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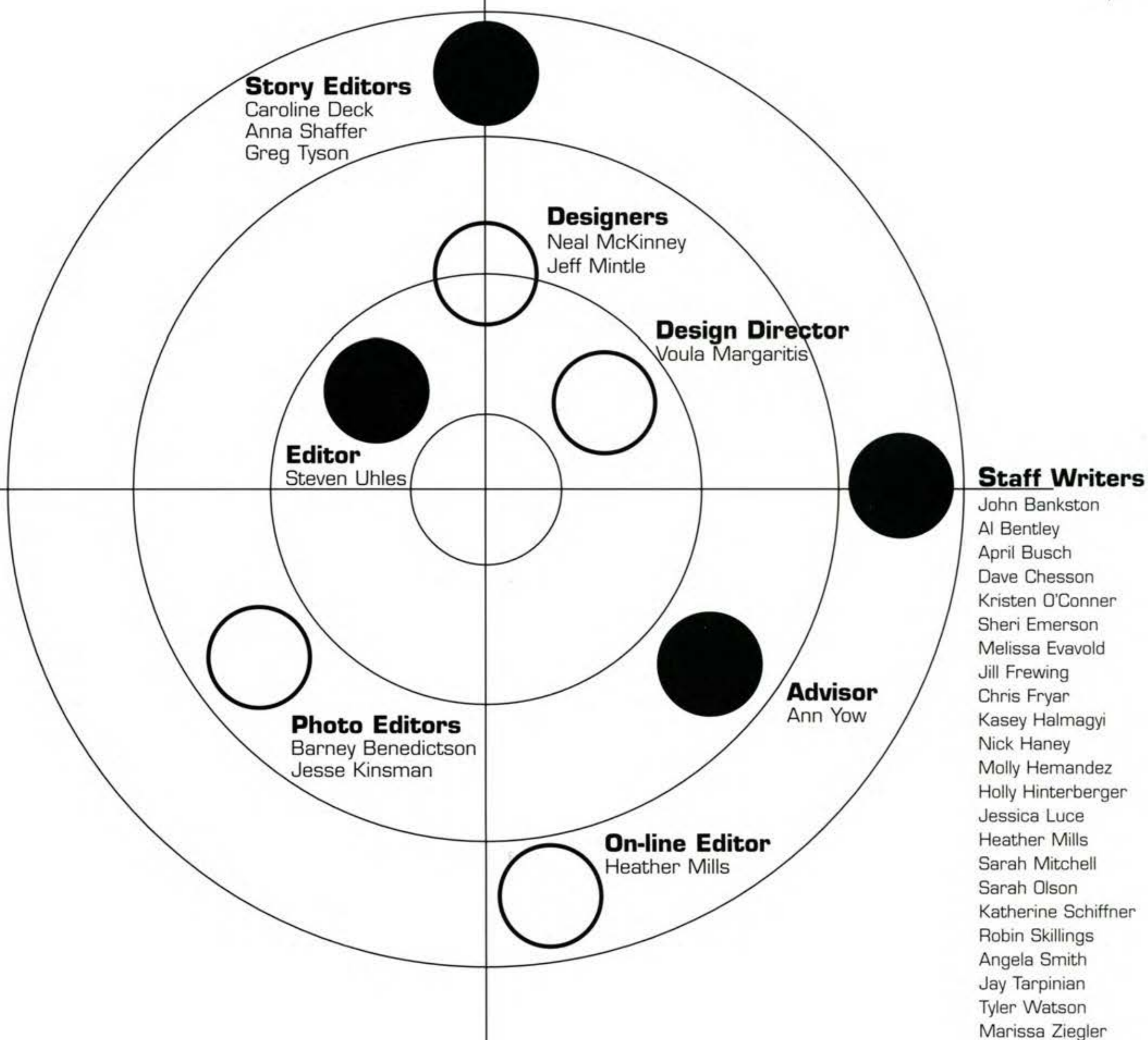
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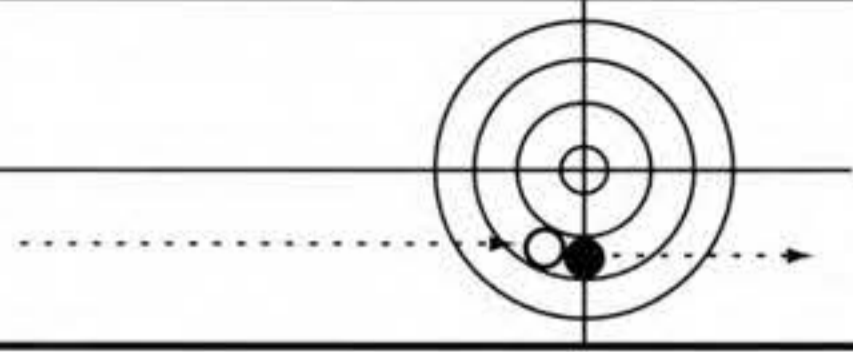
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Drink 'em Dry Holly Hinterberger

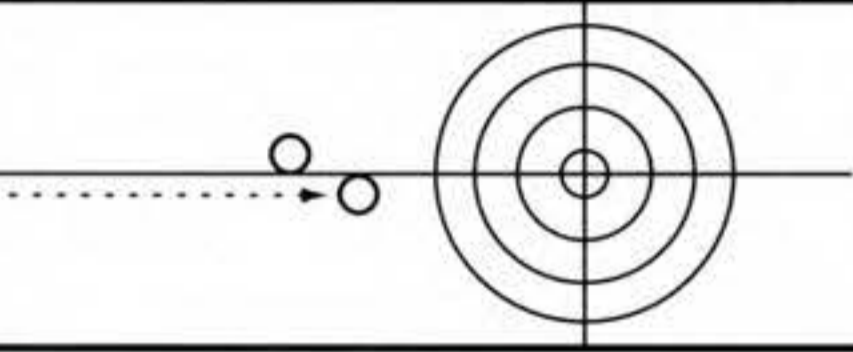
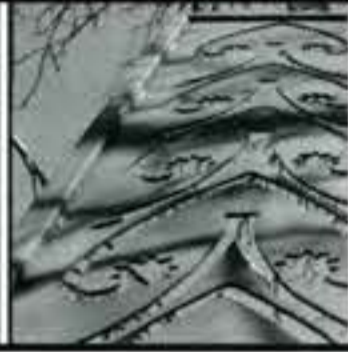
The resurgence of the martini culture.



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Artistic Illuminations Sheri Emerson

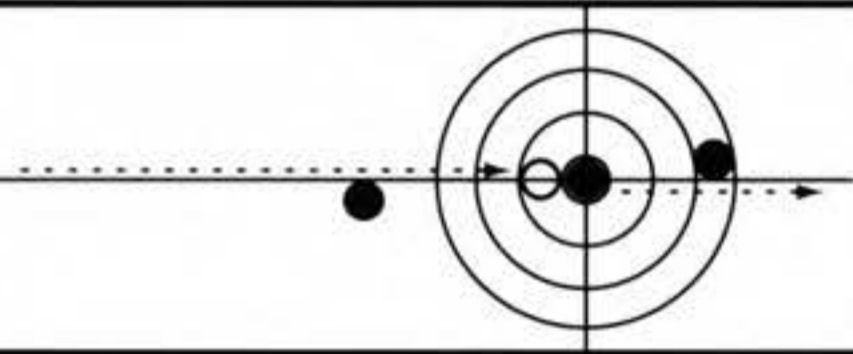
Nationally known artist is making her name known in Bellingham.



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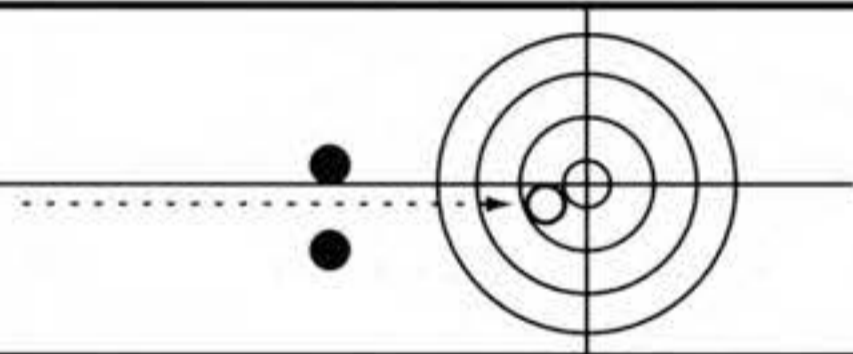
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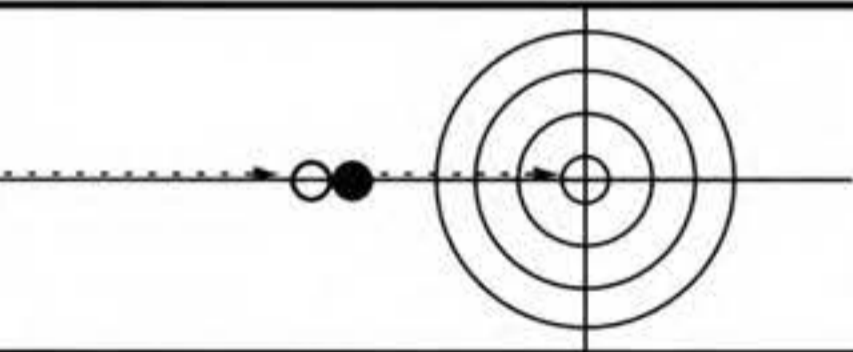
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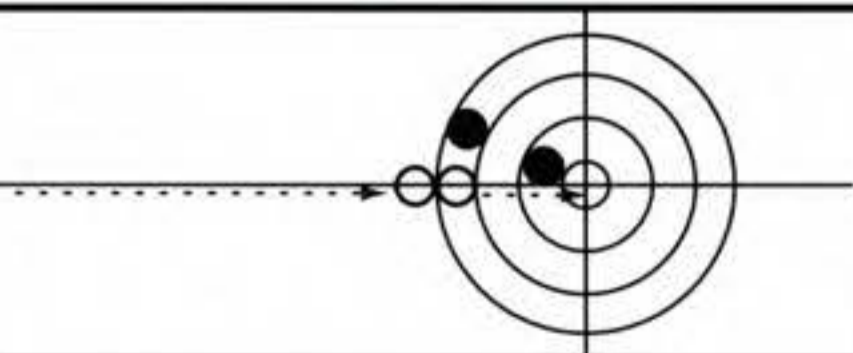
A bridge, a troll — and this time, no goats.



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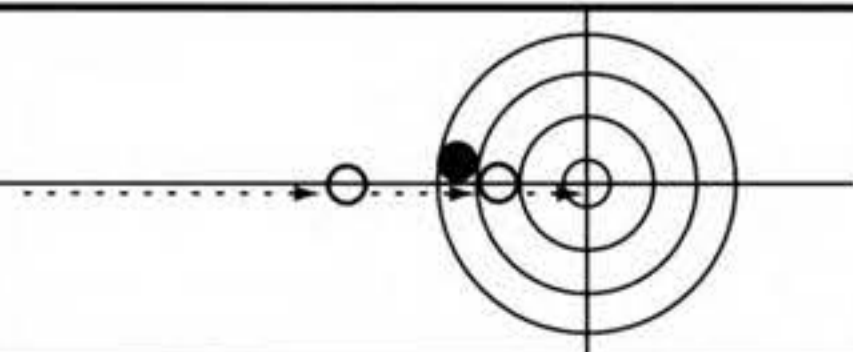
A couple of lotto winners chat about life, love and luck.

