To: Steve Valandra
c/o Editor of Klipsun

Is this serious? I certainly hope not. Are you the guy who reviewed the Rollins concert? Hey man, before you start pre-evaluating us who work so hard to make jazz what it is, why don't you come on down to the department on any given Wednesday or down to Fast Eddie's on a Sunday afternoon and check us morticians out? One last thing—give me an example of jazz.

Mike Murphy

P.S. I don't know of any rockers with more technical or playing skills. I could conclude this by saying rock is for those who can't play jazz, but I won't be a presumptuous ass.
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Editor: Dave Miltenberger
Managing Editor: Nancy Walbeck
Design Coordinator: Greg Lewis
Business Manager: John Bliss
Darkroom Technician: Rick Ross
Production Manager: Susan Borter
Consultant: Gregg Olsen
Advisor: Carolyn Dale


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Monday P.M.

The second floor of the Prospect Street firehouse in Bellingham is a quiet place on a Monday night. Half the shift catnaps with their hip boots on, the other half nestles in overstuffed leather chairs watching post-Mariners TV or shoots pool down the hall. The half-moon glow of the TV does little to enhance the institutional off-pink walls while the human energy level drops in anticipation of the long shift until eight the next morning.

"Medic one-eight . . . Medic one-eight . . . respond to call . . . 913 Railroad . . . man on roof."

Before the call is complete, the men, wallowing in the limbo of half sleep, rush down the stairs and start up the aid car. I run after them and jump in.

In the medic van loaded with countless jars, braces, ampules and sterile-wrapped unknowns, we careen around corners preceded by our flashing strobe and an occasional siren burst.

We come to a stop in front of one of the less-than-posh hotels on Railroad Street. Some policemen meet us as we climb out of the van.

"A couple of the guys are up on the roof with him," one says. "Maybe we can get him down in the stretcher. I dunno."

We charge up the old stairs and down the dingy narrow halls past silent numbered doors and up to the rain-soaked roof.

As we pass a sobbing young woman with her face hidden in her hands, we can see the man, handcuffed, lying on his side.

The 280-pound, 18-year-old had threatened suicide, without success, and was carried to the ambulance by six uniformed men. We took him to St. Luke's Hospital and he was strapped to a bed in the emergency ward.

"I guess we'd classify this as a transfer more than an emergency," Floyd Roorda, one of the paramedic team, said. "This guy just wanted someone to notice him."

Paramedics are certified emergency medical transport specialists who are firemen with one year on the force. Medical jacks-of-all-trades, they rush to the scene of an emergency and keep the patient stabilized until doctors can attend to the victim.

Roorda, 25, was certified recently after 15 months of medical study and

"Medic... one-eight..."
The veteran of the three, Moore said the medics develop a professional approach, a sort of detached coolness to the trauma of each case.

The kids are toughest. They stick with you longer," he said.

"We get our share of stabbings and shootings with an occasional machete wound or hanging," he said.

The episode with the drunk elicited no sympathy from the crew. The medics hate "garbage calls.

The evening started slowly at the station with a game of poker for bowls of ice cream down in the alarm room. By 11 p.m., all but the acting captain and I were asleep.

Our conversation on commercial fishing and the impact of war was interrupted by the call box.

"Medic one-eight . . . Medic one-eight . . . respond to call . . . Western campus."

As the aid car drove up behind the dorms, the headlights illuminated a group of students carrying someone down the service road. Moore and driver Glen Pauley hopped out and flung the rear doors open to receive the patient.

An emaciated and delirious student writhed on the cot in the back of the medic van.

Moore and Pauley administered oxygen and attempted to calm him down. Pauley sat by the student and held his hand. Moore stroked the man's forehead and chest constantly while asking questions; anything to keep him alert.

Neither left the man's side as another fireman took over the wheel. All the way to St. Luke's, the two medics soothed the student. First, he was calm asking for candy bars, juice and women, then suddenly yelling and squirming in some unknown pain.

