Some things about Western and Bellingham either escape notice, are too unusual to be easily understood or are so common they are overlooked.

What kind of a role do these little-known (and sometimes bizarre) facets of the overall "Western experience" play in the grand scheme of things? The stories included in this issue of KLIPSUN are devoted to answering that question.

But that is not to say that this issue has covered it all. The following pages offer only a glimpse of that vast "twilight zone" beneath the veneer of everyday campus life.

— PETE MacKENZIE
CONTENTS

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      Randall Wagner  Barb Weiss

4  Writing on the Wall
6  Two Scoops
8  Europe on Ten Fantasies a Day
14  “Campus Brats”
16  The Guts of Western
18  Trashed
21  Shannon Point

Christopher Plourde
Writing on the wall

By Kyle Jones

Anyone who has ever walked through the Viking Union or through a dormitory is aware that the Western student has mastered the primitive art of signmaking. In the masses of paper that line the halls and blur the walls, there are thoughts and opinions, hopes and fears, private joys and public needs. Big sheets, little sheets, index cards, poster paper, Xeroxed ads and scribbled notes, all held together with tape.

The network of messages on walls are an index of the lifestyles, problems, activities and interests on campus. It's a welcome alternative to the official memos, housing bills, reports and rhetoric that usually paint the public picture of this institution.

A staggering array of activity announcements dot the walls. During one particular week, for example, students could choose from the following: a symposium on career opportunities for women in industry; "Young Frankenstein;" Mama Sundays featuring Stovepipe Snyder; basic nature photography; "The Loves of Isadora;" the Margalit Dance Theatre Company; and "Hurry Tomorrow," benefiting the Bellingham Emotional Emergency Center.

For a look at continuing activities, there are the club notices. If one has the desire, he can join the International Club for an evening of food and belly dancers on Monday night, watch the Lacrosse Club compete on Wednesday afternoon, attend the Western Ordered and Random Movement dance class on Thursday, and still have time for an excursion with the Yacht Club before taking off with the Outdoor Program for some rock climbing over the weekend. If that schedule doesn't suit your fancy, there is always the Drama Club, Gymnastics Club, International Folk Dance Club, or Chess Club.

Some students use the walls to plead for companions in their after-class pastimes. "If you play anything from the kazoo to the musical saw and want to form a group, or just want to put a few beers in your belly, put a note below." "I am interested in getting to know a few people whose extracurricular needs involve the pursuit of bodily demolishing sports such as rugby."

There seems to be a lack of creativity in the politically minded. "Bruce Ayers Can Do It" and "Write In Ray Banks" seemed to sum up the Associated Student's spring election.

If political signs are hum-drum, those concerning booze or with a dash of sex, are not. An ad on the telephone booth near Arntzen Hall reads, "Get money, get sex, get Marked Man Posters." "How to get screwed without getting screwed" is one of the Sex Information office slogans.

Drinking is publicized for on-campus spots as well as for such off-campus rituals as keg hunts. Every so often a dorm will charter a bus to Vancouver and urge students to go with such slogans as "Gas Town. A real drunk experience. Bathrooms on the bus." The Alaska Tavern, Fast Eddie's, Pete's, and the Shakermill Tavern have notices plastered around every corner.
Needs of students fall into four general categories: rides, roommates, pets and commodities and services.

For every event-oriented sign on campus, there are at least a dozen notes asking to be taken away from it. One wonders who stays around to attend the club meetings.

Most of the travel notices are written on note paper, and they scream forth the names of such far off and exotic cities as Seattle, Monroe, LaConner, Bellevue and Everett. Once in a while someone will add a little originality to his work. "SUZY WOULD LIKE TO BE PICKED UP and taken to Seattle." For the most part, though, students just leave their name and number on tear-off strips.

Roommate hunting can be enlightening. One ad in the Viking Union reads, "Free room for neat girl in exchange for tending animals on weekends." Another is looking for a "vegie person into living with kids." Many rooms are advertised as "sunny" or "large and spacious."

A lot of Western students seem to consider themselves desperate: "I DESPERATELY need a ride to Seattle," or "I DESPERATELY need a refrigerator." Many of the pleadings have to do with musical needs. Someone is looking for "a talented guitar player who has time to create intelligent music." One student has a trumpet he can't play; he would like lessons. "I can pay $1-$3 an hour," he writes. "That's all."

Students are imaginative when trying to get rid of a pet or find a lost one. An ad in the Viking Union reads, "Free large tom cat. Real virile and frisky, hopefully a mouser. We also have a lovely and fertile girlfriend for him."

The owners of Rally, an eight-week-old Poodle with large ears and a white chest, sound inconsolable. "Please, please, please," they write. "We miss him very much." And this, from the owner of Petula: "She comes when her name is called or the usual 'here, Kitty Kitty.' She is orange and eats grasshoppers."