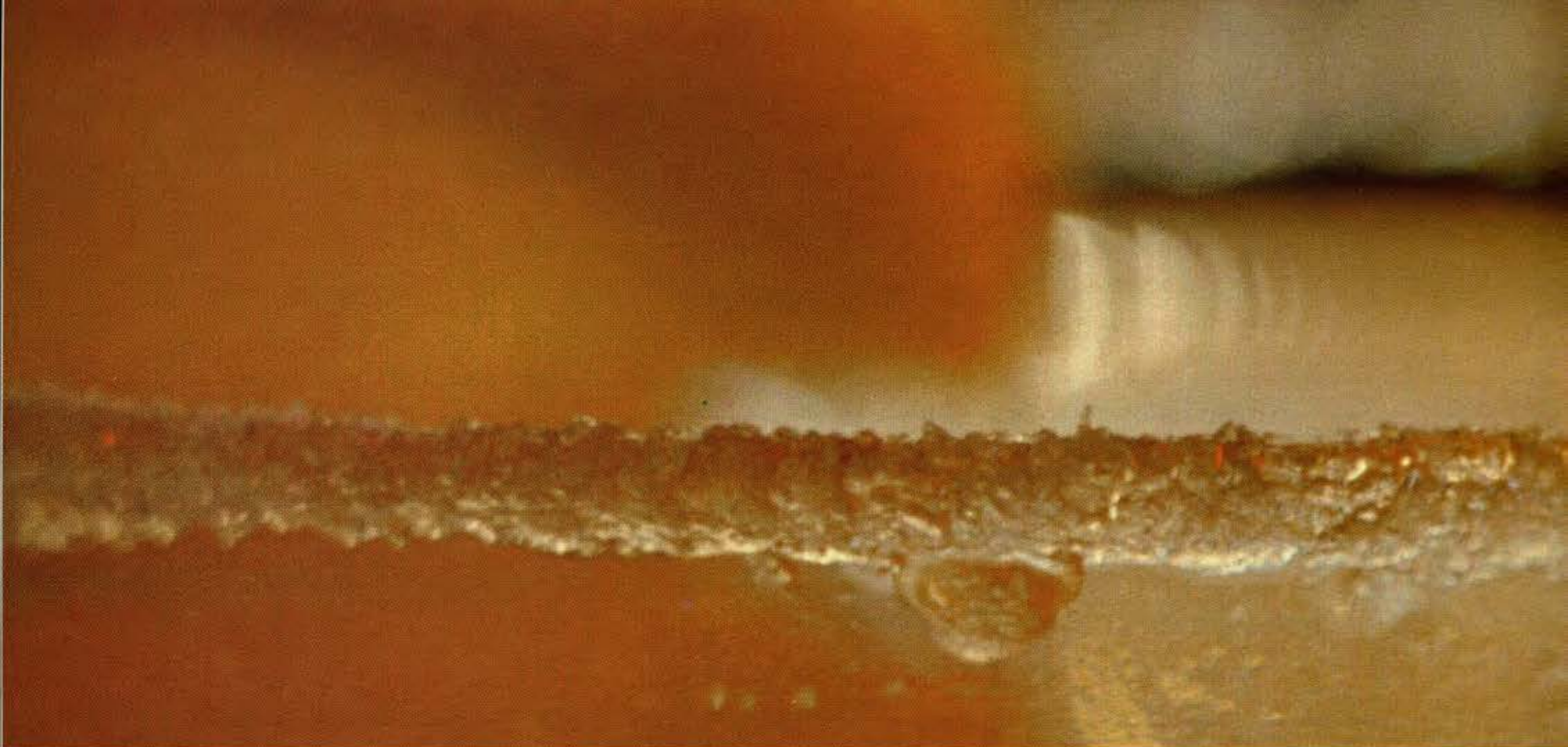


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Tusk & Groove Melissa Evavold

Bellingham artist rekindles lost art of scrimshaw.





Drink 'em Dry

photography by Barney Benedictson
story by Holly Hinterberger



A woman sits behind a light haze of cigarette smoke. Her right hand clutches a glass that is half full of gin, a drop of vermouth and two olives — a classic martini. The man next to her is drinking a Journalist Martini — Beefeater gin, Sweet & Dry Vermouth, Orange Curacao, bitters and lemon juice. Across from her is a Silver Bullet Martini — Tanqueray and dry vermouth, with a twist of lemon.

It's 5:30 p.m. on a Friday at Von's Grand City Café & Martini-Manhattan Memorial in downtown Seattle, and almost every table inside the crowded bar has at least one frozen martini glass perched on it. Color and clarity differs in each glass: cloudy yellow, neon green, peach, clear and more.

Von's, a self-proclaimed martini bar, has 99 martini varieties on its menu. It serves two basic categories of the drink: classic and specialty martinis. Every martini is served with no ice in a chilled, traditional six-ounce stemmed glass. Drinkers have a choice of an imported, stuffed green olive or a fresh lemon twist.

Signs devoted to drinking and Seattle pack the walls of Von's. The words 'Seattle's best martini' gleam in neon green from the window. Above the bar a sign reads, "We employ the wave-the-cork-over-the-glass method or, as Sir Winston Churchill described the perfect dry martini, 'Glance at the vermouth bottled briefly while pouring the juniper distillate freely.'" On either side of Churchill's quote hangs giant \$2 bills with martini-glass centers.

Evidence of the martini's popularity is obvious from the four shelves behind Von's bar devoted to martinis. Half-gallon bottles of gin and vodka are turned upside-down, feeding into the bartender's beverage gun.

Almost every drink that leaves the bar on a server's tray is in a stemmed martini glass. Von's embodies the increasing popularity of the martini culture. More and more young people are nodding their heads toward the stiff drink.

While martinis have been around for decades, they are just now becoming popular again.

"Martinis were big in the '50s and '60s. They were always there, but other drinks came out, and the younger you are, the faster you want to get drunk," said Mike Ruhl, bartender at Oliver's.

The martini has always been considered a drink for older people, said Brandon Winters, bartender and martini drinker.

"There is a move back toward classy society," Winters said. "(Society) is pulling itself away from punk and rap, and people are dressing nicer. The classier drinks go along with that."

The movie "Swingers" and the rising popularity of jazz music and swing dancing also play an important part in the rising popularity of the martini, Winters said.

"The whole retro thing is in right now," said Gregg Pattle, bar server at Von's, "and you get more bang for your buck."

Yet, martinis are about more than hip clothes and swing dancing; they are a symbol of something more substantial, Ruhl said.

"The martini is based on romance and tradition, a time to slow down and enjoy life," Ruhl said. "... It is a drink of being successful and sophisticated. Instead of going to keggers, people are having martini parties."

The current resurgence of the martini culture can be attributed to society's need for romance and elegance. People want to escape and have fun. Martinis fulfill people's need for time to kick back and relax, Ruhl said. For younger people, they fulfill a desire for adulthood.

"(Martinis) are an adult drink; you have arrived," Ruhl said. "It is a symbol of sophistication and attitude. We all want to succeed in life. (Martinis) are a symbol that we are growing up and can go out and get an adult drink."

The appearance of wealth and sophistication comes at a rather affordable price, however, ranging from \$3.50 to \$8, depending on the establishment and the alcohol's quality. The symbol of success is just that, a symbol. Unlike an expensive cigar or wine, the martini's reputation is founded on more than just the price tag. Its elegance is in its appearance.

Even the martini glass personifies the elegance and romance of the drink. It does, however, serve a purpose. The stem is designed so that warm hands do not disrupt the coldness of the drink. Every martini is meant to be ice cold.

The young, hip martini crowd at Von's may or may not notice the chill of their drinks, but it is aware of the image the drinks represent.



Across town from Von's, Tami Tallman is on her second martini of the night. She puffs on her cigarette and talks to the bartender as if he is a lifelong friend. It is obvious she has just finished the work-week and has yet to go home for the day. Her long brown hair is pulled into a tight braid that falls over her black business jacket.

Tallman, who has been drinking martinis since she lived in New York in the 1960s, said she had a hard time finding a martini in Seattle when she first moved here.

"I was looked at funny," she said. "Nobody drank martinis; I was really odd. Everybody drank whiskeys."

As Seattle got more sophisticated and more eclectic people moved in, Tallman had company at the martini bar, she said. As more people joined Tallman, more bartenders began specializing in martinis.

"Intrinsic to a perfect martini is the person who makes it," Tallman said. "You have to have a bartender who has the right personality to make a martini."

Martinis are a package. The glass, the server, the garnish and the presentation all make up the symbol of elegance that are martinis. The martini culture is the embodiment of those who drink the stylish cocktails and what they hope to represent by doing so. It is more than just gin. Gin, however, was the root to the present martini drinker.

Gin's base is vodka, Ruhl said. Distillers add herbs and juniper berries to vodka and refine it until they have gin. The result is very clean liquor that is high in alcohol content. The average gin is 94.7 proof, while the average vodka is only 80 proof, Winters said.

Early martini drinkers sipped genever; the original gin created by Dutch medical professor Franciscus de la Boe in the 1650s. It was distilled and fermented barley, maize, rye and juniper berries. French distillers added spices to genever and created geneva; the name was later shortened to gin. The English created a drier version and named it sweet dry gin.

According to the book "Shaken not Stirred" by Anistatia Miller and Jared Brown, government restrictions in England were placed on the manufacture and sale of alcohol. It became expensive to make gin and distillers of cheap gin could not afford the production licenses. Only high-quality gin was available, and only those who could afford gin drank it. Gin became the drink for the upper class.

The English celebrated the creation of gin and drank it straight. The actual origins of the martini, however, are unknown.

Pink gin and Gin-and-It are considered to be the first martinis. Pink gin was a mixture of bitters and gin that soldiers drank for stomachaches in the early 1800s. Gin-and-It mixed Italian dry vermouth with English sweet dry gin. Gin-and-French followed Gin-and-It and used French instead of Italian vermouth.

Johann Paul Aegius Schwarztendorf, who later changed his name to Jean Paul Aegide Martini, was a popular composer in Paris in the 18th century and is attributed with coining the name for the martini. His favorite drink was genievre (French for gin) and dry white wine. His friends named the drink martini after its creator.

Other theories exist on the martini's origins, but the former is considered the most accurate. Though its origins are debatable, the martini has evolved since the creation of gin. Everyone has their own style of martini.

Martini drinker Elodie Morse takes hers dry — straight up Bombay Gin with two olives and a twist rubbed along the rim of the glass. Morse began drinking martinis because she liked olives and thought the glasses were pretty. She has since come to love them and, like most martini drinkers, is very particular about how she takes them.

She prefers the olives to be served on the side so she can swish them through the gin and add the right amount of saltiness to the drink. She also likes the taste of the gin on the olives. As for the gin, only Bombay Sapphire or Tanqueray are acceptable.

Morse is a part of the older martini generation. She is a symbol of the martini's presence before the current trend of younger consumers.

Winters, 23, is an example of the new martini drinker. Winters is a Western student as well as a bartender. He started drinking martinis two years ago, because he thought the drink had a certain flair and attitude that made it attractive.

"They're stiff, and they can be made in so many different ways," he said.

Winters, like most martini drinkers, is picky about how he likes his favorite drink. He takes a twist, no olives and dry.

"Show the bottle of vermouth to the gin, and then put it away," Winters said.

Because martinis are so strong, they are popular for those, like Winters, who like to feel their alcohol. The average martini is two ounces of gin or vodka and is meant to be sipped. Larger martinis



are available at some establishments, but the bigger the martini, the longer it takes to drink, and the faster it gets warm.

More than one martini can spell trouble for unassuming drinkers. Winters' favorite saying about martinis came from the menu at a martini bar:

'I like to have a martini; two at the most; three I'm under the table; four I'm under the host.'

Getting drunk is not the only purpose of drinking martinis. If it were, people would not be so particular about how they are served. There would never be the argument over which is better — shaken or stirred.

Some argue that shaking a martini bruises the gin, meaning it waters it down. Oliver's shakes its martinis, because it believes the alcohol is chilled better and the ingredients get mixed thoroughly. Von's stirs its martinis to prevent ice crystals from forming in the drink, thereby watering it down.

Serious martini drinkers have a preference as to how they want their drink mixed and usually tell the bartender to either shake or stir, Ruhl said. Everybody has an opinion on how the best martini should be served.

The Mayflower Park Hotel in Seattle believes that the perfectly made martini deserves to be recognized. In 1992 it sponsored the first annual martini contest; only 50 people came to watch. This year's contest had more than 300 spectators, said Pat Boyd, director of food and beverage at the Mayflower Park Hotel.

"Martinis have made a comeback," Boyd said.

Martinis are judged on presentation and taste. Both classic and specialty martinis are considered.

Local celebrities judge the contest and take it all very seriously.

"They are enjoying themselves, but it is not a drinking fest," Boyd said.

Judges are chauffeured through Seattle in a limousine to the four participating establishments, Boyd said. Each establishment presents its version of the perfect martini and what they consider to be the perfect martini food.