In the emergency room, the man was hooked up to an electrocardiograph to monitor his heart. Moore said the student apparently had a toxic reaction to some prescribed medicine. But doctors, paramedics and nurses could not explain the man's scant weight of 87 pounds.

Light and friendly banter between the medics and the hospital staff and even police mixed with the comings and goings of patients in the emergency ward. Comments about patients, whose house needs painting and who was seen with whom at what bar mingled easily with orders for oxygen, inquiries on dosages and methods for moving patients.

"We get to know each other pretty well around here," Pauley said. "It's still a pretty small town."

In another ward, a group of nurses and doctors closed in around the bed of an old Lummi Indian whose heart had stopped.

I followed Pauley into the room.

The doctor and nurses applied cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) alternating duties of pounding on the man's chest, circulating oxygen through his body and jolting him with ever increasing amounts of electricity. Pauley volunteered and took a turn leaning on the man's chest.

Moore walked in from the emergency room, his duties with the student wrapped up. He looked tired and his eyes were bloodshot. Pauley was working into a sweat from his life-saving effort.

Another 10 minutes passed before everybody gave up on the old guy and packed up the equipment. Business as usual.

Moore and Pauley stepped quietly into the elevator and pressed the button for the main floor. After walking through the doors from the emergency ward into the early light of day, Moore took a seat in the front of the aid car and filled out the report. Pauley pulled the van out onto Ellis Street and headed back to the station.

There still might be some sleep time before the next call.
"Look at the faces of my people: You will find expressions of love and despair, hope and joy, sadness and desire, and all the human feelings that live in the hearts of people of all colours. Yet, the heart never knows the colour of the skin."

— from "My Heart Soars," by Chief Dan George

I arrived at St. Mary's Indian Residence at the appointed time, a little unnerved at the prospect of meeting a Hollywood star, a culture hero and my first celebrity. Unnerved, too, because the meeting had been arranged through a second party, Joe Alec, administrator of the residence and son-in-law to the illustrious Chief Dan George.

So I knocked at Joe's door, waiting for Canada's greatest Indian, that "portage across time," to come and let me in. I waited and peered through the living room window. There were children's toys on the floor, and Teen magazines and pictures of Dan George and his many offspring.

When no one answered, I rambled over to Joe's office and found his secretary working busily at her desk.

"I'm looking for Chief Dan George," I said.

"Oh! Well, he's a difficult man to find, you know," she said with a laugh. "He's just like quicksilver, that man."

"But I had an appointment" — I try again.

"Well, those don't mean much to him, he runs on Indian time, you know," she laughs again, a little resigned. "You get used to it after a while."

I am directed to a waiting room and after an hour passes, Joe shows up and takes me back to the house to meet the Chief.

And there he is, the wisdom of the ages and all the dignity of his people compacted, amazingly, into this minute frame. He is much smaller than I had imagined, wrinkled and wiry after 81 hard years, and a little absurd, dressed in his green polyester suit and enormous cowboy boots. Yet, those first impressions are fleeting, for there is, above everything else, that face.

It is a face that emanates a kind of nobleness and sadness, both traits the Chief is famous for portraying. There are furrows and crevices everywhere, then beautiful high cheek bones and the
strong, set jaw. It is a face that could launch a thousand movies and tell a thousand stories.

After the introductions, Joe leaves and I squeeze up close to Dan George as he leans back in the Lazy-Boy recliner. His arms are folded, almost defiantly, over his chest. Every so often, he raises his hand, gesturing, and reveals a maze of turquoise and silver rings, one on each knobby, ancient finger. Then he turns and peers through scraggly raised eyebrows, asking me to repeat the question. The Chief does not hear too well anymore; the years are catching up with him.

"I'm slowing up," he says. The voice is almost a whisper, deep and measured.

Dan George's book of poetry and prose, published in 1974, is just one symbol of his success. The fame he enjoys today is the product of an acting career that began when he was a mere 60 years old. It is a career that began, the Chief recalls, quite by accident.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corp. (CBC) was filming the television series "Cariboo Country" when one of the leading players fell ill. Phillip Keatley, the director, was searching for a comparable replacement when someone suggested Chief Dan George.

