pretty 'Main Street' America," said Steve Mellroth, who sells advertising for a local radio station. He took classes at Western and attended the Naval Academy at Annapolis. He used to call himself patriotic, but now he questions the

policies of the United States government in Central America.

Neither of the Mellroths were political before taking Maria and Fernando into their home.

Chris said she was a "goody-two-shoes" type who grew up in a military family living on Air Force bases around the world. While a theater major at Western during the 1970's she was a member of the Young Americans for Freedom, a conservative Republican youth organization.

The two months spent with two Salvadoran refugees has been a political awakening for both Steve and Chris.

They tried to make a distinction to Maria between what they believe is the right policy for the U.S. government in Central America, and what Reagan is doing.

"We wanted Maria to know we are not like Reagan or the soldiers," Chris said. Before hearing Maria's story, Chris was not very well informed about El Salvador.

When Chris and Steve told their children someone was coming to live with them, the kids asked, "What about our toys?"

Chris asked them, "Is there anything in this house we couldn't live without -- if it was stolen, broken or lost? Think of how you'd feel if you couldn't speak the language, had no friends, nowhere to go? Wouldn't you be thrilled if someone was not afraid to help you?"

"We enjoy having them here and it's always a little tug to let them go."

-- Shirley Osterhaus --

Chris' first step was to buy a Spanish-English dictionary, but bridging the language barrier was not that difficult, she said.

"We used a lot of sign language and facial expressions. Then we did things together like manicures and watching soaps on T.V."

Maria's son finally saw his grandmother for the first time when he crossed into Canada last May. The four-year-old was overwhelmed by all the travel and the changes in his life;

but while living with the Mellroths, he got to know Legos, bicycles and three American children.

And the Mellroth children learned a lot from the experience as well, Steve said. "They learned the difference between loaning and giving, and they learned a little Spanish, too," he said.



SHIRLEY OSTERHAUS

Having visitors meant sharing. The Mellroth children took turns rotating from the top bunk, to the lower bunk, to the floor and back up again. One of their rooms was given up for Maria and her son to share.

After hearing the stories about Maria's torture and the role she said U.S. soldiers are playing in El Salvador, Chris decided the G.I. Joe toys had to go.

"It just seemed so bad to have those cartoons on all the time and our kids playing with those war toys," Chris said.

Their two months together built a friendship which the Mellroths say will stay with them for years. It's an experience they wouldn't trade for anything in the world, Chris said.

"I detested politics before, but now I want to tell people to get involved and do something. People feel really impotent about things like nuclear war and Central America, and I want to tell them there is something that can be done," Chris said.

"Our family has learned to share in a new way," she said as she reached across the table to hug Maria and say, "Amiga. She'll always be like my sister."



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Pete Kendall

Racer Gets Cranked to Push Pedals

BY LYNN BALDWIN

From afar, the line of cyclists resembles a centipede, snaking and churning. It twists along the spectator-lined course in Seattle's Volunteer Park, leaving a swoosh of wind in its wake. Multi-colored helmets bob in unison, as if the riders hear a secret song only they comprehend. As they draw closer, the cyclists emerge as 69 individuals in the 20th Annual Volunteer Park Criterium Race, and the song becomes for each a personal, silent lament of pain.

Western student Chandler Leach, even after seven years of cycling, feels his body straining, his legs burning, his lungs laboring. The 21-year-old's concentration stretches from the determined set of his jaw to the wiry map of his leg muscles. He sees the blur of spectators and hears the shouts of "All right, Chandler!"

He wears a bright blue Puget Sound Cycling Club racing shirt and black shorts that wrap around his thighs like sausage skins. A knotted yellow handkerchief encircles his neck and his cheeks sport orange war-paint -- "To be different," he says. Except for a few strands that have broken free, most of his spaghetti-colored bangs stay secured under his blue and white helmet.

Leach trains three to six hours a day, trekking down Chuckanut Drive towards Burlington or up towards Birch Bay. Whether it's 70 degrees or 30, a lazy Saturday or finals week, afternoons will find him cranking the pedals on one of his six bikes.

The 14-year-old kid who started biking to train for skiing is now a tough cyclist who races at the national level. Leach's winning record is enviable. He placed eighth in a national competition last year and won the Marymore Track Championship three consecutive years. In seven years of competing he has won 14 medals in the senior 18-to-35 category, and 17 medals in the under-17 junior category.

Cycling is both an individual and team sport. The tightness and skill of a team determines if a race will be a group effort, or if individuals will work by themselves to win. More than anything else, perhaps, this opportunity for individual achievement has drawn Leach to cycling.

"All my life I've been in Little League sports where you have teams," Leach says. "I wanted to do it on my own."

He is a member of the Baleno-sponsored Puget Sound Cycling Club. He rides with the Seattle-based team, which has a coach, during the summers but during the school year he devises his own workouts.

"I know what's best for myself," he says.

Leach trains for two events -- road racing and track racing. Road races can be rides of 70 to 100 miles, or criteriums, where cyclists race a designated number of laps. The laps are usually about a mile long.

Track races, on the other hand, are between one and 25 miles, confine cyclists to a steeply banked track and require a different type of bike.

"In track racing you have a fixed gear and no brakes, which means the back wheel is fixed with your crank so if you try to coast, your legs will keep spinning," Leach explains. "To stop you have to take an extra lap after the race is over."

Cycling involves team tactics. The main group of riders, the pack, is where most cyclists stay during the race, taking turns riding in the front. Those leading the pack break the wind for others, working harder than the cyclists behind

Chandler Leach: "I know what's best for myself."



Pete Kendall

them. Cyclists riding in a line behind the lead riders are said to be "in the draft." Riding in the wake of another rider can save up to 25 percent of valuable energy, leaving the drafter fresh for later stages of the race.

"Sometimes no one will want to lead because they want to stay rested for the end of the race," says Rick Ives, president of the Mount Baker Cycling Club. "But in elite teams, national teams, guys will shield their star racer so he can be fresh for the last sprint."

Another group that can form during a race is a breakaway, a cluster of cyclists who will break out ahead of the main pack, attempting to drop the larger group.