"Food is an important part of consuming alcohol," Boyd said.

This year's participants included Oliver's at the Mayflower Park Hotel, The Metropolitan Grill and The Garden Court at the Four Seasons and Stars, a Seattle restaurant and lounge.

Oliver's, who has won the past six years, took home the prize of the best specialty martini for its Paradym Shift, made with Compari, raspberry-lemon-lime sour, an ounce of grapefruit juice, Rain Vodka and Bombay Gin. It is shaken and served in a frozen glass. Boyd described the flavor as bitter-sweet; the strength of the alcohol is slightly masked by the crisp fruit.

Regardless of how they are served, bars boasting good martinis continually find themselves packed with martini-thirsty drinkers.

Oliver's, like Von's, is known for its martinis. The atmosphere lends itself to the sophistication of the beverage. The elegant bar looks out onto Fourth Avenue in Seattle. People hurry by on the street without noticing the small, dimly-lit lounge and its tables of martini drinkers. The mahogany bar is lined with customers who finger the stems of their martini glasses.

Slowly they sip until just the garnish lines the bottom of the glass and it must be refilled, and they say, "Bartender, give me another — half gin, half vodka with a twist."



Artistic illuminations





Her Skagit Valley farm provides space for Sheila Klein's site-specific installments made from varying media.

South of Bellingham's Chuckanut mountains, the Skagit Valley unfolds into acres of farmland that extend toward distant horizons. This quiet, rural environment is home to fields of crops and a scattering of small towns.

Near one of those towns, an old farm house sits near the road, surrounded by an assortment of outbuildings — 10 in all, counting the outhouses. Next to its traditional front porch stands an eight-foot circular figure with red, green and amber pulsating lights. From a distance, the rhythmic pattern of colors might be mistaken for a string of traffic lights or a traffic accident. But it's actually a sign that nationally-renowned artist Sheila Klein has returned to the Skagit valley; a place she calls "magical."

Klein is well-known in the art world for her large-scale sculptures. Much of her work, like "Urband" in her front yard, utilizes patterns of light. More than 20 years ago, she was a young artist, a self-proclaimed hippie, living in LaConner and working in textile art. Despite a personal attachment to the Skagit valley, Klein left in the 1970s to seek bigger and better opportunities in Seattle and later in Los Angeles.

"I used to do street fairs," Klein said.

Today, Klein, 46, is a long way from street fairs. She and husband Ries Niemi, also an artist, discovered that Los Angeles gave them the opportunity to develop their art on a grand scale. Klein has several major civic projects to her credit and more in the works. One of her most famous sculptures sits atop a control tower at the Los Angeles International airport and was constructed and engineered at a cost of somewhere between \$400,000 and \$500,000.

Three and a half years ago, Klein and Niemi decided to leave Los Angeles and move their family to Skagit County. They bought a 26-acre farm just south of Edison. Klein now works in one of the farm's outbuildings with a rustic wooden door, faded from years of welcoming the morning sun. Its humble exterior provides no indication of the creative energy inside, where current and proposed art projects line the shelves.

Another outbuilding — this one recently constructed — provides shelter to some of the large-

scale equipment that Klein and her husband use to convert ordinary materials into extraordinary art. Moving all their apparatus to their new home required three semi-trucks.

One of their machines, a "plasma cutter," uses an optical eye to cut designs out of sheets of metal. Klein will use this technique to create Klein's first local project: a sculpture for her eldest son's school.

Rather than send her son to the local elementary school in Edison, Klein opts to drive him to Bellingham every day to attend Lowell Elementary School. She gladly makes the 25-minute drive through the Chuckanut hills, because she feels art programs in Bellingham schools are fantastic.

"I'm amazed at how good it is," she said. "They do so much. Cheryl Crooks (Lowell Arts Committee Chair), runs an incredible art enrichment program — a lot of the parents are really supportive of it. They do music, theater ... I don't think any school down here in the valley does that much."

As part of the art enrichment program, Klein volunteered to present a workshop to the students in January. Her work with traffic lights captured the students' attention.

"I was surprised," said Devon Taylor, a Lowell fifth grader who said he was expecting to see sculptures made out of stone. "But they were made out of lights."

His classmates echoed his sentiments. Some were amazed at how Klein "changed garbage into things." They also learned how her art is complementary to its surroundings.

"She researches the area where she is putting her art," said Elliot Bradshaw, a fifth grader who particularly liked a butterfly design by Klein. "That butterfly only lived in that area, and she used that for her design."

The students were invited to submit drawings representing their school. Klein and her husband will incorporate the drawings



into a metal design, and the sculpture will be installed on the school's retaining wall along 14th street.

Crooks said Klein and her husband are donating all the materials and labor for this project. Klein came up with the idea of using the student drawings to design a sculpture. Crooks said Klein's artwork often incorporates things that are relative to the surroundings.

"She operates on so many levels," Crooks said. "Her stuff is accessible, but there's other levels. There's a lot of thought in the process and the materials she chooses."

Klein denies this will become the first "Sheila Klein project" in Bellingham. She prefers to call it a "Sheila Klein-Ries Niemi collaboration with Lowell students."

As an artist, Klein said she has basically been supporting herself on one level or another for more than 20 years. That level reached

From elaborate to simplistic, Sheila Klein's work captivates the curious eye.





a new height in 1989 when she was chosen to be part of Sculpture Chicago, an event she said was a big turning point in her career. After her piece entitled "Commemorative Ground Ring" had been commissioned and on display for a year. It was purchased by the Chicago Historical Society for \$50,000 using money from the Miro Fund.

Following that milestone, Klein began developing art pieces, which she calls "jewelry made out of appliance," using traffic signals. She said that work eventually led to her becoming involved in designing the art for the Federal Aviation Agency tower at the Los Angeles International airport.

The architects and engineers that designed the tower were all women.

"It was a really supportive department," Klein said.

"Sometimes when you're working on a really big project that a lot of people have their egos attached to, there are a lot of people who don't want you to succeed. Sometimes people are threatened by it or don't understand it or think it's not worth it. In this case, all the women really wanted each other to succeed and to do their best work."

The LAX control tower was completed in 1996. During an interview on National Public Radio, Klein said her work involved "femming up the tower." She said the tower is very male and "by putting this very soft oval, protruding form with a lot of flickering lights in it ... (it) has a lot of metaphorical female imagery."

Although she's left the fast-paced metropolis of Los Angeles, Klein continues working at a frantic rate. Within the course of one week, she traveled to Vancouver, B.C., Seattle and California to lecture or meet with clients. Her time is precious, and she speaks quickly to convey information. Casual conversations are a luxury she can't afford.

Klein said one reason she's so busy is because her artistic ideas are gaining acceptance. It's creating a growing demand, and she wants her work to continue evolving.

Sometimes her projects require years to finish.

She is currently finishing one of her California projects, a metro rail station in the center of Hollywood, that she's been working on for eight years. Klein described this project, titled "Underground Girl," as a very "sensual abstraction."

"It's one of the largest scale things I've ever done," she said. "It's meant to be an abstract pelvis. It's very female."

She also has a new project starting in Santa Monica, another with Sound Transit in Seattle, and she is a finalist for Paul Allen's new Seattle Seahawk football stadium.

Klein said 256 people submitted art proposals for the stadium and 22 finalists were chosen. The final cut will select somewhere between 10 to 15 people.

Klein's proposal is to construct large fans full of lights on the eastern facade of the stadium with a windshield wiper that



moves over them. As the wiper moves, the lights change.

Although Klein refuses to be labeled by any one art medium, lights are a repetitive trademark of hers. She has created art using both traffic signals and street lights.

Klein can give endless examples of her work, but she doesn't keep track of the total number of projects she has created. And she can't begin to pick a favorite. She prefers to focus on the experience of doing the projects and her reason for doing them: to contribute to society by making things look better.

"Our built environment is impoverished," she said, "I can help. I think that we need to give people better spaces and better places."

Klein quickly points out that none of her work has ever been vandalized.

"If you do something nice for people — and good — then people appreciate it, and they don't vandalize it," Klein said. "If you give people blank, monotonous spaces, then they want to stamp something on it that makes it personal."

Klein is currently adding her own personal stamp to her 26-acre farm. Art pieces are scattered throughout the former dairy farm, including three 10-foot engraved metal screens standing near her driveway.

The rhythmic lights of "Urband" are attracting attention in this quiet, pastoral setting. It's a reflection of her desire to challenge the way people think and feel about art.

"Don't focus on the technology," she said urgently. "Focus on the idea."

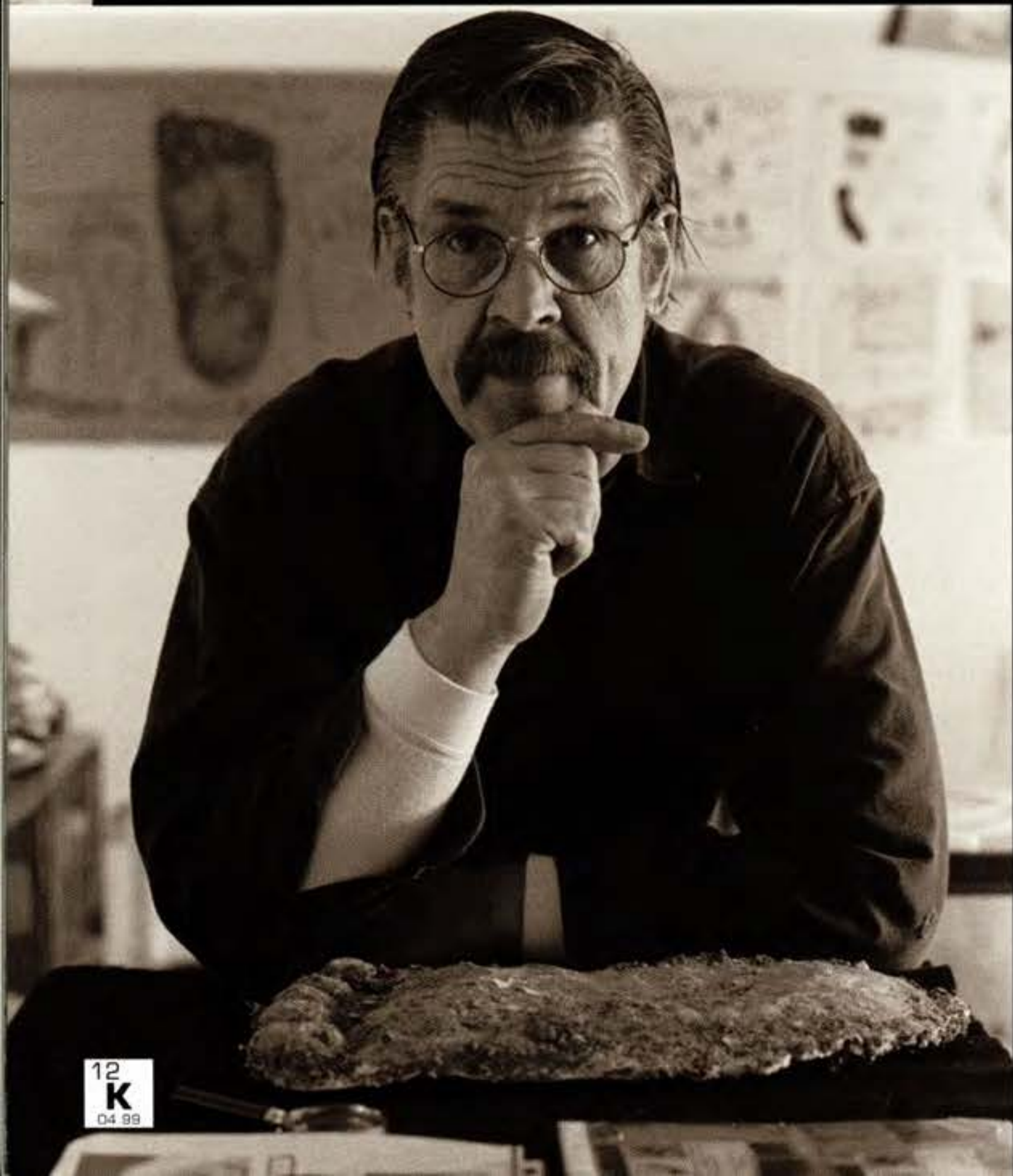
That focus has brought Klein back to Skagit County, where she is making herself at home by blending the magic of this valley with the magic of her art.