Like the five-cent want ads, the Viking Union bulges with commodities for sale or rent. Look what one can find: an organ for $600; a double bed that is "spacious and comfortable" ($30); a twenty-five inch television with "excellent color and picture" ($150); one gas clothes dryer, "a sacrifice" at $75; and one new pair of jeans "never worn, just washed three or four times. Best offer." Some are real bargains: "Free six string guitar with purchase of music book selling for $600."

Some parody Madison Avenue gimmickry. A Ford Mustang is advertised as "born and raised on Martha's Vineyard." An oven is advertised as "the real thing in traditional white and electricity, with four burners on top. $25."

A tremendous number of services are available to students at Western, from massage and therapy centers to courses in "Japanese Acupressure." A popular services is car repairing. The "Old Volks Home," a Volkswagen repair service, says it offers "unauthorized VW repairs and house calls."

Students looking for professional typing will find that rates vary. Most charge 60 cents for a single-spaced page and 50 cents for double-spaced. They go down to 30 or 40 cents a page, however, and up to 85 cents a page, which is what one "B.A. in English" is advertising.

Students are urged to spend their holidays abroad or to study abroad with such sloganeering as "17th annual Europe Celebration for $1,195," or "Study in Montreal, Paris or Mexico." To pay for such luxuries, a few work offerings appear from time to time. Last spring someone was offering "a live-in position with senior citizens."

Some students prefer written communication to verbal conversation. Last year a male resident of Omega pinned an article on the men's bathroom titled "There is Life Without God." He got these responses: "Yes, but is there life after death?" "Do you live for death?" "But why take a chance of being wrong?" and "To change the subject a little. Is there life without SAGA?"

Toward the end of each quarter, campus dining halls glitter with colorful signs advertising dorm contracts for sale. These masterpieces reflect the desperate need to decamp the red brick halls. Some are real attention getters, such as "HELP! MY BOYFRIEND GOT ME IN TROUBLE and convinced me to join him at Central," or "SEX. Now that I have your attention . . . " Others hit home by offering discounts ranging from $5 to $50. The real prize winner was "Due to SAGA I've had the shits since fall quarter. I've got to get out of here."
"What kind ya got today?"
"Chocolate chip mint an' strawberry."
"Gimme a chocolate chip . . . how much is it?"
"Twenty-five . . . thanks."

One transaction. On a good day, Stanley, the Red Square ice cream entrepreneur, repeats that simple procedure about a hundred and ten times.

He does, that is, if as many students choose strawberry as choose chocolate chip mint — or whatever the combination might be. Stanley says he gets "about 55 cones" out of each of the 2½ gallon containers he pedals around campus each business day in his free-enterprise-on-three-wheels ice cream shop.

Stanley, 17 year-old son of Dr. Howard Harris of Western's Soc/Anthro department, became the campus free-lance goodies agent in the summer of 1973. The business, he grins, is "better than a paper route." He only works when the weather man forecasts ice-cream, and Stanley is his own weatherman.

Today's favorite seemed to be the chocolate chip mint.
"What flavors do you have today?"
"Chocolate chip mint and strawberry."
"I want a chocolate chip mint; whatta you want?"
"Give me a scoop of each . . . with the mint on the bottom, please."

*
EUROPE
ON
TEN FANTASIES A DAY

By Ann Carlson

Sipping Campari in a sidewalk cafe . . . gambling at Monte Carlo . . . cruising the Greek islands . . . All the ladies in Cosmopolitan had a "good life," why didn't I? I looked at my rain-washed face in the mirror. "There's something better for you," I told the face. It was one of those days when, tired of having my face pressed into a textbook or propped up during a boring class, I suddenly felt disillusioned with college routine and the unremitting Bellingham rain. Born and raised in Whatcom County, I saw myself dying without having been anywhere . . . my lifeless form found floating in a mud puddle.

I couldn't wait to finish school! I had to escape now!

My roommate felt the same, and we spent the rest of the winter dreaming over our Cosmopolitans in the confines of our dorm room. By the end of spring quarter, we still had not registered for fall.

In October, we boarded a Europe-bound jet, taking our fantasies with us.

We didn't bring them home, however. Traveling wore away all illusions. Three once-romantic things we changed our minds about were 1) European trains, 2) men, and 3) bathrooms.

Fantasy #1. "See Europe," the pamphlet read, "travel second class, the way the Europeans do." We had decided to travel with Student Railpasses, the cheapest for long distances.

How wonderful the world would look, through the windows of a speeding train!

The outside does look fine, but the inside can be chaos. To save money, we rode the trains at night and slept in the compartments. Throughout the endless night, the trains would jerk, grind and halt in every cow pasture, village and town along the way.