"Chandler's good...He's got moves other people haven't even thought of."

-- Rick Ives --

Breakaways require team effort and communication to be effective, because the work needs to be shared equally between the riders. Riders take turns in front breaking the wind for riders behind them, eventually dropping back to allow a fresher rider to take the lead. Most often, though, breakaways get "reeled in," or caught, when the main pack catches up, Ives says.

Leach rarely breaks away because staying with the pack allows him to tap his strongest asset -- speed.

"You can win two ways. You can get in a breakaway and win that way or you can try to keep breakaways from happening and win the main pack sprint. I do better at sprinting than breaking away," he says.

Ives recognizes Chandler's special racing abilities. "Chandler's good," Ives says, "real good. He's smart, tactical, he's a bright guy when it comes to racing. He's got moves other people haven't even thought of."

One handicap Leach faces is a lack of cyclists of his caliber. Few local riders are strong enough to work as a team with him during a race -- to form a breakaway and take turns shielding each other. Since teamwork tactics during a race can be as important as training for the race itself, he doesn't have the back-up support he would like.

Because of the number of riders involved in a race, cycling is not without its hazards. Major accidents occur when

"All my life I've been in Little League sports where you have teams. I wanted to do it on my own."

-- Chandler Leach --

one cyclist falls and others can't ride around him.

"It's pretty high-speed sometimes and people get delirious after they've been riding awhile and do stupid things," Leach explains. "If someone in front of you does something and you're in a pack, you can't go right or left,

you just gotta go with who falls. When you're with good riders who know what they're doing it's usually okay. But if someone has a tire blowout or something, he'll go over the handle bars and everyone behind him goes, too. Eventually you can start swerving (to avoid the fallen cyclist), but if you're right behind him you really don't have any option."

In today's race, one competitor's front wheel swerves into a five-inch ditch where the pavement suddenly drops into dirt. He is hurtled from his bike, skidding on the right side of his body. Half-lying and half-sitting, the racer hauls his bike off the course quickly enough to avoid a pile-up of fallen racers. Hurt only by minor scrapes and a bruised ego, he slumps on a grassy knoll and swears.

Leach flies by the fallen cyclist, unaware of anything but his desire to win. But if he were asked outright, Leach would claim he has no goals for cycling. One might wonder if he has risen to the national level on a fluke, or if he possesses strength and endurance without having experienced per-

"Certain races I'd like to do well in, (but) I don't want to win a gold medal in the Olympics or anything."

-- Chandler Leach --

sonal pain. Goals, however, so ingrained themselves in Leach's personality he seems unaware of them.

"Certain races I'd like to do well in, (but) I don't want to win a gold medal in the Olympics or anything. (But) if I go to the Olympic trials I want to do as well as I can, which means I'm not going to sit here and hope everything happens, right? I'm gonna go out and try.

"I'm laid back, yet I train and ride hard," he says. A paradox. "I don't have real high goals, which is why it's taken me time to get up there. I'm competitive and like to do my best. To stay competitive, you have to spend your time -- that's how you get sucked into it."

Perhaps Leach's passion for the sport has come from his father Mike Leach, who also races competitively. Jason, Leach's brother, used to race, but found other interests instead.

"Jason has the most potential in the family," Leach says, "but you can't make someone do something he doesn't want to."

Leach, however, chose to continue racing, earning some prestigious medals and the personal satisfaction that comes with competition. But if he has a flaw in racing, Leach says, it's an attitude problem.

"I'm a sore loser and I let it get in the way. I'll let it get in the way in a breakaway 'cause there'll be four guys and those guys aren't equal -- some of them don't want to work, they want to draft off you. Well, instead of not worrying about it, I let it get to me," Leach says.

The rewards for Leach are simple: Doing well. Beating certain racers. Improving his cycling. Money is curiously lacking from Leach's list of rewards, and for good reason. Few of the races Leach will enter this year offer rewards other than a congratulatory handshake.

Justifiably, money is one reason Leach won't go professional. "I could quit school and train full-time if I wanted to," he says, "but I'm not going to. There's not enough future in it -- I like money too much."



Pete Kendall

Chandler Leach: "I'm laid back yet I train and ride hard."

Professional aspirations or not, Leach logs 20 to 100 miles every day from February through September, 230 days without a break. He trains hardest on weekends and lightest during the first of the week. Wednesday, like Saturday and Sunday, is a strenuous training day. From March through September Leach races nearly every week, traveling around Washington, Oregon and Idaho. The day after a race he "takes a break," he says, and rides a slow 25 miles. He needs a break in training after a race -- his body is drained and muscles are sore.

"Toward the end (of a race) you get pretty tired. You're glad when it's over," Leach says. He takes a light class load to allow time for racing.

The crowd thickens on the course of blurred cyclists as the race nears its end. Fans fold the top halves of their bodies over the restraining ropes, stretching for an unobstructed view. Photography buffs bristling with camera equipment train their cumbersome zoom lenses on the cyclists. Shouts from spectators spur the men on.

The cyclists round the last hilly corner at speeds close to 30 mph and the finish line yawns before them. Leach rides in the main pack, his tires and handle bars nudged by other cyclists only inches away. He has endured nearly 31 miles -- only a few hundred yards remain. Gathering all the training, stamina and determination seven years have built into him, Leach shoots across the finish line -- in a strong third-place finish.



Glenn Marzano

Living on Toys and Dreams

BY MARGARET PHELPS

Ask for Terry Mitchell's business card and you may be surprised at his self-proclaimed job title. The slip of paper simply reads *Artist and Inventor*. The card is designed with sketches of a UFO flying out of a city, a Roman figure wielding a strange type of sword and a ball with a loop tail descending past Mitchell's name. If you asked him, Mitchell would explain that the odd-looking ball pictured on the card is "Rocketbal," his newest creation that he hopes to build into a national sport.

Rocketbal can best be described as playing baseball with a slingshot. A rubber ball is attached to latex tubing which, when looped around a special type of mit launcher, can be aimed and catapulted through the air.