And she is helping students at Lowell create a little magic of their own.

in pursuit of

Bigfoot,

Cliff Crook, below, a long time Bigfoot tracker/investigator is the founder of Bigfoot Central.



The "wild man of the woods" is a familiar figure in folklore and Indian legend, dating back hundreds of years. Tales of encounters with mysterious ape-like creatures roaming dense forest areas, surface periodically around the world.

More than 600 names exist for a creature few claim to have ever seen. Himalayan Sherpa guides report sightings of a "wild man," calling it the Abominable Snowman or Yeti. For years, encounters with a legendary "man-thing" have occurred in remote corners of Asia and Siberia. Canadians use the native name Sasquatch when making references to the creature. In the United States, particularly the Pacific Northwest, numbered sightings and encounters tally higher than any other location on the planet; we live in an area that many experts and enthusiasts have deemed Bigfoot country.

Enthusiasm is just the right word to describe Cliff Crook, a 59-year-old Bigfoot tracker/investigator who resides in Bothell. In 1991, he founded Bigfoot Central, the first non-profit foundation

Story by Chris Fryer

Photography by Jesse Kinsman



A plaster cast of a Bigfoot footprint, one of the many pieces of evidence Crook says verifies the existence of the Sasquatch.

sanctioned by the State of Washington for the preservation of the Sasquatch.

Crook said he attributes his infatuation with Bigfoot to a terrifying encounter he had one unforgettable June night in 1956. He was camping with three friends in an isolated wooded area near Lake Washington when they were abruptly awakened around 2 a.m. by a rustling in some nearby bushes.

"As it got closer, and we got more terrified, the dog charged into the brush," Crook clearly recalls. "We heard a growling and grumble — like the heavy voice of a man ... the dog came flying through the air, nearly landing in the campfire."

What happened next is permanently ingrained on Crook's subconscious

"The Bigfoot raised up over the brush about seven feet high," Crook said. "I saw him from the shoulders up ...

He just raised up, turned and then crouched down. I got a good enough look at him that I knew it wasn't a bear or a human being," Crook said.

Ever since that fateful day 43 years ago, Crook has been on what he calls a peaceful pursuit of Bigfoot, believing that the purported rare and elusive creatures are entitled to their full peace and freedoms in the wild.

Elusive is a word often used to describe the sometimes estimated 7-foot-tall, 500-pound Bigfoot. However, it is not a word that can be used in describing Crook — a man who is anything but elusive in his fascination and search for the creature.

Giant painted "bigfoot prints" adorn the walkway leading up to his house, which is located in a middle-class cul-de-sac neighborhood. A large sign attached to the front door reads: Bigfoot Central.

"C'mon in," a mysterious and unknown voice growls and grumbles, through a slightly ajar door.

Upon entering the home/headquarters of Bigfoot Central, the common nature of its interior and decor is comforting. Photos of relatives crowd the walls. Knick-knacks cling to cluttered shelves. The voice of Doris Day lyrically dances about the room. And a middle aged man sits alone at a dining table.

His dark mustache and slicked hair nicely match with his black shirt and deep dark eyes. His voice, although thick and raspy, is pleasant and inviting. He reaches for another Basic-Ultra light cigarette and removes it slowly from the pack. Holding it masterfully between his thumb and index finger, he methodically places it into a silver-tipped cigarette holder, and with one quick flick of his wrist and stroke of his thumb, he ignites it with a Zippo.

"I just got a call from a guy down in the Mount Hood area — claims he's got video of a Sasquatch," Crook said, exhaling a puff of smoke with a degree of skepticism. "It'd sure be a long way to travel if it turns out to be a hoax."

Having been a tracker and investigator of Bigfoot for more than 40 years, Crook is often one of the first individuals notified when reports surface involving the mysterious and evasive giant.

"I've been a lot of places chasing Bigfoot," he explains in a more serious tone. "A lot of the reports end up being jokes or hoaxes, and sometimes animal tracks are mistaken for Bigfoot. But every once in a while I find the real thing — authentic Bigfoot evidence, that's what keeps me going."

Crook's office, Bigfoot Central's brainstem, is a cluttered reserve, mixed with old and new information. Files, videos, sound recordings



Crook sits amidst his artifacts at Bigfoot Central. Crook has been investigating Bigfoot for more than 40 years.

and maps fill the walls, stuff the drawers and cram shelves. A Gummy Bigfoot, a Sasquatch Wheaties box, cartoon drawings, pictures, magnets and everything else Bigfoot, smother the small room like an overabundance of prized trophies.

Crook shifts his attention to a movie poster attached securely to the wall. It's from the 1987 comedy "Harry and the Hendersons," a story focusing on a Northwest Sasquatch, a middle-class family, and the antics that follow when the legendary creature decides to join their family. Some scenes from the film were loosely based on Crook's own life.

"You know, I was a technical advisor for the film, and Bigfoot Central was used in the movie," Crook proudly points out with an ever-expanding grin. "I was portrayed by the great Don Ameche."

It's obvious that Crook welcomes with open arms any and all attention Bigfoot receives through various media and products.

"It keeps the interest in Bigfoot alive and fun!" he says while holding a "I Brake For Bigfoot" bumper sticker, copyrighted by him of course.

What isn't fun for Crook is managing the hundreds of reported incidences he receives each year.

One way he tracks his investigations is by continually updating and monitoring a map of Washington state with colored pushpins. Black denotes recent sightings, red: reoccurring reports, white: no evidence, green: less current and blue is what Crook refers to as "a code for me." (It's located in Cowlitz County.)

Pierce County is currently ranked number one in the state for sightings, with Whatcom County coming in at a distant sixth.

"There hasn't been much activity in Whatcom County in recent years," Crook said "Nothing really substantial since a 1977 hoax, filmed on the Lummi Indian Reservation. It turned out to be a man in a rented ape suit!"

A lack of conclusive evidence has long been the missing ingredient cited by most Bigfoot skeptics. For the most part, the only hard evi-

dence the world has acquired in regards to Bigfoot have been plaster foot-print casts and unexplainable hair and feces samples.

According to a majority of Bigfoot enthusiasts, there is one irrefutable portion of film footage that undeniably proves the creature's existence. The controversial footage is known among buffs as simply, the Patterson film.

On October 20, 1967, Bigfoot hunters Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin were on horseback, riding through rough and wild terrain in northern California, near an area where a plethora of Sasquatch reports had recently surfaced. Armed with two hunting rifles and a Cine-Kodak K-100 camera, the men were determined to return to their hometown of Yakima, Wash., with some proof of Bigfoot's existence.

In a 1991 interview with KOLA radio in Los Angeles, Gimlin recounts the events that took place that fateful day.

"As we rounded a sharp bend ... the horses spooked and reared," Gimlin said, reflecting back on his unforgettable encounter. "The creature was about 80 feet away ... Roger got down over a log to stabilize his camera, and to shoot the film that I'm sure everyone has now seen on TV."

Gimlin has absolutely no doubts as to what he saw that day. "I'm convinced I saw Bigfoot."

The few seconds of scratchy, 16mm footage that allegedly captures the image of a lone female Bigfoot walking along a sandbar has long been considered the gold standard by buffs for proving Bigfoot's existence. That is, until Crook and colleague Chris Murphy went public a couple of months ago, calling the film a hoax.

"It's easy to see that the Patterson film is a hoax," Crook said in a matter-of-fact tone, holding an original casting of a track found at the Patterson site. "Plain and simple, it's a man in a fur suit, and we have proof."

Allegations of the film being a hoax have especially angered those with a vested interest, including Crook's one-time investigative partner for over 20 years, Rene Dahinden. Dahinden has owned half the film's copyright since 1972.

"In 30 years we've heard it all," scoffs the 68-year-old Richmond, B.C. resident in his native Swiss accent. "It's a bunch of never-ending bullshit

that's being shoveled. Not one person has ever come forward with anything proving the film is fake ... We just want them to produce some real evidence."

Crook and Murphy however, have produced what they believe to be strong evidence debunking the Patterson film. They enlarged four frames that show a suspicious-looking object near the creature's waist. They claim the object is a bell-shaped fastener and clasp.

"The object we found was in the right place for a fastener," Crook says as he points to an easel holding enlargements of the scrutinized frames. "It snaps loose at just the right time in the film to see it....How can an artificial, man-made object end up on a Bigfoot?"

Crook claims he and Murphy have proved what critics of the film have said all along - that it was a man in a monkey suit. Not only do Murphy and Crook think they've proven the film a hoax by discovering a smoking gun, they believe they've done one better; they've found the zipper.

Dahinden and other staunch supporters of the film, including film experts and scientists, claim the methods used to enlarge the frames were invalid, making the end findings completely void.

"In the film, the creature is about one-and-one-half millimeters tall in the frame," Dahinden said in a condescending tone during a recent telephone interview. "The film was 16mm ... if anyone knows anything at all about film, that is very, very small. So, blow it up 200 to 500 times, and you're left with nothing but film grain."

Murphy disagrees with Dahinden, saying that the object in question can easily be seen with only minimal magnification.

"Its existence is credible ... it can be seen with the naked eye when the creature in the film frame is enlarged 100 times," Murphy writes in a faxed statement.

Supporters continue to refute the apparent discovery by Crook and Murphy, citing scientific analysis of the film, as the best evidence for its authenticity.

On a recent trip to Bellingham to present a lecture entitled, "How Science Sees Sasquatch," John Kirk, president of the B.C. Scientific Cryptozoology Club, addressed the question of the Patterson film's authenticity.

"No scientist who has ever truly studied this film has ever refuted it," Kirk said. "The musculature structure is so abnormal, and the definition clearly visible ... there is no way it could be a human being in a costume. It would've been impossible to make a costume like that in the 1960s. It just couldn't have been done."

Crook, however, disagrees and believes it's only a matter of time before the film is proven 100 percent false and the world is told the complete truth about what happened that mid-autumn day back in 1967.

"I'd call the Patterson hoax the biggest hoax of the century," he said while holding a model of the alleged bell-fastener he and Murphy discovered on the supposed Bigfoot. "The truth is going to come out real soon ... There's a guy in Yakima who said he wore the suit - and he probably did."

Crook is referring to a 58-year-old Yakima resident who claims he donned a suit for Patterson in the 1967 film. The man, who has remained unidentified, recently hired an attorney to represent him and to negotiate the rights to his story.

In a telephone interview, Barry Woodard, a Zillah, Wash. attorney, says his client had passed a polygraph test that indicated truthful responses regarding his involvement in the Patterson film.

Many skeptics, including Dahinden and Kirk, are asking why the man chose to come forward now with his alleged involvement. Woodard offers an explanation:

"When my client saw the Fox special ["The World's Greatest Hoaxes"] and their interview with Cliff Crook, he thought it took a lot of guts for someone to finally come forward with such strong evidence against the film," Woodard said, adding that his client couldn't recall if the suit included a bell-shaped fastener.

"He realized it was getting to the point of being broken wide open, and he figured the time was right to come forward with his story."

"It will all be over soon enough," Crook said, once again sitting comfortably at his dining table, listening to the vibrant voice of Doris Day percolate through the room.

His thumb begins to tread once again on the wheel of the Zippo - not advancing, just spinning and spinning.

For a moment, his thoughts perform much the same spinning movement. But finally, they begin to advance, dancing slowly into articulation across his dark and gray hair-covered lip.

"After thirty-two years, I'm glad this thing is finally coming to an end," Crook said in a quiet and reminiscing voice. "I'm tired of talking about the Patterson film. I want to get out to the backwoods and down to business again."

"You know it might sound kind of funny, but the thing that frightens me most about being in the woods isn't coming across Bigfoot. It's coming across other human beings. You never know what they're planning to do. Other than that, I'm perfectly comfortable being in the woods. And that's where I belong - in the woods chasing Bigfoot."



Crook examines a Sasquatch footprint.



story by Al Bentley

Ben down-shifts his leaky Bronco past a series of rain-spattered signs at the Canadian border. Open lanes at a curling club in Surrey, British Columbia await us, but only if Ben's truck can make it there by 4:30 p.m.