German trains are efficient, French trains less so but still comfortable. Italy was the worst. Because it is cheaper to travel by train here than in northern Europe, they are frantically crowded . . . compartments crammed and aisles clogged with crying children, dogs, and old men playing cards amid loaves of bread and salami.

One night there were seven of us plus backpacks in a compartment, exhausted and trying to sleep. The night was a spaghetti-like tangle of arms and legs, along with screams of "Stop, you're crushing my face," and "Move, my foot's asleep."

Our compartment door squeaked open at every new stop, as faces peered into the darkness looking for vacancies. Even when the door slid shut, it could not keep out the parakeet-chatter of Italian. Next morning in Rome we crawled off the train dazed and bleary-eyed.

Fantasy #2. While dining, perhaps two handsome, suave, debonair (and of course rich) Europeans would approach us, be spellbound by our beauty and carry us away to their chateaux in the Alps.

They approached us, alright. We had been warned before we left about the pinches, remarks and gestures, but considered them to be exaggerated by Pollyanna types of a less-adventurous variety.

In Monaco, at the palace museum, I was approached by the elderly guard. "You are beautiful!" he said, rolling his eyes and clenching his fist, gestures we came to know well. "American girls are the most beautiful in the world! Princess Grace — she is from Philadelphia!"

"Well, merci," I gulped. Me and Grace Kelly! Back at the station I found he had said the same thing to my three friends.

Spain has a warm climate which directly affects the lusty Latin temperament. We stayed in Alicante, a city on the coast, popular with German and English tourists. In the afternoons many of the shops close until early evening, and the beaches are cluttered with local merchants, school children and the elderly.

Young senors also roam the beaches, truant from school or jobs, in search of female tourists. Lack of the English language does not stop them; they would like to take you out anyway.
One caballero, not more than 17, managed to find us every afternoon, sprawled in the sand, no matter where he hid ourselves.

"Discotheque," he would say, pointing in turn to himself and us. "Musique... noce," he would add, gyrating his hips in a pitiful rendition of the twist. We feigned perplexity until we learned enough Spanish to tell him we were married. We never saw him again.

Late one afternoon, we were looking for yarn for a scarf our landlady was knitting for me. Hopelessly lost, we were glad to see a little man who graciously led us from wool store to wool store until we found the perfect match.

He looked up at the men leering from balconies and windows, shaking his head in disgust. "Don't listen to them," he seemed to say, "these young men are all alike."

"Si, si!" my roommate said, laughing at his gestures. Then he grabbed her and tried to kiss her. When I, who had been walking ahead, turned to thank him for the help, she had broken away. I smiled and waved as our little middle-aged gentleman scurried away into a throng of shoppers.

He restored my faith in the human race when you meet a nice guy like that, doesn't it?" I said on our way back to the hotel. She answered that it did not, and told me what had happened. She still grimaces when someone asks me where I got my beautiful scarf.

Fantasy #3. After a full day of sightseeing, we would retire to our hotel to freshen up with a glorious hot shower, in a bathroom replete with the Old World charm of antique bathroom fixtures.

I must admit we'd been warned. The first thing a lot of people told us when they found out we were going to Europe was "Don't forget to take a roll of toilet paper."

That seemed hilarious at the time, but bathrooms in Europe are nothing to laugh about. Toilet paper, when available, has the look and feel of — well, I remember one particular roll in Barcelona that resembled purple crepe paper. But it did lend a festive touch to a rather dingy bathroom.

Showers, especially hot ones, are hard to find when traveling; the cheapest hotels don't have them. On several occasions in desperation we stuck our heads in the bidet to wash our hair.

After a while, we gave up entirely on elegant and stroved for clean.

We left the big cities behind and headed for the tiny village Agia Gallini on the island of Crete.

It was our favorite place. Located on the southern side of the island, Gallini was wedged between hills of stunted olive trees and the Mediterranean, a romantic idyllic collection of whitewashed dwellings baked by continuous sun. The only connection with the rest of the world is a twice-daily bus to Heraklion. The people who live there fish, raise olives or oranges or run the hotels and restaurants for the numerous students who migrate there each year.

It is hard to say why it is so wonderful there; there is nothing to do but look at the sea and play backgammon. In every cafe, old men can be seen hunched over backgammon boards drinking ouzo (Greek licorice liqueur) their lips silent, their fingers rapidly tossing dice and shuffling chips.

We learnt backgammon too, and it became our only intellectual stimulation. We spent the rest of the time on the beach or drinking retsina, a wine made from wood resin.

There is a sort of timeless about Crete; men still lead donkeys into the hills and load them with bags of olives as they have done for generations. One day we climbed into the hills among the olive trees, and looked at the blue expanse of sea, dotted with brown islands. I felt I could see, back through time, the ships of the Minoans, an ancient civilization which once flourished here.