So hopeful is Mitchell about the success of his latest invention that he and Don Degel, his marketer, have created the North American Rocketbal

Company. The firm, headed by Degel, covers both ends of the business -- the promotion of the game and the equipment for it; namely the balls and launchers. The two have been working hard to create fun -- and it's finally starting to pay off. Presently nine local retail stores have begun carrying the game, including one shop in Mount Vernon and another in Blaine.

"The course of invention is you're always walking down a forked road."

-- Terry Mitchell --

"We may even give it (Rocketbal) to the Mariners. Have the Mariners try it out, they need something," Degel laughed.

"Let's mail some to them. We'll send them to the batting coach. I'll get that off into the mail tomorrow," Mitchell quipped.

Mitchell has reason to be optimistic about his latest invention. Previous inventions have paid off big for the inventor who now resides Bellingham. Sitting in his office on Holly Street, Mitchell gestured towards a blue furry toy sitting near him. It resembled a miniature version of "Cousin It" on the *Adams Family* -- a ball of hair with large glass eyes and big feet.

"That's the 'Slurp' and I sold three-and-a-half-million bucks worth of him," Mitchell said.

Mitchell visualized his first Slurp in a dream. Thinking it had potential, he took drawings down to Master Industries, a manufacturing company he was working for in 1965. They laughed at his absurd creation, but Mitchell persisted and sewed the first

Slurp himself. "It was the most grotesque thing," he said, chuckling.

But after a few refinements the Slurp became a national fad and was successfully marketed by Master Industries between 1965 and 1970. The Slurp was the first patented invention Mitchell held.

Today, Mitchell's office for the North American Rocketbal Company is located on the second floor of the Clover Building in Bellingham. It appeared to have been designed by a mad interior decorator. Half the walls were painted a peculiar green, matching the green-, yellow- and red-flowered wallpaper. Large paintings, drawings of funky cartoon characters and newly invented products adorned the room. The blue carpet and orange couch added to the eccentric decor. Above the couch hung a bright mural painting with dangling Rocketbals and quartz crystals stuck into the canvas. The whole room was a mishmash of art and invention.

Mitchell, dressed in a blue sweater, navy blue pants and loafers, was comfortable in the disarray of his office, speaking about his love of inventing.

"First of all to invent you have to have a lot of time alone," Mitchell said, laughing. He created the first Rocketbal and launcher by himself in 1975 in his apartment in Minneapolis. He was fiddling around with a broken paddleball and unceremoniously attached laced rubberbands to the ball. He took his new toy outside and shot it off his thumb. Fifteen minutes later Mitchell made history's first Rocketbal launcher by attaching a bicycle grip to a coffeepot handle, a bracket and cloth bag. And the envisioned possibilities for his household gadget took off as fast as the Rocketbals could fly.

"..To invent you have to have a lot of time alone."

-- Terry Mitchell

"It hit me just like a ...I don't know if you'd call it inspiration or coincidence or throwing things around in unusual places. In fact most of the things I invent or design are backed by more of coincidence than inspiration," Mitchell said.

Mitchell originally named his new invention Bomberbal because it "looked like a bomb coming down."

For a while, though, his spare-time creation was set aside. Mitchell was lecturing at the University of Minnesota on another of his inventions --

a UFO vehicle which he describes as a sort of "space frisbee." After Mitchell researched UFOs and designed his high-tech vehicle, the university had hired him to lecture at high schools and other universities about his invention. Unfortunately, lack of money later grounded hopes of marketing the UFO.

job as a railroad statician.

"Then I decided it was time to be a toy designer," Mitchell recalled, and he applied to Master Industries in St. Paul.

Following his success with the Slurp, Mitchell invented more monstrous animals like "Billy the Buzzard."

"That was real weird. It was made with the ugliest colors humanly possible, but it sold because it was so ugly," Mitchell said.



Glenn Marzano

Mitchell aims to launch Rocketbal into a national sport.

"The problem with invention is it's hand over fist. To get capital is a difficult task. One of the things I've learned is people won't buy it until you build it," Mitchell said.

The 46-year-old Chicago native comes from a family of inventors. His grandfather worked on helicopters and his father dabbled with home inventions. Mitchell briefly studied chemistry at the University of Minnesota, but quit to go to the Brown Institute of Radio and Television. "You never graduate from college when you're an inventor," Mitchell chuckled. But somehow he managed to obtain his degree and started work as a radio programmer in 1963. One of his tasks involved inventing games for a lunch-time radio show.

But unable to financially support his hobby of building and racing cars, Mitchell quit the radio station and started working for the railroad in 1964. Six months and nine promotions later he landed a higher-paying

But all fads come to an end, and in 1970 Mitchell left Master Industries and went on to work on other inventions such as automated phone systems, an operational manual for Dairy Queen and a razor Mitchell claims was stolen by Gillette.