It's a '68 Bronco, with most of its original parts, including vacuum windshield wipers. I pull on a nozzle at the top of the passenger-side window; 'hiss!', a short burst of air shoots through a rubber tube as wipers smear dirty water across the window.

"Hmm," I say, straining to see where we are. A bright yellow arrow shines through the smear, and Ben wills his Montana-plated beast toward the border guard's kiosk.

"What's your citizenship?" a young, female border guard says for the thousandth time that day.

"United States," Ben says.

"What's your reason for visiting Canada today," she says, eyeing our beards and shabby clothes. We'd fit right in at a pot-smokers convention or Deadhead reunion, but we're not headed there today.

"We're going curling!" Ben says happily. I beam at her from my seat.

"Ah," she says, skeptically. "Do you do that often then?"

"It's our first time," we harmonize.

After a few more questions, she rolls her eyes at us and lets us on through, confirming any belief she might harbor concerning the peculiarity of Americans.

Maybe we are weird, but strangeness is relative. Canada has always felt like a weird place to me, like a part of Disneyland: Enter Canadaville, home of ice sports and underage drinking, British accents and high tea, tolerated prostitution and marijuana.

Curling is indicative of the multitude of differences between us and our neighbors to the north.

Curling is not popular in the United States, probably because to us it looks dorky and it's on the ice. When we want to look dorky and slide around in funny shoes, we go bowling. In Canada, where they are good at curling, it's not dorky at all — it's intense. It may not be the NBA finals, but people are into it. At the women's world championships the crowd oscillated from expectant golf-like hushes to ravenous Canadian caterwauling in support for their team.

We are mostly going for the hell of it, and to get a kick or two out of Canadian culture, but I am also curious as to why curling is so popular in B.C. I figured the way to really understand would be to curl myself.

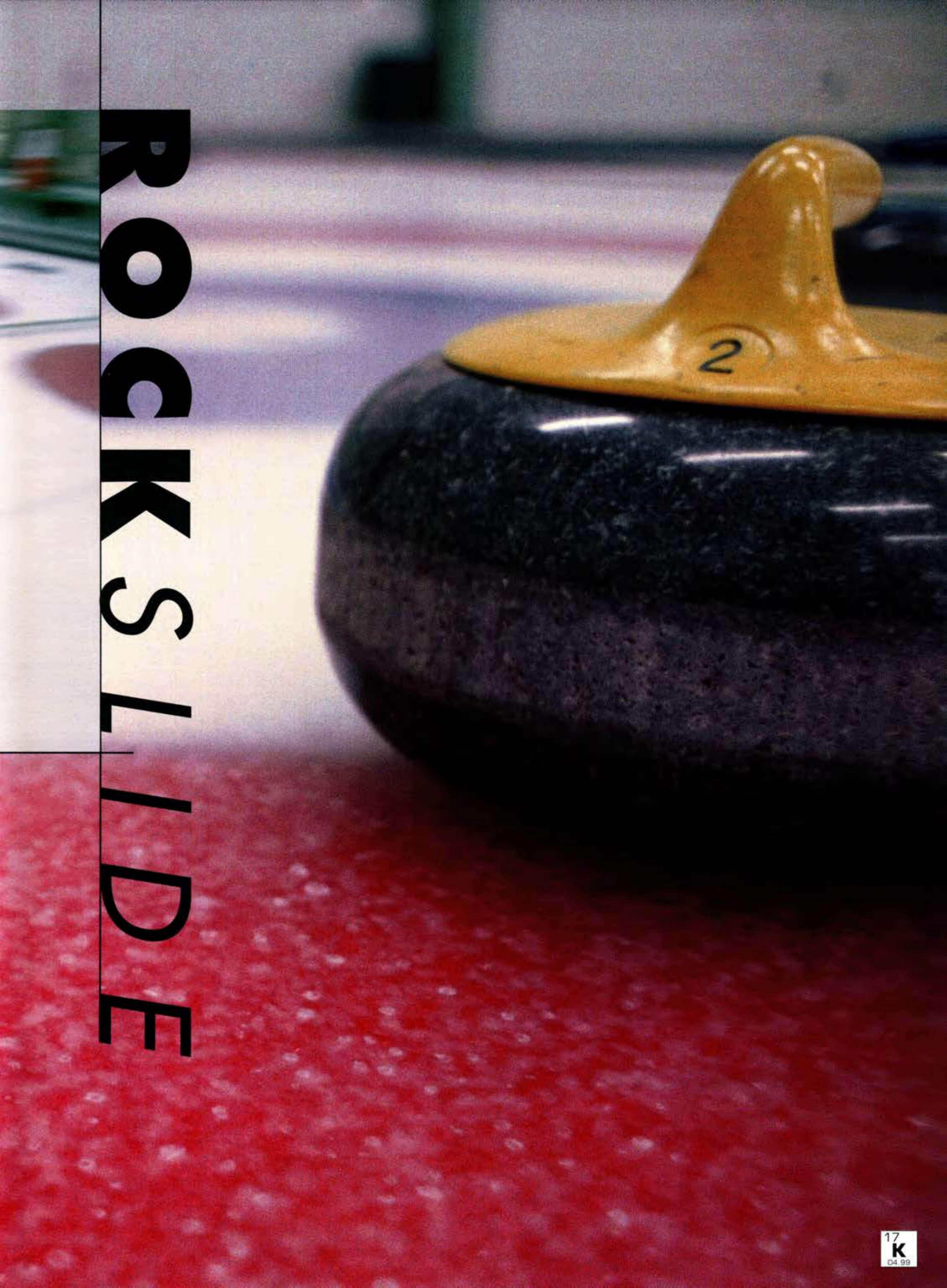
I recap what I know about curling to Ben. "So, there's a team of four people with these special shoes that help them slide on the ice. There's two teams of them, and they each take turns sliding flat rocks down the length of the ice toward a target."

"Like shuffleboard?" Ben asks.

"Sure. Shuffleboard. But on ice, and with brooms," I say. "With the brooms they sweep really hard in front of the stone, and the stone hopefully lands in the middle of the target. Closest one to the middle of the target when everybody's done throwing the rocks gets a point. Oh, and you get to bump other people's stones out of the way."

"And we have to have special shoes for this?" Ben asks. I shrug.

When I called Terry Lyon, the manager of the Cloverdale Curling Club a few days earlier, he told me to come up, but if I



ROCK SLIDE

wanted to learn to curl, I would have to bring a super-clean pair of shoes. Not something that had even a *little* bit of dirt stuck in the grooves of the sole. This is because even a speck of dirt can affect how the stone moves on the ice. That's where the brooms come in.

"The brooms serve two different purposes," Lyon says. "They sweep dirt and particles out of the way, and they also help the stone go farther — not faster, but farther."

There are even two different kinds of brooms: bristle brooms, like smaller versions of the ones you clean your driveway with, and cloth brooms, which wouldn't clean up a damn thing in your driveway, but are relatively effective on the ice.

The stones weigh around 40 pounds each, and look a little like decapitated Snork heads. They are made of peppery-colored rock. But not just any old peppery rock.

"They're made of a Scottish granite," Lyon says. "They haven't found anything anywhere else that makes quite as good a stone." Each stone costs \$800 to be made and specially shipped from the Old Country, and there are six lanes here with 16 stones in each lane. Since there are 107 curling clubs here, that works out to be about \$8.25 million dollars spent on stones alone in B.C.

Curling started in Scotland and spread to Canada when the first Scottish emigrants settled in a place they called Heart's Content, in Newfoundland.

The earliest report of a curling game is from Paisley Abbey, Scotland, in 1541. Around the same time, an ice game appeared in the paintings of Pieter Bruegel and Jacob Grimm. In 1716, the curlers of Kilsyth in Stirlingshire, Scotland formed a club and others in central Scotland followed.

The name curling came from the handle on the stone, attached at the front, rather than the middle of the stone. This makes a difference because when you throw it, the stone will curl left or right depending which way you twist the stone.

It appears to be a working class kind of sport, like bowling. The clubs are as prevalent in Canada as bowling alleys are in the U.S., and like bowling, you throw something down a lane and need really slick shoes to play — but that's where the similarities end.

Bowlers don't need to pay crippling monthly or yearly fees in order to roll a few frames. Some of the private curling clubs charge hefty fees in order to throw down, like the Arbutus Club, in Vancouver, which charges a \$22,000 lifetime fee just to step on the ice. Yearly dues for the CCR are only \$170 Canadian — a paltry sum for the amount of enjoyment you can have out there on the ice. Members receive access to any tournaments that happen at the rink, as well as access to the ice

in the evenings.

The original rules of curling primarily dealt with conduct and mentioned penalties for gambling, swearing and non-attendance. Drinking, however, was permitted.

Drinking is permitted at the Cloverdale Curling Rink, too. The previous Saturday, I came up to check the place out. It was hardly past noon when we got there, but upstairs in the lounge, people were already enjoying the observational part of curling as they smoked Parliament cigarettes, drank pale Labatt's beer out of schooners and ordered fries with vinegar (another Canadian phenomenon) while cheering the curling spectacle below.

The building in which the curling part of curling happens looks like a frosted-over airplane hangar. The buttresses, ceilings and walls are wintergreen and look like they would make a spark in the dark if you bit into them. Adjacent to the rink on the left, trying to look inconspicuous, seven full kegs of Canadian beer stand out like silver thumbs. Slim wintergreen benches, not made for comfort, sit between the courses.

Windows look out onto the six curling lanes. Targets lay at each end with a red outer ring and a blue inner ring, a foot-wide bullseye in the middle. The lounge is excellent for watching the stones come down the ice and then watching the players slide the stones back. There are 10 ends in a game, down and back equalling two ends.

The players wear special shoes. Some of them own curling shoes, which have either a teflon or aluminum sole, which allows them to glide smoothly on the ice. Others have a detachable sole covering that looks like a set of climbing spikes without any teeth.

I have a pair of lightweight Rockports — they were the cleanest thing I could find. Ben, who spends the majority of his day hiking around or working on his car, didn't even bother with the shoes; he was hoping to slip by with his dirty Simples.

Ben lurches the car into a parking spot. A mural painted on the side of the skating rink next door depicts smiling people playing various ice sports, but both the rink and the Cloverdale Curling Rink appear to be vacated. Open ice is supposed to be from 4:30 to 5:45 p.m. every Monday - Thursday, according to a sign inside, but something is awry.

Through the windows downstairs, we see a young man working a Zamboni-like machine across the lanes, melting and refreezing the ice.

Terry Lyon sees us and comes over. I introduce Ben and myself.

"Ah, yes, I saw you here on Saturday," Lyon says. "Practice ice is on Thursday, not Wednesday. That sign should read 'Monday and Thursday'. But let's see if we can get you out on the ice, eh?" He frowns at my shoes. He seems jolted, but says, coolly, "Hmm, those really aren't the best shoes you could have brought. But we'll use the duct

(top right) The author regains his balance long enough to examine the ice.
(bottom left) Members of the Cloverdale Curling Rink, showing the Americans how it's done, sweep one of the granite curling stones home.



photo by Barney Benedictson

photo by Jesse Kinsman



tape, and it will be okay." His stocky frame retreats onto the ice and into a storage shed, where he rummages and finds a couple of plastic flip-flops and a roll of duct tape.

"Usually we use these," Lyon says, pointing to the flip-flops, "but you're left-handed, and so you push off on a different foot." He tapes up my right shoe and we enthusiastically take to the ice.

We're ready to curl and the only ones on the ice. That's good — because we are about to embarrass ourselves. Lyon gives us a few pointers.

"Use the broom to help you slide," Lyon says, "You need it for balance," he adds. "You don't need to throw very hard, either," he says. "Look close at the ice. You'll see it's not perfectly flat, but it's got an extra layer of ice called 'pebble' on it, which make the stone go over it with less friction."

Sure enough, upon inspection, goosebump-like bumps in the ice are visible.

"I have to leave," Lyon says, "but if you have any questions, ask one of these guys out on the ice; they should be able to answer any of your questions."

The two guys are the Zamboni guy, who is from Newfoundland and knows little about curling but a lot about ice, and Terry Shea, a twenty-year curling veteran who is about to give a lesson to a middle-aged couple.