In evenings we would choose a restaurant by its specialty for the night. It wasn't unusual for ten of us to be clustered around a stove while a smiling Greek cook explained the contents of a multitude of simmering pots. The cafes swarmed with flies and scrawny kittens which scrambled for crumbs of bread. A tinny jukebox blared American tunes, and the retsina flowed. One of the fishermen who came in serenaded me royally with his flute.

One night, with nothing to do, we spent the evening in our hotel room, watching the countless flies mate, snipping at them with towels.

Our fantasies had dissolved, but it didn't matter; the "good life" hadn't really passed us by. It didn't matter, either, that Campari reminded me of battery acid; I was too young to get into the Monte Carlo casino anyway.
Peace Corps
and VISTA
representatives
are here
Oct. 28-31
Placement Office
Edens Hall
4-7pm
I smoke for taste.

Dan Lamont
I began my college years at seven, a "campus brat" — one of a 100 students in an experimental elementary school run by Western's Education Department.

Campus School first opened in 1940 in the building that later became Miller Hall. The program was designed to give education students a chance to practice teaching and observe experienced instructors at work. Pupils in this "goldfish bowl" had as many as 1,000 visitors a week.

Most of the students were children of Western's faculty with a few selected from other backgrounds within the community. I was one of the latter.

I have many memories of what Western was like then. Gene Vike of the Art Department, who was a teacher at Campus School, is one of a few Campus instructors still teaching at Western.

I talked with him about his recollections of Campus School and of Western in the 1960s. Mr. Vike started teaching my second grade class in 1962. He worked with us through fifth grade, and also taught other grades. At the same time, he maintained a full teaching schedule with Western's college-age students.

Mr. Vike said he had tried to accomplish an "increased general perceptual awareness and development of skills in drawing, painting and sculpture."

Mr. Vike said the situation at the school was "atypical." The thing that made the school so different was "the parents wanted their children there, whereas in a public school some do and some don't." The school had a "good elementary program and provided a unique experience for the children," according to Mr. Vike.

There was no Red Square in 1962, just a black-topped area by the southern end of the school near Carver Gym, complete with square ball courts, hop scotch, and a baseball diamond. The rest of the space between Campus School and the "Science Building" was a large grassy area. On a sunny day, at recess time, the grass would fill with campus brats playing their favorite game: kick as many balls as possible onto the Science Building roof, then argue with Mrs. O'Brien, the P.E. teacher, about who had the privilege of getting them down.

Mrs. O'Brien appeared on the playground dressed in Bermuda shorts, tennis shoes, ankle socks and a whistle on a string around her neck. She led us in exercises and taught us to do the Hora dance. Once she set up an obstacle
course in one of Campus School's two gyms. We had to hang from ropes and jump over blocks. If we fell off the wooden bridge a sea of hungry paper piranhas waited eagerly to devour us.

There were no Humanities Building, Bond Hall, or Lecture Halls during my first years at Western. Instead, there was a wide expanse of grass between Campus School and the library, and between Campus School and Old Main. A road connected with the fire lane beside College Hall and Carver Gym, so the city bus could drop off college customers right at the door of Campus School.

Later, when construction was started on the Humanities Building, a wooden fence was put up around the site, Mr. Vike took his art classes out to paint the barricade.

Campus School might have been considered the nearest answer to a child's dream school. On Fridays we invaded the pool in Carver Gym when we had our swimming lessons. All the girls wore identical green swimsuits made of horrid stretchy material.

After lessons we fought over who got to use the hair dryers first. Hung high on the wall, we had to stand on chairs to reach them. It was fun to twirl around under the blast of hot air and make our hair fly.

The foreign language department also participated in the Campus School program. We began learning French in kindergarten, and by sixth grade knew quite a bit of the language.

What is now the Arboretum was used as a nature trail by science classes to study rocks, mosses and trees. If you should happen to climb Sehome Hill and find a tree with a tag bearing a child's name you can bet it was written in a third grader's scrawl.

We all looked forward to every other Tuesday when school got out at noon. "Short Tuesday" gave teachers a chance to hold meetings. Campus students also got the same vacations as college students; considerably longer than most grade school kids.

It was fun getting used to college life at an early age, "atypical" as it might have been. I had an easier time than most when I returned to Western in 1973 for my second college education.

Western has grown up since Campus School days, and so have the Campus brats. One or two attend Western, some are obtaining their educations elsewhere, some are married, some work and some don't. Still, I think the Campus School experience was worthwhile for all of us.
Many people never know it's there, the tunnel system beneath Western's campus. But if it weren't, a lot of things would clutter up the landscape — like telephone poles and constant digging to maintain steam lines and other utilities serving the campus.