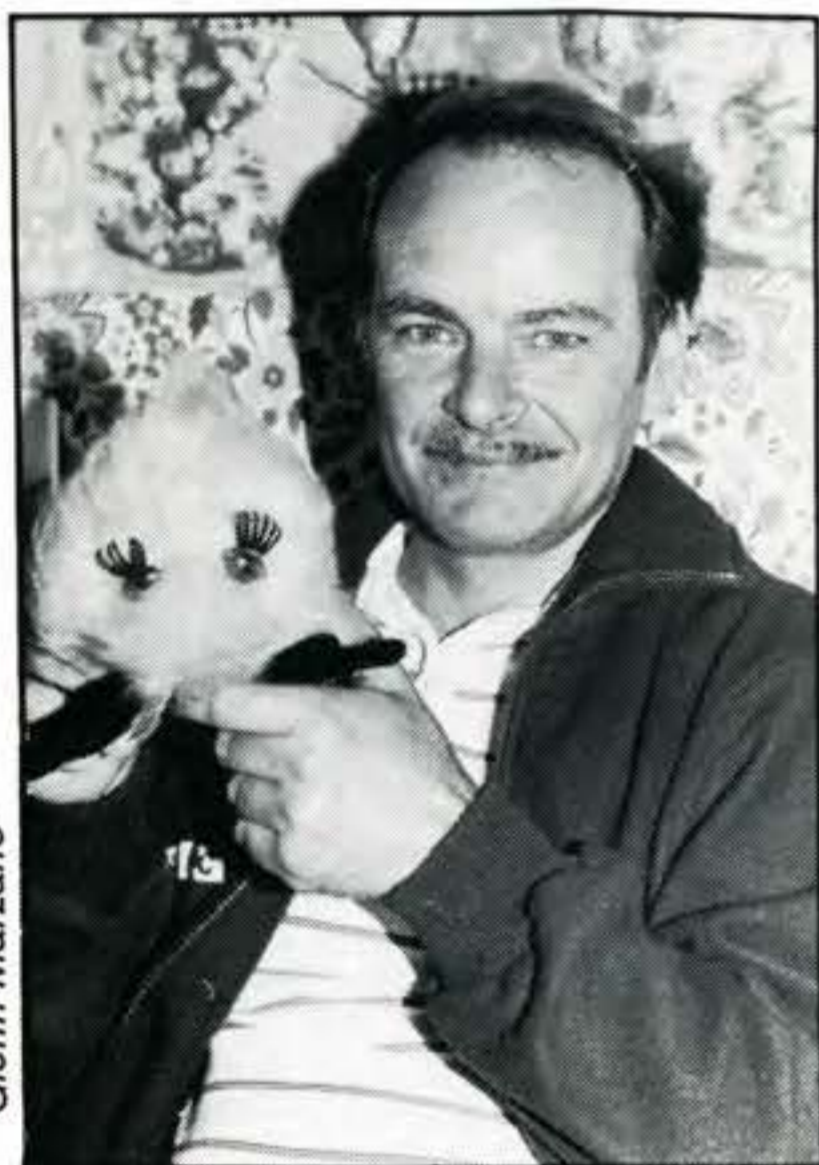
After the alleged patent theft, Mitchell delved into an unusual field of study. For six months he became a hunter of the Sasquatch and the Opopogo, a Canadian Lochness monster believed to exist in Lake Okanagon. "I was known as the Sasquatch hunter," Mitchell said.

He came to Canada via Bellingham in 1973, on his own funds and those of a Minnesota-based documentary film company. His assignment was to capture both of the legendary creatures on film. He failed to film the creatures, but did claim to see footprints and cave dwellings of the Sasquatch.

After depleting his funds, Mitchell returned to Minnesota. It was there

that he invented two more bizarre companion toys, "Ump" and "Ref," which he lived off for four years.

Mitchell then moved to Bellingham and it was here that he met his future business partner Degel, who at the time was working at the Bellingham Herald, supervising county carriers. During the summer, Degel led the "Summer Fun" program, where he took the carriers to parks and provided other summer activities for them. Mitchell's office was down the hall from the circulation department, where Degel worked. One day in passing, Degel noticed "funny looking balls" in Mitchell's office.



Glenn Marzano

The "Slurp" became a fad during the late 60s, and was Mitchell's first patented invention.

"When I saw the Bomberbals I thought they'd be fun things for the kids to play with. Right away my thought was 'this is a hot item.' The dollar signs started clicking right away, but I didn't realize how big it could really be until these kids started playing with it and they loved it," Degel recalled.

However, work took precedent over Bomberbals for a while, until Degel tracked Mitchell down and made a business proposal. In 1981, Mitchell and Degel became legal partners. "He was the inventor and I was the one who was going to make it go," Degel said.

Degel and Mitchell have been in the Rocketbal business since last August, operating out of a small ground-level shop in the Clover Building on Holly and Commercial. The dream to

market Rocketbal was beginning to take shape. As sales increased, Degel started to sell the balls wholesale to the local retail stores.

Degel, 38, came from Montana, where he ran several businesses with his father, including a roofing and siding business and a wholesale stereo equipment business. He graduated from Eastern Montana College "where the cowboys go" in 1972 where he studied special education. In 1980, he moved to Bellingham to fish. When he arrived, however, "the whole fishing industry was in a real low ebb" and he couldn't find a job. When the *Bellingham Herald* offered him a job working with kids, Degel eagerly accepted and worked for the newspaper for six years until he and Mitchell established Rocketbal as a business.

Degel changed the name from Bomberbal to Rocketbal.

"I had always hated the name Bomberbal and I was always convinced that was the reason it never worked. I didn't like the name Bomberbal because it's just 'bomb' -- you know -- it's not a nice word," Degel said.

While Mitchell maintained his job as inventor, Degel took over the business side of the venture. Rocketbal underwent further changes to make the balls more aerodynamic and soon Mitchell and Degel opened their shop in Bellingham. The owner of the Clover Building gave them free rent in return for their help overseeing and repairing apartments in the building. Rocketbal spread by word of mouth and soon the two were selling more balls than they could make.

"Everything's just getting crazy," Mitchell said.

"It's a challenge," Degel explained. "We run into so many different dead ends. So many people that were gonna call back and didn't, the wasted trips and long distance phone calls, the hopes that get dashed to the ground. If you want something done you've gotta do it yourself."

"If you want something done you've gotta do it yourself."

-- Don Degel --

"The only thing is that when you work for yourself everyone thinks that's the American dream. But I'll tell you, you're working seven days a

week, twice as many hours and there aren't any benefits involved. But you never get rich working for someone else. You're always gonna be happy and less stressed out, but you're never gonna get rich. And there's always that possibility that you just might, and I like that," Degel grinned.

Currently the business has four part-time employees to assemble the balls and launchers. The handmade production of the Rocketbal equipment can be time consuming. It takes one hour to make 40 to 60 balls and one to two hours to produce a single launcher.

The duo wants to keep the Rocketbal industry locally based to provide jobs and hope to establish the game with a major chain like Sears or K-Mart.

"The problem with invention is it's hand over fist."

-- Terry Mitchell --

"We hope to have Sears introduce launchers. It would sort of Americanize everything," Mitchell said.

Rocketbals may be a fun toy to play with, but Mitchell and Degel would like to make it into a full-fledged sport under the North American Rocketbal Alliance. "We are the NFL of Rocketbal if it becomes an organized sport...It's nearing football in excitement," Mitchell said.

The small diameter of the launcher can make it difficult and frustrating to catch the ball so the company will soon be offering a larger launcher. "One (launcher) for the jet set and one for the Geritol set. Then everybody can play," Degel laughed.