We take turns wobbling down the ice chasing after stones and trying the throwing technique Terry taught us. I scramble in my duct-taped shoes trying to catch up with the rock and brush the ice in front, looking idiotic and knowing

it. I can barely stand still and brush ice, much less brush while running after a Snorkhead.

Ben, however, after the first couple of tries, is getting the initial slide and release of the stone down pretty well. Three of his first four stones are in the blue part of the target. My throws usually end up ricocheting off the back wall or sides.

It's fun, though! The whole time we are on the ice we giggle and laugh at our ineptitude. A scary moment happens during a particularly brutal fall by Ben when he opens a fat hole in the ice with his broom.

"Oh man, that guy probably has to completely redo this lane now," I say. But Zamboni-man comes over and says it's no big deal. They can just pour water on it and it will be fixed.

"When you fall, though, don't stay down there, right?" Zamboni-man warns us. "You're hands'll melt the ice."

The couple learning from Shea are having as much embarrassing fun as we are.

"Don't worry," I say to them. "We came up here to make you guys look good."

"Don't feel bad if you aren't doing well now," Shea offers as he skates expertly backwards toward the end of the ice. "I've been doing this for twenty years and I'm still learning how to do it."

It is then that I understand the essence of this game of skill and tradition. A shot well executed is a joy to watch, just as a shot from Michael Jordan is a joy to watch. There is more, though. There is no negative competition so prevalent in many United States sports. Those things can never be a part of this game, because a cordial playing atmosphere has been cultivated for five hundred years.

If it was like this all along, then I think one of the reasons is because ice is an inherently fun and innocent thing — fun to slide around on and fun to slide things across. It's childish and free to see how far you can make them go, and how accurate your throws can be. You might look silly, especially if you're bad at it, but that is part of the game. Even the good people look silly, because they are sliding on ice like kids.

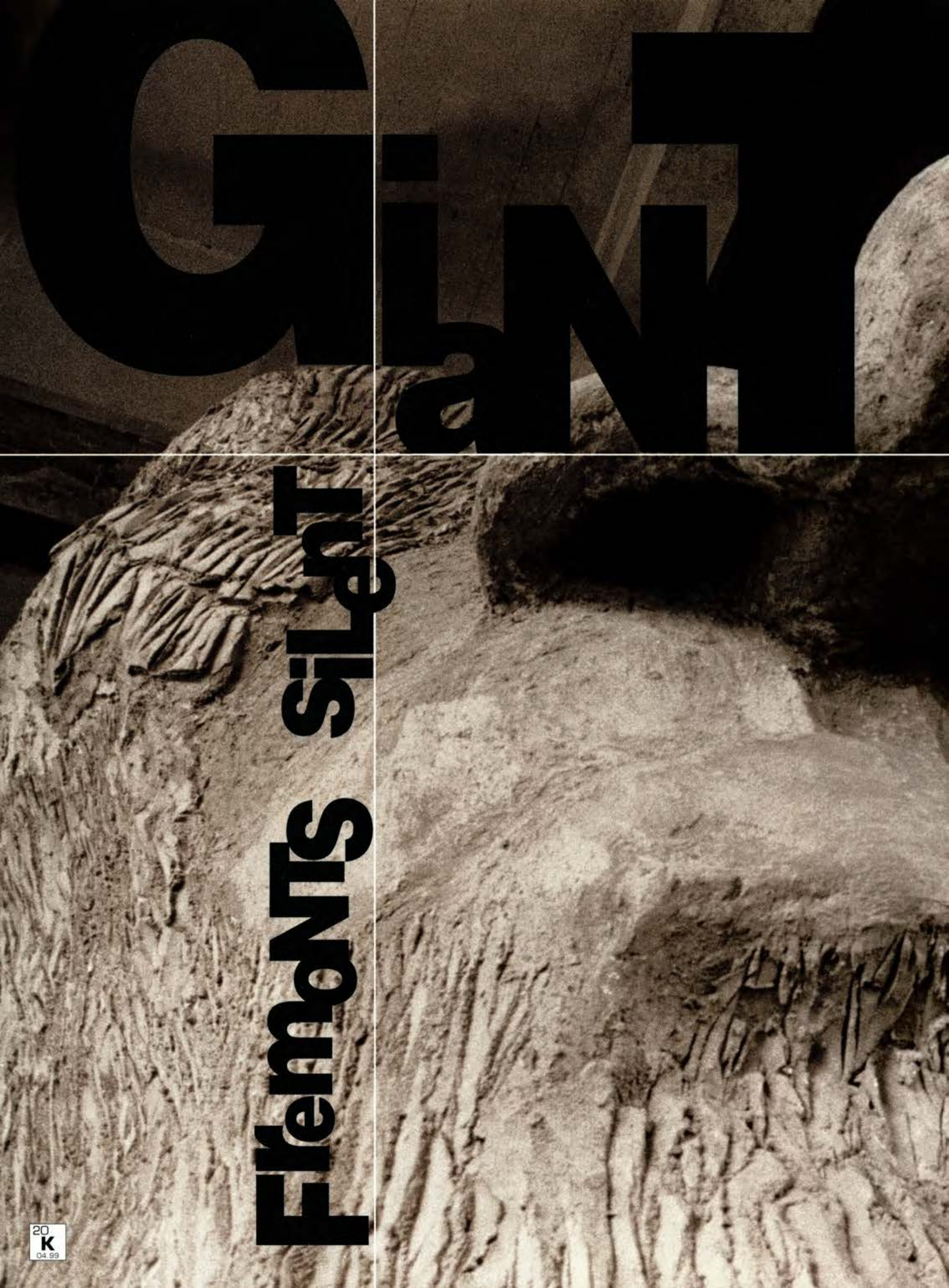
This, I think, is the reason why most Americans don't really go for curling; it's not that curling isn't competitive, (from the screams of the fans and the tense look on the curlers face as they release the stone, it is obvious they want to do well) it's the way these Canadians compete. Curlers don't arm-bash each other or give each other chest-butts. That wouldn't be nice to the opponent, and the opponent would lose face.

It is because it lacks this "Who's the man" aspect that Americans find little excitement in curling. If they adopted this sport, they would either have to change it to fit their schemas of competition and domination, or they would have to alter their perceptions of how sports should be played.

Since neither is likely to happen anytime soon, curling will probably remain an almost purely Canadian game. But it's there for those who share a less competitive, more cooperative view of sports and life.

Ben and I finish up our round and head to downtown Surrey to spend the rest of our colorful Canadian money on something which will make us feel more at home, something inherently American — fried food.

The ride home is quiet. At the border, the Americans hassle us, saying we look too happy to be sober, but we pass the tests and slide down I-5, smooth and steady as a well-thrown stone.



Filaments silent

CREATIVE

He lurks under the Aurora Bridge in Seattle with one icy, chrome eye, a once-shiny hubcap worn by the Seattle weather, peering out at the humans around him.

All 18 feet of his dirty, gray cement body stoops under the bridge. His shoulders slightly hunch over, and his arms, bent at the elbows, creep down in front of his gargantuan head. His long hair intertwines with his beard and covers one side of his face; his lower lip bulges under two overbearing nostrils. A Volkswagen Beetle, covered in cement and crushed by the weight of his body, lies under his left hand. His other hand is free to dangle down and rest comfortably on the packed dirt ground, ready to grab anyone or anything that disturbs him.

Despite his less-than-friendly look, the Fremont Troll has become an icon and a representative of the Fremont neighborhood. To some people, he is even magical.

Paul Tumey, one resident who believes in the power of the troll, sits on one of the cement bridge supports with his new puppy, Molly. A red rain jacket protects him from the breezy, misty and frigid Seattle weather. A navy-blue baseball hat mostly covers his brown hair, and his wire-rimmed glasses sit unpretentiously on the bridge of his nose.

"I brought Molly here to see the troll," Tumey says, as he gives the distracted yellow dog a treat from a clear plastic bag.

Tumey goes on to explain why he has such a special affection for the sculpture — he helped Tumey find a place to live.

Tumey couldn't find a house to live in when he was looking to move to the artsy, laid-back neighborhood of Fremont two and a

half years ago.

He was staying with a friend who lived in the area, and one day, they walked over to the troll sculpture under the Aurora Bridge. Tumey stood before the Fremont Troll and asked the troll if he could help him find a house in the neighborhood. In return, Tumey promised to give him something as a sacrifice.

Tumey went home that evening and opened the classified section. To his amazement, he found a one-bedroom house with a large yard just two blocks down from the Fremont Troll — just what he and his wife were looking for. The house had not been in the paper the day before.

After he bought the house, Tumey fulfilled his end of the bargain. He bought the troll toy cars with plastic people in them as his sacrifice, set them carefully under the free hand of the troll and thanked him.

"He helped me find my house," Tumey says. "I have a special place in my heart for this troll."

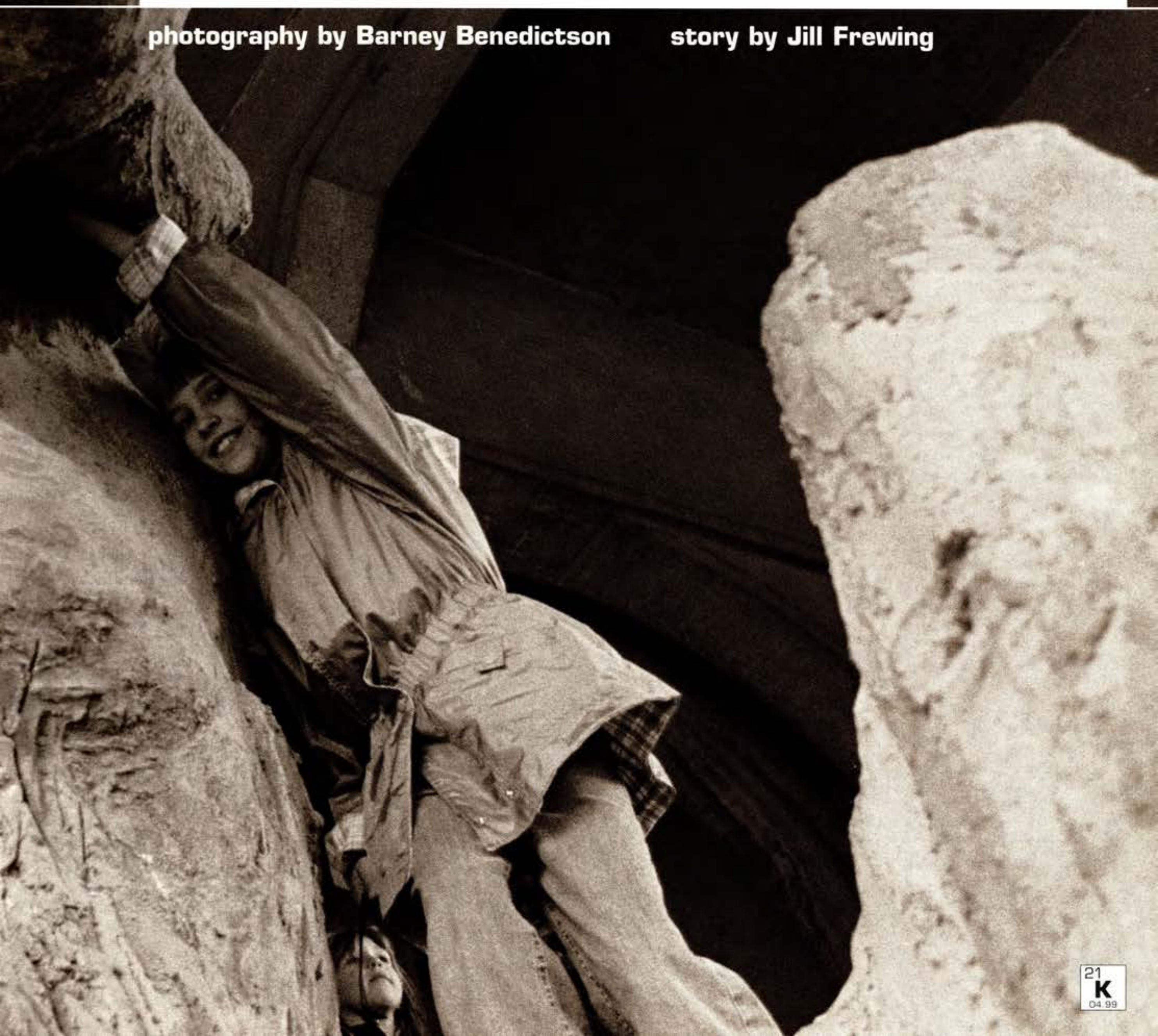
Today Tumey is one of the many Fremont residents with stories to tell about the Fremont Troll. However, strangers also visit the troll for a picture or a quick look.