The tunnel carries most main utilities on campus — steam for heating, electric and phone wires and chilled water to some buildings for air conditioning. It runs the length of campus, nearly a mile, and is large enough to walk through, unless you’re more than 7-feet tall.

Going through the tunnel, you can walk from Old Main, past Fairhaven College, nearly to Buchanan Towers — all without coming up. If you get lost, you might come out a manhole in the middle of High Street.

It took a long time to get the tunnel built, and there is little chance it will be extended in the future. Two sections, both in Ridgeway, still need work. There, steam lines buried directly in the ground without protection, have rusted and started leaking.

"There was no money to do it right," said Dave Anderson, steam plant Chief Engineer, who has worked here 23 years and seen a lot of changes. He has worked on planning for all sections of the tunnel. "I guess I can retire when we get the last of it done."

"The administration told us to plan for 6,000 students," he said. "Then just a few years later they were talking 15,000 students. We hadn't planned on that."

"The first section was put in during 1960. It runs from the steam plant to the gym. The last section, under High Street, was added in 1973. That was probably the last addition to the main tunnel. Any new buildings can be served by branches from the existing tunnel."

The tunnel was built to make inspection and repair easier and because it costs less for new utilities. There's at least one maintenance person working in the tunnel every day and Security checks it at night.

Beginning at Old Main, the tunnel runs between the Library and the Humanities building. When it reaches Bond Hall another section goes to High Street near the Music Auditorium and then to a dead-end near the bookstore.
"Security told her that her ‘pillow’ carried 4,400 volts."

On the west side of the gym, the tunnel was built on top of the ground, to keep the bank from sliding down. The stairway is actually the top of the tunnel, as is the walkway next to the tennis courts. There were plans to continue the tunnel above ground, along the bottom of the hill, but it was too expensive.

The tunnel continues, past the gym, going next to the tennis courts, to the steam plant, next to the parking lot near the Art building. Before it gets there, a section splits off and goes south to Fairhaven, underneath the path to Arntzen and Huxley. It dead-ends between the Commis­sary and Buchanan Towers.

The oldest section, from the steam plant to the gym, is the smallest, only six feet high and crammed with pipes and wires. In order to get through you must either be very small or duck your head and scrunch your shoulders.

You may have wondered about the high curb between the tennis courts and the gym. It wasn’t built that way; the ground is settling and the sidewalk (the top of the tunnel) is not. The tunnel was built on steel pilings that go down to bedrock, which is as deep as 60 feet in some places.

The older parts of the tunnel, where concrete was poured in place, are square. It cost $1400 per linear foot. The newer sections, to Fairhaven and under High Street, were built from 7-foot round concrete pipe, laid underground at a cost of $800 per foot.

The pipe has a flat-bottom walkway. One side is lined with steam pipes, the other has two metal trays that support electrical cables and telephone wires.

There are many exits from the tunnel, but most can’t be opened from the outside. Only a few buildings connect directly to the tunnel. Break-ins continue to be a problem, even though Security checks the tunnel nightly. A Klipsun article in 1973 told of several incidents, including some about students who had been hurt. One girl, found by Security, was lounging on the metal tray carrying electrical cables. She thought she was comfortable until Security told her that her “pillow” carried 4,400 volts.

During construction, it was not unusual for workers to leave entrances open. Students would sometimes wander in the darkened tunnel until someone discovered the light switch and spoiled the fun.

Locked gates were installed three years ago to keep intruders from going very far if they did get in. Security Director R. G. Peterson said anyone caught is now charged with criminal trespass. In the past, students were often released without punishment. Peterson said criminal charges are necessary because of continued break-ins and vandalism.

Every night a student patrol walks the entire system looking for problems. Dave Evans has been doing it for nine months. He walks the tunnel in about an hour. Most problems he finds are small, like burned-out lights or broken pumps. But not always. On one recent trip he found a small leak dripping from the ceiling — no problem, except that it was dripping on a high-voltage line.

“An underground utility system is not unusual for a college,” Dave Anderson concluded. “Similar ones exist at both the U of W and Evergreen. The one at Evergreen is big enough to drive through. They’ve got a little electric cart they run through for inspection. Their’s is huge, a good twenty feet wide and twelve feet high. That’s the advantage to building it all at once. Ours just sort of grew up with the college.”

Even if it’s not unique, the tunnel is a part of Western few students ever see.∗
When I arrived from Germany last spring I was ready for a period of transition back to the fast-paced American lunacy. Two years of rustic living had left its mark on me. The easy-going Germans had impressed their value of practicality.

Bearing this in mind I was prepared to scold and lecture all my former mates on the travesty of the American lifestyle. I checked in with my best friends to begin my mission.