Mitchell wants to continue inventing and hopes to market four new games including a space age roulette table. This summer he plans to hunt for buried treasure left by Spanish explorer Hernando Cortez, an explorer turned emperor of Mexico, who reputedly left the treasure in the Cascade Mountains in 1538.

In the future Mitchell hopes to earn enough to start on other projects, such as the liquification of electricity, originally devised by the 19th century inventor Nickola Tesla. He would also like to publish a book of his own art.

"But it's hard to say. The course of invention is you're always walking down a forked road."

BEHIND THE SCENES

with Victor Leverett

BY JEFF KEELING

Victor Leverett sat on the front porch of his Fairhaven home, his bear-like shape comfortably straddling the railing.

"I have very little ego, I think, about anything I do in the theater, because it's just kind of a learned craft," the man who is Western's costume design department said.

For someone whose entire career has revolved around the theater, including tours with prestigious companies in New York City and Michigan, Leverett speaks of himself in a manner that is almost self-deprecating.

By Leverett's own estimate, he has worked on about 200 shows during his 10 years as the head of Western's costume design department. But his involvement with Western goes farther back than a mere decade.

The 50-year-old Bellingham native spent his early school years, through second grade, at The Campus School, an elementary school located in Miller Hall where education students could get hands-on experience with schoolkids.

"I like to say I've been here since World War II," he laughed.

With his balding head and round, friendly face that often breaks into a warm grin, it is obvious Leverett likes people. This is a good thing too, because he says his job often involves dealing with some of the world's most fragile egos, those of actors.

"Sometimes I say actors are just

horrible exhibitionist children who should be kept in cages, but that's on my bad days."

He is a man who seems comfortable with himself. His large frame is usually clothed in loose, comfortable shirts and pants, allowing room for his animated personality.

"I learned you pamper stars whether they're rotten to the core or not because you have to have them."

-- Victor Leverett --

Leverett has a theory about the progress of his career.

"I started in the big time at the bottom and sort of did this Henry Jamesian X where I ended at the top of the heap in the small time."

Leverett's beginnings in the big time came soon after he entered the University of Washington in the late '50s on a journalism scholarship. But soon he found himself enjoying theater more than journalism.

His involvement with UW theater came at the end of the Glenn Hughes era. A professor who brought the UW theater program national acclaim, Hughes coached the likes Francis Farmer and Dorothy Previne.

Leverett went on to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor on a graduate fellowship. Michigan ap-



VICTOR LEVERETT

prenticed about seven theater students yearly to the Association of Producing Artists Phoenix Theater (A.P.A.), a New York City-based theater company.

In the early summer of 1964, Leverett went to New York, where the company began its shows before touring Michigan the rest of the year. It was in New York that he gained his initial designing experience, though it wasn't quite hands-on.

"I worked for the designers, but I was a schlepper (gofer).

"It was nothing I ever intended to do -- I've always said I just sort of fell backwards into all of this."

Although he went to Michigan to pursue his graduate degree in theater, Leverett worked for the A.P.A.-Phoenix Theater until 1967, rotating between New York and Michigan.

After finishing his requirements for his master's degree at Washington State University, Leverett found himself pining for the Ann Arbor environment again, and to his luck he heard of an opening for a costume designer at Wayne State University in nearby Detroit.

"Although I had never designed, I'd been the schlepper all these years, but I'd seen it done by the best people," he said.

Leverett stayed on at Wayne State until 1973, when a family illness prompted him to make a visit to Bellingham. Soon after his arrival, he began doing steady part-time

work for Western's theater department. Leverett became a full-time costume designer in 1977, when Don Adams became ill.

"It's like being a cook or some other kind of job that has skills and particular kinds of demands and requirements and you do them without becoming too emotionally involved in it," Leverett said of costume design and theater work in general.

"It was nothing I ever intended to do -- I've always said I just sort of fell backwards into all of this."

-- Victor Leverett --

Looking back at his experience in New York, Leverett realizes West Coast students who go back East to work seem to establish themselves quickly because they don't harbor the type of illusions Ivy Leaguers seem to have.

"Kids from Yale would graduate and say 'I don't want a job, I want a position,'" he said.

He said that when he went to New York, "I'd never had any question that you didn't have to sort of do all the shit stuff at the bottom before you break in."

"Bellingham's not one of the great theater centers of the world."

--Victor Leverett--

Asked about acting, he admitted he's done some, but added, "we won't talk about that.

"You look at a part in a script and it looks like it will be good, never realizing that the words coming out of your mouth will sound like a dog's breakfast."

The costume department has undergone few tangible changes during Leverett's career at Western.

"I've learned more and I've gotten more toys to play with," he said, adding that "we rearrange the furniture when we get really bored."

Although he doesn't regret his experiences back East, Leverett said it didn't completely prepare him for all the different chores Western's job would throw his way.

"Here I have to do everything, and I wasn't really equipped as a constructionist when I came here. I look back at some of the artifacts that are in the storeroom now of my early construction from 10 years ago and I think 'Oh my God.' I really didn't know what I was doing sometimes."

When someone goes beyond the initial learning stages of a craft like Leverett's, he says certain kinds of dangers creep in.

"It's not only how it looks from 40 feet away, but one of the dangers of this business is you become preoccupied with how well it is actually **made**...you can get extremely neurotic about small details that are not only not visible to the audience, but not visible even to the people wearing the clothes.

"When that becomes too much of a preoccupation, then it slows you down and you don't get stuff done and you're wasting a lot of time and effort.

"Somehow you have to strike a balance between doing good work and not becoming obsessed with inconsequential details that only please you or nobody else knows about," Leverett said.

A great deal goes on in preparing for a production before he even sees the actors, though. The initial stages of design involve balancing Leverett's perceptions of the play with those of the director.

"Having arrived at sort of a resolution of wants and aspirations against possibilities and availabilities, I then just sort of get busy and start doing it," he said.

An often frustrating aspect of "doing it" is finding stuff he needs, since "Bellingham's not one of the great theater centers of the world."

Without much time, he says he often has to invent solutions. Because the program often does not have the time to build whole productions, they rely heavily on props from previous productions.