A turquoise and pink Seattle tour bus parks in front of the troll; its inhabitants peer out the windows at the creature sitting under the bridge.

After the bus leaves, one woman, who looks about 65-years-old and is dressed in a see-through black chiffon shirt, tight black pants and high black boots, climbs up the troll's hand. She sits down with one leg bent at the knee and tilts her head back.

photography by Barney Benedictson

story by Jill Frewing



"You know how many years it's been since I've been an artist's model?" she shouts in a voice thick with cigarette smoke.

Then, another group of visitors arrives: four giggling 20-something girls pose for a quick picture before they get back in their white Ford Explorer and drive away.

A middle-aged man and his grade-school-aged daughter pose in front of the troll's never-ending beard with an older woman.

"I take out-of-towners by here," he says. "You don't find this in Tulsa, Oklahoma — it's really unique."

Small pieces of green, red and clear glass litter the area around the troll, and the slope behind is a terrace of garbage-speckled dirt. A blue water bottle lies on its side along with two pieces of plywood and one magenta, green and yellow cushion. Behind the troll's head and farther up under the bridge is a pile of around 20 empty beer bottles and cans, their owners long gone. Cigarettes, abandoned and scattered on the ground, complete the look.

Steve Badanes, a 55-year-old architect, builder and lecturer, along with Will Martin, Donna Walter and Ross Whitehead, are responsible for constructing the troll. As for the original idea of the troll, Badanes is quick to take the credit. But he is also quick to give the credit of building it to the other artists and community volunteers. Construction began in early fall 1990 and finished three months later in December 1990.

However, that was not the end of Badanes' contact with the troll and its visitors.

"I have a Christmas card of naked people in Santa hats standing on top of it," he says, with the hearty chuckle of a naughty teenager who saw his first pair of boobs.

Badanes goes on to say that most people just look at the troll for fun.

"Most people don't see the troll for what it is," he says. "They just think it's funny."

Most people don't realize that the grumpy-looking statue is a serious political statement that represents anti-capitalism and anti-materialism.

It represents what Badanes calls the "reclamation" of the Fremont neighborhood. Badanes wanted the troll to remind people about the dangers of excess business, cars and greed.

"The troll is angry at development; the cars are a symbol of it, and that's why he holds the Bug," he says, trying to sound angry over good humor.

Martin, another one of the four artists, feels that since the troll was built during a time that the Fremont neighborhood was becoming "yuppified," it was intended to symbolize a truce between the old Fremont and the one it was in





danger of becoming.

As for the popularity of the troll, Martin says he can't understand it. "I have no idea why they like it so much," he says. "I'm baffled."

But baffled as Martin may be, the troll is still popular and has been for almost 10 years.

The sculpture was an idea for the Fremont Arts Council competition for art under the Fremont Bridge. There were three finalists — none of which were the troll — in the part judged by local artists. However, in the public judging, the troll won the popularity contest.

And the troll's popularity in Seattle was something that Badanes never worried about.

"Everyone remembers the story of the three billy goats and the troll under the bridge," he says.

The sculpture is so famous in Fremont that the community has its own holiday for it — Trolloween. On Halloween night, people in Fremont hold a parade complete with skits, costumes, music, dancing and drumming.

On this mystical night, the troll basks in orange lights with a large spider crawling over his shoulder. Participants adorn him with unique decorations: one year found him adorned with a nose ring made out of a bicycle tire clinging to his nose.

The event begins at 7 p.m. with a drumming circle at the troll. Revelers then parade through the streets of Fremont in costumes and end the night with dancing, or what they call the Troll a Go-Go.

The Fremont Troll's popularity has made him world-famous. He has made appearances in the Seattle-based movie *Hype!*, Music Television (MTV) and a host of magazines including *Car & Driver*. The troll has many proposals for its use as a restaurant or store mascot, but Badanes and the other artists are picky in deciding who gets to use the troll.

They tend to let it be used for community and non-profit use, but not for business use.

"He's a spokesman for the people," Badanes says, with the sincerity of

a child talking about his imaginary friend. "We don't let the storekeepers use it to make money; the troll refuses to be a mascot for the business community."

The troll does, however, have a relationship with non-profit organizations such as the Fremont Arts Council, Fremont Public Association, Alt-Trans and any other non-profit organizations who ask.

"There's a little girls' ballet class in Fremont that uses the troll for its logo, and that's just fine," he says.

Due to its popularity, the troll has also been repaired a lot in the nine years he has been sitting under the bridge. He has been a subject of countless graffiti attacks, beatings and arson attempts.

"I remember one man tried to beat the troll with a shovel," Martin says. "I have no idea why."

It has also been a model for positive forms of expression.

"Recently when the bus went down in Fremont, some people painted a black tear on the troll," Martin says. "It was their way of absorbing their pain."

Today, the tear on the troll has been worn off. His lower lip, however, continues to pout as he stares out at his many visitors.


The woman dressed in black who modeled on the troll is gone now, replaced by a young couple who run around the troll as if 10 years have been magically lifted by the troll's presence.

"This art is great," the man yells back to the woman. "As a kid I would have been climbing all over the this — up on his nose ..."

He trails off, and in another two minutes they have walked back down the hill from where they came.

The rest of the visitors are gone now too, but there will be more. Neighbors will be back, and strangers will continue taking photos. But for now, the troll is left in peace to contemplate his neighborhood and those strange turquoise and pink tour buses that park in front of him.

Winning by numbers



Mike Awadall's Exxon station in Ferndale, where five large prize-winning lottery tickets were purchased.

The Ferndale gas station is indistinguishable from any of the hundreds of corporate-owned, snack-and-gas-dispensing structures lining Interstate 5. Cigarette and soda advertisements plaster the windows, but the typical patron doesn't even glance at the entryway signs before heading in to pay for a fill-up. Inside the store, the hum of beer and wine being chilled by the massive, glass refrigerators sounds as if someone has cued an orchestra of crickets to continually play a single fortissimo note.

The cash register, framed with Camel cigarette ads, racks of beef sticks, lighters and tiny fabric roses, is where customers pay for their gas, \$.79 burritos or lottery tickets.

However, this isn't just any gas station.

This place is lucky.

Mike Awadall's Exxon station is one of the premiere places to purchase prize-winning lottery tickets in Washington state. Five big winners, including a couple who won more than \$1 million, purchased their tickets from Mike, an affable merchant who is still hoping for his own winning numbers.

"It's just luck; that's what it is," Mike says, and Shannon and Kim Poster agree.

The Posters are still celebrating their own Lucky-for-Life, \$1,000-per-week prize, after realizing in November 1998 they were another one of Mike's winners.

Shannon always thought of herself as lucky. She had won countless raffle prizes, airline tickets and even the pool of money for when she would have the Poster's son, Dylan, now 15. She hadn't won any major cash prizes before, though.

"I've never won anything in Vegas or anything," Shannon says.

Besides entering local raffles, Shannon and her husband Kim played the lottery twice every week. But last fall, Shannon began to think the \$8 to \$10 she and Kim were spending every week on Lotto and Quinto tickets were a strain on their carefully planned budget. She talked to Kim about giving up the tickets they bought when they filled up at Mike's. The Main Street Exxon station had been their gas station of choice ever since Shannon, a real estate agent for 23 years, sold Mike the property; Mike always had the tickets waiting for them when they walked in the door.

Shannon figured she and Kim had spent several thousands of dollars on tickets over the years, only winning a few small cash prizes.

"We'd talked about taking the money and putting it in a jar," Shannon says.

She and Kim intended to take the \$300 or more and spend it on a

vacation at the end of the year.

"I didn't think we'd ever win," she says.

Even though both Shannon and Kim loved playing the lottery — which Kim has done since Washington State's first drawing — they were hesitant to keep on playing. They certainly didn't plan to add another ticket to their purchase, especially since the \$2 Lucky-for-Life ticket was more expensive than the \$1 tickets they usually bought. However, Mike persuaded them.

When Shannon stopped for gas and tickets on Oct. 27, Mike offered her the Poster's first Lucky for Life ticket. Prizes for the game range from \$50 to the grand prize of \$1,000 per week for life. She bought the ticket and tossed it into a stack of other Lotto and Quinto tickets piled in the car.

Unlike lottery players who obsessively buy and check tickets, entranced by gambling on the chance they will strike it rich in the lottery, the Posters just play for fun. They allow the computer to pick the numbers.

"They are never serious about it," Mike says. "They just buy one a week. They don't even check in the paper or follow the numbers."

In fact, these Ferndale residents were often too busy with everyday life to worry about checking their tickets for up to several weeks. In addition to selling real estate, Shannon does volunteer hospice work, giving caregivers for homebound patients a break. When not working as an independent contractor, Kim volunteers at the Ferndale Boys and Girls Club or one of the many other organizations the Posters spend time helping.

Despite winning the lottery, the Posters still look like a typical middle-aged couple. These two prefer jeans to designer clothes. Shannon, who wears her soft brown sweater to match her chocolate-colored jeans; and Kim, who sports jeans and a polo shirt, would look more at home at a school meeting than an upscale party. They still drive the same dependable cars they've been paying off for years, with no plans to trade them in for BMWs.

The Posters, who have been married 18 years, seem to know just about everyone in the small town of Ferndale. Everyone who walked into Mike's Exxon station got a friendly greeting from Kim and Shannon during the afternoon they discussed cashing in Shannon's Lucky for Life ticket.

Kim, a life-long Ferndale resident, was headed to a state school board conference in Spokane on Veteran's Day, Nov. 11, 1998.





Shannon and Kim Poster, winners of the Lucky-for-Life lottery prize in November 1998.

Shannon decided to come along for the trip. Before they headed out of town, they stopped to gas up at Mike's Exxon station. Shannon scooped up Kim's pile of tickets and took them in to check the numbers with Mike. Kim came back out and said he had won \$4. Shannon then handed Kim about a dozen of her tickets that had been stuffed in the glove box or were languishing on the floor of the car, including the Lucky-for-Life ticket she had purchased two weeks earlier.

After a while, Shannon started to wonder what could possibly be taking Kim so long. Eventually, he emerged from Mike's and floated to the car.

At this point in the story, Shannon's eyes start to light up, and Kim grins from ear to ear. It's a moment they say they will remember for the rest of their life. Literally. Shannon's ticket, the first Lucky-for-Life ticket she had ever purchased, was a winner.

The shock waves of disbelief still register on their faces when they talk about winning, even though they have told the story dozens of times to family and friends. At first, they thought they had won just \$52,000.

"Wow," is what Shannon says she kept saying.

"It seemed so strange, like it was a dream. Winning \$20 seemed much more real."

But as Kim and Shannon gleefully sped off to Spokane, they began to realize they may have won more than \$52,000. They puzzled about why they won \$52,000 instead of \$50,000, the second-place prize.

"We thought at first it was a one-time win," Kim explains. He and Shannon tried in vain to recall the rules of the drawing, finally stopping at a Moses Lake mini-mart for more information. That's when the Posters learned they'd won \$1,000 per week for life.

"We were stunned and excited," Shannon says.

The valuable ticket then became top priority. After arriving at a Spokane hotel, they placed the ticket on the bedside table, waking up first thing in the morning to visit the local lottery office. Still, to the Posters, the thought of winning \$52,000 a year (just over \$37,000 after taxes) was unbelievable.

"I think we were the first people there," Kim recalls.

They waited for what seemed like a geological age for the office to open. Then, the Posters held their breath.

"That was the real moment of concern," Kim says.



Their minds raced. Could they have possibly been wrong about the numbers? Was this really the winning ticket?

It was.

After wading through an hour-long bureaucratic examination — checking to see if Shannon owed anything to the Internal Revenue Service, making sure the Lucky-for-Life ticket was authentic and double-checking the winning numbers (9,39,50 and 62) — it was official. Shannon Poster had won \$1,000 per week for the rest of her life. Shannon, who is 43, expects to get about \$2 million during her lifetime.