"They just happened to need an old Indian character," the Chief said with a smile. Two days later, he stepped into the role of Ol' Antoine and was an instant hit.

Keatley, particularly, saw Dan George's natural talent and in the following years, helped the Chief land roles in various movies. The famous Indian from British Columbia took parts in "Smith!," "The Trap," "The Outlaw Josey Wales," "Cade's Country" and other pictures. But his most memorable role was that of Old Lodge Skins in "Little Big Man."

"I was quite excited, but a little bit scared," Dan George remembers. But despite any apprehension, he played the part brilliantly and was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actor. Although that prize was lost, the Chief did win Best Supporting Actor from the New York Film Critics.

Fortune did not follow fame with "Little Big Man." Although other actors had been offered up to $300,000 for the part, Dan George was paid a mere $16,000. I remind him of that fact and ask him why the wage was so low.

"I don't know." He looks up at the ceiling thoughtfully. "I guess if it was a white person doing the part, he would have got more money.

But it is not Indian nature to barter and money is not important to the Chief. He still lives in his father's house on Burrard Inlet, on Howe Sound, when not visiting Joe. He doesn't care to buy anything and, in fact, says he rarely sees his money. It is taken care of by his office, Chief Dan George Enterprises, in Vancouver. Arthur Fouks, lawyer and operator of the business, negotiates the Chief's deals, charging substantial amounts for lectures and filming. Dan George, however, is not about to join the Beverly Hills jet set. His heart remains with the Squamish and Shuswap tribes of the north, both of which he is honorary chief.

It is appropriate that he stays with his people, in a place where he once hunted with bow and arrow.

"We lived the Indian way, we lived mostly on what our land had to give," the Chief reminisces. The lament begins. It is a story he has told to crowded stadiums and lecture halls full of silent onlookers everywhere. The white man has heard this critical song since the time of his first exploitations, but the picture Dan George paints rings with truth and anger, and the skeptics begin to believe.

Carefully choosing each word, he lays out the story of his life. From the time he went to boarding school at age six, ("I didn't know anything about reading and writing") to the time he married Amy Jack at age nineteen. Looking to support his growing family, Dan George left his draft horses and log hauling and began a 27-year career as a longshoreman. His first wage was set at 40 cents an hour.

"It was hard work, dangerous, but I liked it," he recalls.

During this time, Dan George became Chief of the Tse-lal-watt tribe, an honor he held for 12 years.

Since then, Dan George has used his movie fame to better the lives of the Indian. He is a spokesman for all American natives and a strong advocate of integration.

His hopes for cultural survival now rest on the younger generation. And in the area of children, he is no novice.

"I have four children, close to forty grandchildren and fifteen great grandchildren," the Chief said with obvious pride.

To this flock of descendants, Dan George passes on his philosophy of life. He tells his people they must learn to live the modern way, saving as much of their culture as is possible in white society. That philosophy includes teaching by example, and respecting one's elders.

He is happy to see the Indian children going to white schools because, according to his views, it is the only way for his people to succeed. Still, he maintains that integration should be solely the choice of the Indian.

"As owners of this country, we feel we can live a free life, without being told what to do, pushed here and there."

Dan George sadly admits that prejudice against Indians is still a battle to be fought. He blames some of that ill will on the older portrayal of natives in western movies.

"Years ago, they showed us as scalpers, notorious people," the Chief chuckles. He considers the idea absurd.

It is correcting this false idea that keeps Dan George in the acting business. As an original great Chief, he is able to portray his own character and offer his own message, as he did in "The Eustacy of Rita Joe," an honest portrayal of urban Indian life.

Though his health has diminished somewhat over the years, he still works on the CBC-produced "Beachcombers" occasionally and currently is reading a script for a new movie, "Wind Walker." Scheduled appearances and interviews keep him busy and fans still ask for autographs and handshakes. Dan George is not about to give up his career. He likes the work and the interesting people he meets too much.

This year, he may take a little of his earnings and go on a trip.