But after all this planning, in come the actors.

"You can plan forever, but you've got to know what bodies you're dealing with."

Dealing with actors' bodies can be excruciating.

"You're having to deal with that **most** delicate and sensitive area which is their bodies and their insecurities -- nobody likes the way they look -- nobody likes their body. People are always saying 'I hate my neck,' or 'I hate my butt,' or 'wool isn't my fabric,' and I have to say, 'that's too bad, dear, but it's your character's fabric.' You have to be real diplomatic and I'm not always, I'm afraid."

Leverett's least-favorite part of the job is "dealing with **some** actors. Their priorities and mine are not always the same.

"I learned you pamper stars whether they're rotten to the core or not because you have to have them."

Leverett's favorite parts of the job are "sitting around talking with directors and sometimes roaming around looking for things -- not because I find what I'm looking for but because I come across things unexpectedly that stimulate a lot of thought.

"We rearrange the furniture when we get bored."

-- Victor Leverett --

"I look at things and I see possibilities in them rather than sitting dreaming things up out of thin air."

Another aspect of the job Leverett has come to enjoy in a twisted sort of way is the chaotic nature of his work.

"I have to admit that I kind of thrive on the pressure that the sort of crisis schedule brings on. It gets my adrenaline going. In many ways I feel a lot more 'up' when I'm pressured."

This chaotic existence has surrounded Victor Leverett's occupational life, but he confessed, "My dream has always been to sell underwear at J.C. Penney from nine-to-five."



Michael Seal, director of Western's Vehicle Institute, leans against one of his department's award-winning performance cars -- the Viking Eight.

Brian Bean

VIKING CARS

On the Road to Success

Why the Viking test cars are some of the fastest, most innovative technology coming out of a college program -- and who's behind the innovations.

BY MARISA LENCIONI

In case of any sudden terrorist attacks on Western, students in the automotive research department could take refuge from flying bullets easily. They could crowd into the passenger seat of their Viking-Eight test car, whose outer body skin is composed of Kevlar -- the same material used to make bullet-proof vests. Experimenting with exotic materials like Kevlar for their Viking test cars is business as usual for Western's auto department.

"Kevlar is a material one-step -- a very big step -- but the next one up from fiberglass," Anthony Thostenson explained, running his hand along the Viking Eight's smooth gray outer body. "Much stronger for its weight than fiberglass."

Thostenson is a senior technology major and one of a group of student volunteers who work on the Viking test cars. The auto shop department, under the direction of Michael Seal, has had volunteers researching and developing performance cars since the first Viking-One model was created in 1975. That car set a high standard for other Viking cars to follow, placing an overall second for performance in the prestigious Unical race rally in 1976.

Depending upon what year it is, the Unical Rally runs from the Mexican border to the Canadian border, or from Canada down to Mexico. Last year the race went from Mexico to Canada. The Unical race is one testing ground Western utilizes for its experimental car line. The race is made up of entries from independent car builders, many of them from college programs. Fresno State University in California, Mankato State University in Kansas and the University of Minnesota have been entries in past rallies.

Since the success of the first test car, the auto shop department has produced more Viking models of varying design and function. The Viking-Four model, produced and tested during 1978-79, became the auto shop department's first record-breaking per-

"As long as students are interested, we'll keep coming up with new Viking variations."

-- Anthony Thostenson --

formance car, reaching speeds up to 165 mph at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. Its broad, flat body design is similar to the current Viking cars, but not quite as sleek.

Currently the Viking-Seven and Eight cars are the students' main focus. According to Thostenson, students volunteer for the projects, sometimes for credit but usually just for the experience of working on the cars.

"Each year there are tech students who are willing to expend the time and the talent to work on this project," Thostenson said. "Actually, if they show any interest in this they just get sucked into it. It takes an amazing amount of time. I've known guys to fall asleep in these cars because they spend so much time in them."

Thostenson did extensive electrical work on the Viking Seven, which so far has taken the longest of the cars to build -- about a year-and-a-half. The Seven is low, sleek and painted a bright candy apple red. Thostenson described some of the finer points of the machine.

"The Seven has a turbo-charged Subaru engine,



Brian Bean

The Eight's modified interior.

which we've modified." Thostenson lifted a hatch behind the passenger seats to display the engine. "The fuel tanks are located behind the seats too, but the fuel fill is... underneath the side doors."

According to Thostenson, the design of the Seven is a bit rougher than that of the Eight.

"The Eight is easier to get into," Thostenson said, indicating the wider, lower design of the side doors. The shape is a sort of hybrid between a Porsche and a Corvette, with a broad, flat hood dipping down in the front and swooping up and back to form the smooth lines of the car. The windshield curves in almost a half-circle around the top of the Eight -- a smooth aerodynamic structure.

"We've also put the fuel fill in the back near the engine," Thostenson continued, "and the Eight has a Chrysler 2.2-liter engine instead of the Subaru (engine.) Subaru stopped supplying us engines for test cars after the Seven, because they didn't want to be responsible for any accidents that may happen. So we have Chrysler engines now."

Although the Viking cars haven't been involved in any accidents that he knows of, Thostenson explained Subaru "was concerned with the liability," from any accidents their company's engines could be involved in.



Brian Bean

Steve Janicki adjusts the Viking Eight's windshield wiper.

According to Thostenson, the Eight doesn't have quite the same performance as the Seven, though.

"The Eight is faster in the long run than the Seven, but the Seven gets off to quicker starts," he explained. "The Eight also has a better-redesigned front dash, and much better ventilation than the Seven."

"It's got about a 40 mile-per-gallon capacity," Seal said.

Viking cars are tested for their speed capacities at the Bonneville Salt Flats. Usually Seal or one of the students will take the car for test rides.

"The Eight is really in limbo at this point," Thostenson continued. "Because of the dispute in ownership, we can't conduct any scientific tests on performance. We have to wait until the real owner is decided."

The question of legal ownership seems to be the only bug in the works of the Viking program.