They live in a run-down house in a deserted part of Pullman, a sturdy but aging home built when pre-fab had different connotations. The most striking thing about it is the accumulation of several tons of junk. My friends, Mark and Pete, have an eye for old, seemingly useless items that are throwbacks to an era when a lot of thought and effort went into the design and manufacture of products. Old furniture, tools, curios and halfway antiques adorn the inside as well as outside. Some of these are incorporated into the decoration scheme, early American pandemonium, and some are sold to help keep the wolf from the door. A lot of it is randomly stacked around the grounds, waiting.

As part-time students and nearly always gainfully-unemployed, Mark and Pete seldom rise before noon so I thought to surprise them with my sudden appearance at the unheard-of hour of 8:30. Amazingly, they were not only up but bustling about preparing for some endeavor with a fervor I just could not associate with these two.

Following a predictable round of hail-fellow-well-met's I smiled bravely and tried to ascertain what the preparations, which they had fallen upon with renewed frenzy, were all about. While Pete cooked a hearty breakfast, Mark concentrated on gathering such things as leather work gloves, gunny sacks and sundry tools. There was an air of anticipation completely foreign to this environment. I swallowed my pride and asked the inane: "You fellas get a job?"

Activity halted. Mark looked up quizzically from his pile of devices and a hurt cry of "What" pierced the smoke coming from the kitchen. Mark sensed my bewilderment and motioned me to sit down while he explained. Pete wandered in, licking God-knows-what off his fingers, and leaned against a work bench to listen.

"It's trash run," Mark began.

"Trash run?" I was alarmed. Visions of these two hauling refuse in their beat-up pickup collided with my smug assumptions as to their ambitiousness.

"Yeah, trash run," Mark went on, "it's finals week and the students are cleaning their rooms cause they can't carry home all the stuff they picked up during the year. You ought to see some of the stuff they throw away."

He gave me the nickel tour of the place, concentrating on the remnants of the previous year's trash run, their first. We started at the work bench, which is incorporated in the room connecting kitchen and living room and at one time would have been considered a dining room. They had salvaged various wrenches, screwdrivers, nuts and bolts, hinges and other mechanical paraphernalia. In the kitchen I was surprised at the array of utensils, pots and pans, dishes, silverware and you-name-it that were trash relics. We went to every room in the house; each contained at least one item that someone else had thrown away.

"And this ain't the half of it," Mark said. "We sold a lot of stuff at a yard sale after the run and made enough for a hellacious party."
I had a mild buzzing in my ears as I contemplated the possibilities. I'm given to grandiose schemes of vaporous fabric but this situation really had me agog with dreams of fame and fortune based on mountains of garbage. Trash King of the Northwest. The arrival of two more "trashers" broke up my musing.

The spirit of salvage was on us all. We barely took time to choke down breakfast before our caravan of three pickups hit the trail. I pumped them for all the information I could on the subject of garbage. I wanted to know what to look for, where to look, how the booty was to be distributed, and on and on. My companions weathered my incessant questions with knowing smiles. There is nothing like the enthusiasm of a fresh recruit before the first shot has been fired.

We arrived at the first dumpster, those monstrous contraptions built to be picked up by the mechanical arms of garbage trucks. I had been convinced by the others to stand by and watch before getting my feet wet, or dirty, as it were.

They swarmed the dumpster and proceeded to run amok. Trash flew like confetti as the happy warriors dug and churned, standing knee-deep in the aromatic muck, searching for that worthwhile item. Occasionally there was an exclamation and all activity stopped while a piece was examined and given the thumbs-up or thumbs-down. Bottles and aluminum cans proved to be plentiful and I was set to work separating and stacking the bottles by brand and crushing the cans.

They followed a sort of unwritten schedule: half hour in the dumpster, then 45 minutes sorting through and evaluating what had been collected while discussing where to strike next.

Morning dragged into afternoon and we headed back to Mark's for lunch and a few beers. We would have hit a tavern but no place could have put up with five guys dressed like coal miners and smelling like an ecological nightmare.

The dumpsters we had hit in the morning had been located outside dormitories, chronic low producers of quality trash. Lots of bottles, cans, some clothes, and old records, but not much furniture and such. It was time to turn our attention to the fruitful apartment complexes.

Quickly we had our first tragedy. One of our group, called Bear for obvious reasons, was the first one to a dumpster and spied what he thought was a dream catch — four seemingly full bottles of rot gut wine. Dipsy Dumpsters have two and a half foot square hatches on two sides and two cruelly heavy flaps covering the top. The idea is for people to deposit their litter in the hatches and leave the flaps, which can come down with deadly speed, alone.