The Posters, who elected to collect their money yearly, received \$7,200 for the rest of 1998. After confirming that fortune had indeed smiled upon them, they raced to the phone and called their son Dylan and their parents. Word quickly spread in Ferndale and at Kim's conference.

Fifteen-year-old Dylan, Shannon says, was pleased the family could donate more to charity. He was also thrilled, because his birthday was only three days away; the new Dell computer with the 19-inch monitor he had been dreaming of suddenly seemed not so out-of-the-question as a birthday present. In fact, that computer was the first thing Shannon and Kim bought with the lottery money — besides going out for a celebratory dinner in Spokane.

Dylan also proposed splitting the lottery money three ways. Three Posters, three equal shares of the money to spend as each desired. Kim and Shannon Poster both chuckle as they recall his suggestion. No way, they said. However, Dylan did talk them into purchasing a new television, a satellite dish, a Nintendo and some other luxuries. While exchanging sheepish glances, the Posters say the presents were mostly for Dylan's birthday or Christmas.

"He never would have gotten all that before," Shannon says, although she insists the extra money has not changed Dylan's life too much.

"Now, if he's going to the mall, we might give him \$10 when we wouldn't have before," Shannon says.

The Posters have already spent most of last year's lottery winnings on vacations for Shannon's dad, paying off some bills and on trips for themselves. Shannon also plans to accompany Kim more often on school board-related trips.

"It doesn't take that long to spend money," Kim says, adding that they have also sunk more money into remodeling the rental houses they own.

Shannon and Kim decided to give Mike \$1,000. Mike passed some of this on as \$50 gifts to his employees and the remaining \$650 as a donation to his church. After selling the next big winning ticket, Mike jokes he said he won't accept anything less than \$2,000.

His eyes betray a bit of chagrin at selling so many winning tickets to other people; he'd purchased his own Lucky-for-Life ticket right before he sold Shannon the winning one. Although, if any particular place is the spot to beat the odds, it seems like Mike's Exxon lotto station would be it.



Even though the odds of winning the Lucky-for-Life grand prize are astronomical — 1 in 3.9 million — Shannon and Kim are still purchasing tickets, along with Lotto and Quinto tickets, a pastime they wouldn't have been able to easily afford had they not already won the lottery once. Aside from their continuing lottery-ticket purchases — "you never know," Kim says — the Posters say time was the most valuable thing winning the lottery gave them.

The lottery income, which is like having an extra breadwinner, wasn't enough to prompt Kim and Shannon to quit their jobs — although that was one of the first options they considered. But they are now much more likely to spend a sunny day relaxing rather than working.

"The biggest (benefit) is just giving us more freedom to do what we want and to not have to worry about work," Shannon says.

The Posters are most grateful for the opportunity to move in with Kim's ailing 101-year-old mother.

"That's something that I don't know if we could have done before without some strain," Shannon says, adding that they cherished every moment they got to spend with Kim's mother before her death in late February 1999.

Aside from planning a few other trips, the Posters say winning hasn't changed their lives too much.

"The money isn't so much that it changes your life majorly," Shannon says. "It just means you don't have to worry so much. We both have jobs tied to the economy, and now, if there's a bad year, it's OK."

Kim and Shannon say, "How could there possibly be a downside to winning the lottery?"

However, they have found themselves pondering issues they hadn't expected to deal with until they got much older. Since the money lasts as long as Shannon stays alive, the Posters have drawn up a will, are considering life insurance for Shannon and are determining whether Shannon will stay on life assistance if she is ever hospitalized.

Shannon, who is thin and fit, has a tough time thinking of anything she has done differently to stay in good health, except visit the YMCA gym more often with her mother and sister.

She's more protective of her lottery tickets now too, carefully tucking them away instead of tossing them in the car. As for Mike, the Exxon station owner, he's seen a boost in lotto business since the Posters won. Even though four other locations on the same block compete for lotto-lovers, Mike's aura of good luck lures ticket buyers to his store.

Ferndale legend has it that he is lucky; so are the Posters. Mike and the Posters are often asked to touch lottery tickets, with the hope the luck will rub off.

With an upcoming statewide lottery commercial depicting their story, the Poster's fame will probably extend beyond their local legendary status. Still, Shannon and Kim say they are still amazed they won.

"We're still adjusting," Shannon says. Kim adds, "Ask again in ten years. Then we'll really know how the money has impacted our life. Now, we're just enjoying the money."





photo courtesy of Matt Stothart

TUSK

story by **Melissa Evavold**

Crammed in a small studio on the sixth floor of the Herald building, a man is busy chipping away at teeth — two to eight pound sperm whale teeth, that is.

He scratches away for hours at a time, his hands fashioning straight lines and intricate dots in extreme detail. He's not a dentist; he's a scrimshaw artist.

Matt Stothart's big blues eyes are magnified behind his glasses, his smile even more magnified by his large cheekbones and ivory white teeth. Working in this squished 10-foot by 8-foot room for 17 years, Stothart has etched whales, bears and civil war scenes on ivory using a controversial, centuries-old art form.

According to the Westsea Company, an Internet site specializing in scrimshaw, scrimshaw is the art of using knives, needles and other sharp objects to carve decorative objects out of fossilized mammoth tusks, sperm whale teeth and elephant tusks.

"This is it, this is all I do," Stothart said leaning back in his chair smiling widely.

Stothart was previously a painter, but has been doing scrimshaw for the past 20 years.

Milton Slater, the director of sales for the Ye Olde Ship Store, a scrimshaw shop in Hawaii and one of Stothart's regular buyers, said Stothart is the most dynamic scrimshaw artist he knows, with a technique he dubs "the subtle blend of hues."

"No one else can do portraits like Matt," Slater said.

Charles Hunnicutt, owner of the G.B. Heron Jewelry Store in Bellingham, said Stothart is an extremely dependable and impressive scrimshaw artist.

"He's been working for me for 15 years," Hunnicutt said. "His record speaks for itself."

Stothart's corner office overlooks Bellingham Bay and Georgia Pacific.

"I pay \$80 a month rent for this room," Stothart said. "You can't beat it, and it has a great view."

Stothart's office has a very scholarly look — not unlike

a college professor's. A whole wall is devoted to shelves crammed with books, magazines and random papers dripping out the sides. Beside the shelves is a windowsill lined with five empty Pepsi cans. In front of the windowsill waits Stothart's drawing table, its surface littered with a stack of knifeblades, a small scrimshaw machine and a lamp. A bumper sticker depicting a charging elephant is slapped on the side of his table. It reads: "Save elephants, don't buy ivory!"

Stothart's closely-cut nails grip a smooth pencil as he quickly outlines a sketch of an eagle on a piece of fossilized walrus tusk. The pencil glides swiftly and automatically; Stothart knows exactly where to go. Sitting at his table listening to classical music and wearing a plastic blue magnifying headset resembling a coal miner's light, he's able to see the grains in the ivory. He makes pinpoint dots and scratches with sharp knives, creating perfectly detailed images of ships, wildlife and scenery.

"It's pretty tiring and pretty tedious," Stothart said.

Stothart said whaling scenes on whale's teeth take him a week to do. He just finished a large walrus tusk with a civil war scene on it.

Originally, scrimshaw only used nautical scenes like whales, ships and sailors and was done mainly in black and white, Stothart said.

Opening book after book, Stothart points out the historical realities of whaling ships and the Eskimos who began scrimshaw. Opening a file cabinet stuffed with papers, he pulls out a book of the history of whaling.

"The reason whaling began was oil for lamps," Stothart said, pointing out the graphic photos and drawings of powerless sea giants floating in their own blood. Sailors would kill the whales and melt down their blubber on the ships and store it in massive barrels.

Whaling



photo courtesy of Matt Stothart



photograph by Barney Benedictson

Stothart said sailors would use needles to carve designs on whale's teeth and then give the teeth to family and friends as gifts.

"Sperm whale teeth is where the art form originally started from," Stothart said, reaching into a cupboard and bringing out a 6-inch tooth not yet touched by a knife. Glossy white and resembling something that Tarzan might have hung above his fireplace, this massive tooth weighs about 374 grams and is worth about \$200.

"One of those whales has about 60 teeth in their jaw and each tooth can weigh up to eight pounds," Stothart said, placing the tooth onto a cherrywood stand. "I enjoy working on the whale's teeth because they are amazing objects.

Stothart said whaling is strictly prohibited except in Japan and Norway.

"Strictly for scientific purposes supposedly," Stothart said, letting out a nervous chuckle as he rubs his eyebrows.

Stothart said the ivory supply in Washington is very limited.

"I can buy these teeth and sell them only in Washington," Stothart said, "but they're tightly regulated, unless you have a license to sell them interstate," Stothart said.

So what happens when all of the raw ivory in North America is gone?

"I don't believe it would affect me personally, in my lifetime," Stothart said.

Stothart said he could always use epoxy polymer material, a product that is similar to ivory in weight, color and texture.

Stothart's favorite type of ivory is the fossil walrus tusk. He opens the cupboard again and pulls out a shiny, 6-inch, smooth, flat piece of a walrus tusk that looks like an old bruised banana. He places it sideways onto a dark wood stand.

"This is something that has been worked on by the Eskimos," Stothart said, pointing out the hole drilled at the top, to weigh the nets down out at sea used when the Eskimos would go fishing.

Stothart pulls another book off the shelf and opens to a picture



photograph by Barney Benedictson

of a native Eskimo holding a tool that looks like a piece of ivory.

"I imagine they used flint stones to carve before Western civilization," Stothart said, pointing to a picture of a native carving with a screwdriver.

Stothart said a lot of people believe scrimshaw promotes the senseless killing of animals.

"I disagree with scrimshaw," said Anna Brandt, the president of WARN, the Western Animal Rights Network. "I am against any products that contain animals or that were tested on animals."

"Selling the ivory that remains in stores could fuel the black market and poaching, which leads to senseless killing," said Justin Campbell from Western's Environmental Center.

Stothart said he doesn't like working on elephant ivory since he's against supporting the slaying of animals for their ivory.

"I try to stick with the old ivory," Stothart said, "that's been around longer than I have."

Stothart said he uses special tools for the scrimshaw process.

"First I draw an outline of the image I want on the piece of ivory," he said. "I begin by using a soft-leaded pencil."

Stothart said once the patterns drawn, he uses a metal stylus with a rounded point. He holds up an object that looks like a calligraphy pen. He said he'll use the light to see the scratches and then scratch the outline.

"It's not very difficult if you already have drawing talent," Stothart said. "It's getting used to the medium."

Stothart said ivory is fairly soft; if you were to compare it to engraving metal it would be comparable to scratching aluminum. He said ivory is a solid material; you can carve it three-dimensionally.

"It's not delicate — you can drop it and it will hold up fine," Stothart said. He picks up a small belt buckle that looks like a small painting of a wild black mustang standing in tall grass in front of snowcapped mountains. The horse's skin looks glossy and smooth. Each wisp of hair in the horse's mane flows wild and free.

"You can feel the scratches," he said running a light finger over the top of the horse. "While you're not wearing it, you should stick it on the stand."

Stothart said scrimshaw jewelry doesn't hold up well, because the design is just scratched in there. If it rubs against clothing, it rubs off.

"Ivory will wear, but it's still a popular thing," he said.

And what happens if he makes a mistake?

"If you make a mistake, it's easy to sand off an area, because it's just scratches," Stothart said. "You have to be careful not to take off too much of an area, though. Some mistakes can be covered up or worked over the top of."

Stothart said he mainly works in color because his background is in painting. He said the scrimshaw artists back east tend to stick with the traditional black and white, because that is the tradition. They didn't have a whole lot of color to work with on the ships.

Stothart said collecting ivory is not like pick-and-trade baseball cards. It's a very expensive hobby, especially since most ivory is very old.

Stothart mainly sells his items on the Hawaiian market. He said in Hawaii, if he does a piece of ivory that is worth \$500 of work and there's \$250 worth of work done on it, that's \$750. Multiplied by three and a half and that is the price it is sold for in a store.

Stothart said he doesn't have much contact with his buyers.

"I'm not a marketer or a business person; I just enjoy doing the work," Stothart said.