"The Viking-Eight was built under a contract for Vardax Consultants," Seal explained. "They paid us approximately \$80,000 to build the car, do some plastic tooling and conduct handling and performance tests. We completed the project on our end, but then Vardax sold the project to other investors. Vardax claims they didn't receive all the money from the other party, so they assumed the car was theirs. The other investors claimed they did pay in full, and that the project belongs to them. So now it's up to the courts to decide."

According to Seal, Vardax is a group of about 80 different companies. Most of its executives live in

Whatcom County, and Seal believes Western is the only school Vardax approached to construct the car.

Despite the ownership dilemma, students continue working on the Viking Seven and Eight, creating and testing new design ideas.

"The Seven and some of the earlier Vikings are 'test beds,'" Thostenson explained. "If someone has an idea, they build it and test it using one of the car bodies. It becomes their project."

The Viking cars have also taken to the roads around campus. Thostenson says that students or

Seal will often take the Seven out for a short drive, to test an idea or just for the thrill of driving one.

"As long as there are students interested," Thostenson said, "we'll keep coming up with new Viking variations."

The students working on the Viking project also keep busy researching and developing engines for various clients.

"The Canadian government recently sponsored a project to find a more efficient engine for public buses," Thostenson said. "We took a General Motors V-8 racing engine, turbo-charged it, and set it up so it runs on natural gas. We got much more power out of it than we hoped."

The students also modified a Subaru engine, which included casting their custom-designed heads for the engine, making it more efficient in fuel consumption and power output. They sent the plans to Subaru, which plans to adopt the modifications in future engines they produce.

But the Viking-Eight remains the major focus of the auto shop department.

"We've put into the Eight the highest technology available to us now," Thostenson said proudly, smiling at the glistening gray auto standing still for the moment in Western's auto shop garage. "It's a great performance car. It

took first place overall in performance at UBC's Innovative Vehicle Design Competition."

The competition, funded by the British Columbia provincial government, took place last spring during Expo '86, where it was also designated as an exhibit. Points were awarded on the basis of how creatively the cars were designed, with another category including points for how well the cars performed. The Eight was the overall winner in this category.

According to Seal, the future for the Viking-Eight looks bright, especially once the legal battle is resolved.

"Our sponsors may plan to eventually produce the car," he said. "Not on a mass scale, but perhaps eight to 10,000 will be made."

At Western, the future in fast cars may already be here.



"We've put into the (Viking) Eight the highest technology available to us now."



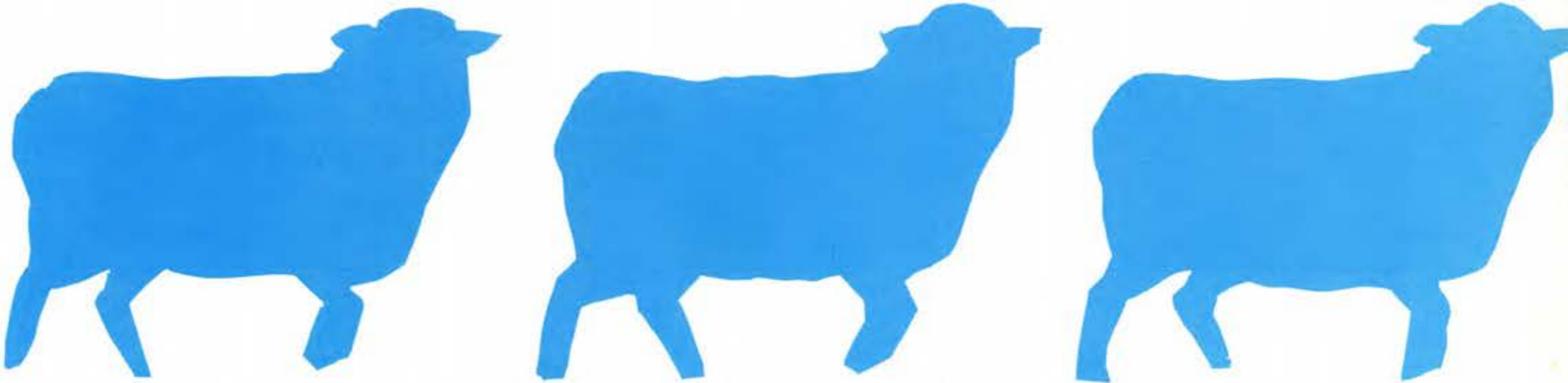
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No-Doz-BROZ
FIGHT
SOCIAL APATHY

Laura Boynton

«Next Best Thing To Dead Air»

BY CLAY MARTIN



Throughout time, certain individuals have used everything from militant demonstration to passive resistance to affect the collective social conscience. But two Bellingham men believe the most effective means of changing people's attitudes and perspectives is through comedy, music and theatrical weirdness.

Pliny Keep and Pat Brainard, both 21, have conventional-enough responsibilities. Keep is a Fairhaven student, and until last quarter was the personnel manager of the Associated Students Recycle Center. Brainard is a baker at the Cookie Cafe and a student at Whatcom Community College. But when they have an audience and a microphone they are the No-Doz-Broz, which is anything but conventional.

The No-Doz-Broz ("The next best thing to dead air"), is a name derived from the duo's first KUGS show, which had a 2-to-6 a.m. Sunday time-slot.

Dressed in a red baseball cap with silver wings, a powder-blue T-shirt with a broken egg embroidered on the front, tucked into blue stretch-pants hiked up over his stomach, Keep explained his rationale.

"If I tell you something and you think you're being entertained, you're gonna be open to it. But if I come to you 'n' say things are this way 'n' you're wrong, you won't get anywhere. You trick people into social activism."

The No-Doz-Broz have been tricking people this way for the past two years. Performing what Keep described as "unnervingly weird entertainment with a social conscience," the duo have performed weekly radio shows on KUGS as well as numerous live performances.

These performances generally consist of comic dialogue intended to create a satire pointed at the ridiculous side of consumerism, militarism, middle-class attitudes and a cannonade of other topics.

During their radio shows, which they first did in the summer of 1985, they overlap songs by such diverse artists as Frank Sinatra, the Ventures and Le Chick, with satirical dialogue, pseudo-commercials and their innovative "splabbing" technique.

Splabbing is a form of raw, improvisational rhythmic vocalization that stems from scatting, a "doo-wop" form of jazz singing.