Bear spotted the wine near the back of the dumpster and was immediately seized by "wino frenzy." He threw up one of the flaps and began clambering up. Unfortunately the flap did not reach the point of no return and arched back to its former position with a sickening crash, catching the end of Bear's right hand. With a howl he jumped back, leaving glove and the end of his middle finger lodged in the flap, and began careening around the parking lot emitting grunts of pain. Finally he allowed us to lead him away to a hospital where, incredibly, they were able to sew the flattened end of his finger back on. There is no justice; the wine turned out to be colored water.

Later we came upon some prize items; a virtually new easy chair with one broken leg that the owner had

"Trash flew like confetti as the happy warriors dug and churned."

"We sold alot of stuff at a yard sale after the run and made enough for a hellacious party."

"A dream catch — four seemingly full bottles of rotgut wine."

19
thoughtfully stacked on the chair, a box of assorted and untainted canned foods, enough silverware and dishes to seat eight, and two portable TV sets. One had a faint picture; the other made an odd growling noise when turned on. Nevertheless, TV sets can be sold to repair shops to be stripped for parts or reworked and sold.

Some of the places we hit had better quality merchandise than you’ll find in most Salvation Army collection points, which bespeaks the charity and wisdom of the Psi Generation.

At the end of the day my spirits were somewhat dampened, especially after I got a strong whiff of myself and nearly passed out. I also had a crick in my neck from shaking my head at the stupidity and wastefulness of my fellow man.

I was surprised by the number of good books that were cast aside. Our collection ran the gamut of useful household and educational goods, and I couldn’t help thinking back to the lessons in pragmatism I had witnessed in Germany. In a deep melancholy I proceeded to get brutally drunk and couldn’t answer the bell in the morning.

That proved to be the last of my trashing, save for a brief spurt two days later when my comrades sensed someone following them and, fearing competition, called up reserves for an all-out blitz. But students were leaving town in droves and pickings were getting slim. Without the full effective strength of the half-crippled Bear there was no getting deep enough in the trash to where the hidden treasure might lie. After three and a half days the hunt was called off.

Though my collecting activity had been curtailed, I agreed to help sort the results in preparation for the yard sale. Minor repairs raised the worth of some objects while others were left in disrepair for hobby enthusiasts.

I stayed on the couch at Mark’s place the night before the sale, advertised to start at ten. I awoke at 9:15 and moved to the window for a quick weather check. What I saw made me jump back and hide behind the curtain. Two well-dressed women were busily hiding things on the porch so they could come back and claim them when the sale officially opened. In the next 30 minutes at least a dozen different sets of “shoppers” tried the same tactic, with varying success since they stumbled upon each other’s caches.

Is there no end to this madness, I thought, as I scurried up the stairs to warn Mark. He yawningly informed me it was standard operating procedure and not to be alarmed. Right.

The sale was a blur of haggling and snipping over the most trivial of issues. I escaped by making the pay-off run with the collected bottles and aluminum. At 50c a case for bottles and half a cent a pound for the aluminum we cleared $86.74, which had been earmarked for the now-annual Trash Keg, as aptly named a party as I’ve ever seen. The yard sale netted close to $200.

All in all my reaction to this rather sordid business has mellowed with time. Initial disgust at the variety and quality of the rubbish encountered, and the self-righteous indignation at the callousness of people has been tempered by the realization my friends and I may be no better for taking advantage of it. I might even “trash it” again if I have to.

In any case, my father has begun to wonder about me, since I’ve taken to checking the contents of his trash can when I’m home for a visit. Occasionally I find a gem.
I came to Shannon Point Marine Center in Anacortes expecting to see Jacques Cousteau's Calypso anchored off shore, and white whales like those in Stanley Park rolling in pools. Instead, I saw dense, rain forest vegetation lining the dusty, gravel roadside. Towering moss-covered trees, widespread ferns, and leafy plants were in abundance, but not a giant squid or killer whale could be found.

From the primitive, unpaved parking lot, we walked through the trees, and came upon a secluded brick building. The lone building on the 70 acre Shannon Point site, the three-story structure is known as the Leona Sundquist Marine Laboratory. A simple, rustic-type lab, it's ornamented only by a bronze plaque which informally proclaims that the State of Washington owns Shannon Point, that it's administered by Western, and shall be for the use of students attending state colleges and universities.

On the second floor of the building are the instructional labs, where most of the classroom study takes place. These starkly clean rooms had cement floors, brick walls and spotless black table tops. Microscopes decorated the shelves along the walls, and the black board simply stated: "Biology 431 Low Tide 2:15 Lecture 3:15."

A side door opened to a damp, cool rectangular room, with sea water tanks lining the gray walls. The white, shallow tanks looked like double decker bathtubs, and inside them were all sorts of sea organisms. Groups of students had captured the sea creatures for study, and were responsible for their care and feeding while they were at the Center.

My friend, Jim, was taking "Marine Invertebrate Zoology," (Bio 431), at Shannon Point, and he was at the far end of the room scraping something out of a pail with his knife. He yelled for me to come and watch him feed his sea anemone.
He dropped some slimy snail eggs from his knife into the water above the pale-pink anemone. It felt the bait with a few of its chubby, maroon-tipped tentacles, and then slowly took the eggs into its stomach/mouth.

I watched as Jim surveyed the other occupants of his tank. He reached in and pulled out his orange-green baby sea cucumber, and slid a couple of limpids off the side walls. The crabs and starfish were doing fine, but in the corner his terebellid worm looked as if it had died. He slid his knife under it and lifted it out. Its limp, muddy-brown body just hung off the knife point. Sadly he let it hover over the center of the hungry anemone, and then dropped it into the tentacles.

The place has all the equipment of an elaborate aquarium, complete with a circulating salt water system and temperature regulators. The fascinating thing was that you could reach in and touch the organisms. No glass or wire screen stopped you from stroking the purplish-brown giant sea cucumber, or searching for gills on the krypto kyton. Jim reached down to tease an orange and white scallop with his knife, while I tickled a bright yellow sea-lemon slug. After fondling most of the specimens in the tanks, Jim wanted to show me the beach where they had come from.

We walked 20 yards along a gravel path, and came to the beach, which is completely concealed from the building. Across the water the San Juans looked like deep blue-gray mounds, and only sounds of the waves and an occasional sea gull screaming, broke the silence. The shoreline looked healthy and clean, with colors of dark green, white and yellow splashed among the rocks.

A bunch of cream colored barnacles were clinging to a couple of large rocks, and I asked Jim if the barnacles were alive. He pulled me down so my ear was up against the rocks, and told me to listen. For a minute, I heard nothing, and then a high-pitched chirping sound, like electrified baby birds, came from the rocks. In a couple seconds it came so fast it sounded like a high-pitched hum, and I looked at him in amazement. I'd never heard barnacles talk before.

Walking back to the lab, Jim said that education was as it should be out here. You could really get a sensory appreciation for the organisms you were studying. They became more than just a Latin name, and a member of that super order and this specie. These creatures were a piece of life, and a part of the whole. I decided I wanted to meet the man who was in charge of the Center, and find out how the program had been put together.

I looked for Dr. Summers in his third floor office, and the door was open but he did not appear to be around. I walked outside the building and saw two men in green cover-alls who was in charge of the Center, and find out how the program had been put together.

I looked for Dr. Summers in his third floor office, and the door was open but he did not appear to be around. I walked outside the building and saw two men in green cover-alls working. They looked like custodians so I asked if they had seen the director, Dr. Summers, anywhere.

"I'm Summers," the man with salt and pepper colored sideburns and pale blue eyes answered. I explained to him that it was my first time here, and before I could finish the man carrying two rusty Shasta cola cans interrupted. "Only your first time at Shannon Point?", he questioned me wide-eyed. "Why Sir," he addressed Summers with a dash of British impetuousity, "We must show you here the pond."

So I set off down an unmarked path with Dr. William Summers, and Mr. Dick Lively, the top tour guide and caretaker.

We shuffled through leaves and bushes, and Summers said that nearly every foot of Shannon Point is covered with vegetation and plant life. This made it an excellent site for biological field studies, as well as marine experiments. As we continued, Mr. Lively proudly pointed out the fledgling douglas firs and flowering digitals growing along the path, and Summers bent down to inspect a slug that caught his eye.

Commenting to Mr. Lively on the good size of slugs this season, Summers led us on, and soon we heard a chorus of crickets and frogs whose song grew louder as we approached the pond.

Ducks frantically started beating their wings against the water and flew quacking into the air as we stepped onto the 2-foot wide gangplank that reached 15 feet out into the murky green water. This is the only man-made addition to the 5 acre shore front, and nothing inhibits the trees and grasses from growing in the lake bed.

"Only a 20-foot isthmus separates this freshwater pond from the sea," Summers said as he gazed out over the duck-ruffled water. He rattled off the names of the different animals that made their home there: turtles, salamanders, fish, river otter and deer. Mr. Lively said that he had spotted a beaver, and pointed out where it looked as if a beaver had been chewing away at a tree limb. We turned to leave and Summers said this will all become a meadow someday. We hiked back to the lab in peaceful silence.

"We want to offer the students a marine experience, and not just courses," Summer said back in his lab/office. He told me if I really wanted to find out about the Shannon Point program I should spend time outside with the students, and he couldn't tell me much.

"The only reason this center is here and the only reason I'm here is to provide service for the students," he said solemnly. "Without the students there would be no Shannon Point."