Sitting outside Tony's Coffee, Keep and Brainard clarified splabbing further by performing a psychotic a capella rendition of Herbie Hancock's "Rockit," with Brainard doing the percussion and Keep simulating the keyboard with note-for-note exactness. "That's the only (non-original) we do," Keep said.

He explained that he and his cousins, who called themselves "the bag team," developed the splabbing technique while living on the streets of Seattle



Laura Boynton

The No-Doz-Broz style of provoking social conscience -- satire and weird humor.

during 1982-84.

"I was a street punk livin' in squats... 'n' dumpsterin' a lotta stuff," he said. Keep and his cousins had no musical instruments, so they began doing complete songs, such as "Roundabout" by Yes, using only their voices as instrumentation.

But the musical side of No-Doz-Broz performances is only one of many. Their main emphasis is on social satire, which Brainard said "requires the audience to go beyond the literal."

Keep said he's received his main inspiration from the book *Candide* by Voltaire. One of the characters in the book is Dr. Pangloss, who Keep said believes that "everything that happens in the world is for the best. It was a satire on the social issues of his time."

The No-Doz-Broz take this same "Voltairean" approach in the weekly news show they began doing in spring, 1986. It was called "The Truth?! -- The Pangloss News and World Distort." The motto of the show was, "All is for the best, in this, the best of all possible worlds."

In these psuedo-news reports they would address real news events and satirize them.

Relaxing in Levis and a flannel shirt, Brainard explained the No-Doz-Broz technique as "taking these terrible things and twisting the logic."

With Brainard simulating the rhythmic clicking of a rapidly-operated typewriter, Keep gave an example in a voice resembling Ted Baxter's on-air voice

from *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. "It's good that the people are starving in Ethiopia because now there's more room for the rest of us. And it's good that we're burying tons of grain in the ground to keep the price up because a few people will get very rich, and there will be plenty of room for them."

Another example cheerfully examined the destruction of the rain forest in Brazil. "Rain forests are itchy, dirty, slimy places. We can make them into deserts with plenty of room for RVs."

"Some of it is so harsh people just can't handle it," Keep said.

An example is a skit they did on their radio show called "Brown People," which was intended as a satire on racism and exploitation of Central American refugees in the United States. In the skit Keep advocated in his friendliest salesman voice that listeners "contact Brown People As Pets today, and sign your conscience away."

The skit angered one listener who didn't interpret it as satire and gave them a hate call during the show.

Keep and Brainard have known each other since they were five years old. They said that in past years they would put their energy into getting stoned and making bongos.

"That was our creative output," Brainard said. But they needed an alternate artistic outlet and eventually turned to "comedy and weirdness," he said, "because we weren't very good musicians.

"It's our vent for living in such a closed, isolated town. It's good for my nerves."

They agree that their contrasting personalities make a good balance. "I'm kind of shy, and I try not to get involved speaking about issues and such, but he gets so carried away, and I hold the reins," Brainard said. "Apart, we're kind of hopeless. He's an exhibitionist -- I'm detached. On my own, I'm kind of boring, but Pliny; he's too wild."

Sipping his decaffeinated coffee, Keep admitted, "I'm like naturally on speed all the time. One time I took speed and it almost killed me."

"I'm naturally on speed all the time. One time I took speed and it almost killed me."

-- Pliny Keep --

Though they are very motivated in their efforts, fame and fortune seem to be the least of their motivational factors.

"We're not really into success," Brainard explained.

Keep agreed. "We keep thinking it's just a mellow, fun thing, but people keep responding to us and giving us things to do."

He recalled his favorite fan letter and recited it as if it were classic poetry. "Dear No-Doz-Broz, The last time I listened to your show, I set my garbage can on fire. Keep up the good work."

The duo have performed at the Fairhaven Renaissance Art Fair, the KUGS benefit last February, various in-house performances at Fairhaven college and occasional parties. They also performed at the April 1987 Dialogue on Peace and War seminar.

With Keep dressed as a mercenary soldier, complete with a mock M-16, the two performed such skits as a Super-Savers flight pitch for exciting holiday vacations to all the great war-torn areas of the globe. The audience, sobered by the day-long discussion and debate, stared open-mouthed as the No-Doz-Broz rambled into the microphones with a barrage of rapid-fire social satire using a variety of vocal tones and sound effects that seemed to be coming from five voices and a couple of electronic instruments.

"Sometimes I get so hyperventilated I almost pass out," Brainard said.

After a few such skits, Keep asked the sparse crowd, "Should we keep going?" The applause indicated a yes answer.

"The number-one thing about our shows," Keep added, "is that they're improvisational."

They decided not to do the KUGS show last spring because they found themselves "starting to follow formulas of past shows," as Keep said. "We did achieve radio burnout after doing the show for two years."

They spent the time off from the radio show working on their live performances and putting together a 60-minute promotion tape, which includes material recorded from their radio shows and vari-

"Reporters are basically objective, but they're afraid to report a lot of things, and in a sense, that's self-censorship."

-- Pliny Keep --

ous new material. The skits on the tape are about two minutes each.

Although both are quick to point out that they watch no TV and avoid mainstream newspapers and magazines, they do rely on such alternative publications as *Utne Reader*, *The Nation*, and *Mother Jones* for news and information.

Although they dislike the reporting in most mainstream media, they admit it has a large influence on what they do.

One example is a skit which advocates reducing drug dependency through "media medicine."

"Instead of taking a stimulant just turn on the TV and watch a few hours of sex and violence. It's very stimulating."

Keep said they did some research into the media and found that "reporters are basically objective, but they're afraid to report a lot of things, and in a sense, that's self-censorship."

Both feel this contributes to the isolation of most people in the United States. Keep said the United States has five percent of the world population but consumes 60 percent of the world's resources. But most people are so isolated in their perspectives that they don't know or care about this.

With their performances, they hope to do something about the vegetative state of most people by shocking them out of their apathy and ignorance and into social activism.

"I get pissed-off at everybody being sheep," Keep said.



Laura Boynton

Pliny Keep, left, and Pat Brainard -- The No-Doz-Broz.