"I was thinking of going to Hawaii for a couple weeks, a month," the Chief muses. "Get a good tan." He smiles widely at this, and the still sparkling eyes pierce through me. He waits to hear me laugh.

There is no doubt that this silver-haired legend will take his trip, or make more movies. He continues to form a span across time, across cultures, yet still holds firmly to his belief . . . "My People's Memory Reaches into the Beginning of All Things."
Pigeons Strut

By Nancy Walbeck

The blue polyester cap with a big red “B” on it is pulled down over his eyes and a two-day-old stubble dots his chubby cheeks. When he speaks, his head tilts back, looks out from under the blue brim and squints into the sun. He talks like he looks; short, choppy phrases, succinct and unadorned. Even his name suggests hard-won victories and pioneer stock.

But Monte Walton is strictly for the birds.

Modenas, Red Schiettis, Rollers and Racers are the fine-feathered ones Walton prefers.

That doesn’t mean Walton sits on park benches admiring those ordinary birds, however. He deals only in upper-class pigeon strata—the elite, so to speak.

The 23-year-old teacher’s aide and Western student began pigeon fancying 10 years ago through a Boy Scout project. Now he is president and founder of the Whatcom County Pigeon Fanciers Club, which has a membership of 25.

Walton, like most fanciers, exhibits his birds for prizes.

The pigeoneer—that’s a manager of pigeons—had lots of help in the beginning from Bob Sutherland, pigeon fancier extraordinaire and president of the Snohomish County Pigeon Fanciers’ Club. The 52-year-old lumber worker estimated he’s launched about 500 youngsters on the road to pigeonry, and some, he said, are now the leading breeders on the West Coast.

“When these young guys get into pigeons, they’re not on street corners,” Sutherland said. “They are too busy running back and forth to each others’ coops.”

Walton lives in a Bellingham apartment, so the dove-cote, or pigeon roost, is located on his parent’s farm off Smith Road. Resembling a tall chicken coop with runs and “fly coops” attached to the outside, the rough-hewn building reeks of pigeon dung. It’s also noisier than a kindergarten picnic. In the dark and dusty interior, the visitor adjusts to the squawks and coos of 60-odd birds and, after a while, hardly even notices the smell.

“Over here, we have the Modenas,” Walton points to...
an enclosure filled with birds resembling stocky chickens. The colors range from combinations of browns and blacks, called Bronze Schietti (pronounced sheddy), all the way to a pale red, known as Yellow Schietti. In judging the birds, fanciers note the deepness of the color, the absence of lice in the wings, the basic soundness of the bird, as well as its overall structure.

For beginning pigeoneers, Sutherland recommends a book, "The Pigeon," by the late Wendell Levi, who "owned and operated the last squab plant in Sumter, S.C."

The $37 book is the ultimate in pigeon raising, dealing with bird housing, genetics and breed standards.

Walton leafed through the obviously well-thumbed pale blue book, trying to explain wing spread, head positions, body shapes and various other aspects of prize-winning pigeonry.

Breeding pigeons is a large part of the fancier's responsibility, and Walton uses a separate loft to isolate a selected pair for a month until the eggs appear. The season extends from January to July, with the female producing only two eggs.

Gestation begins after the second egg is laid and pigeon parents work the incubating in shifts: males on night duty, females in the daytime.

Adjacent to the breeding loft, a covey of Birmingham Rollers chatters and calls, sending messages to their mates. Rollers, dual-purpose birds, are often judged by a special performing trick, called "kiteflying." The birds fly straight up to a height of 100 feet then somersault five successive times and swoop skyward again to repeat the process. The rollers are not trained for this maneuver, it simply is their normal flying pattern.

Sacks of feed line the walls of the dovecote, sending up dusty smells mixed with bird odors. A grain mix is used, including peas, corn, wheat and barley. Walton uses Albers Pigeon Mix, which costs $16 for 100 pounds and lasts about a month.
“Of course, they need daily grit and fresh water,” Walton added.

He also has two unusual breeds, fantails and Chinese owls. The former sports a circular fan-like spread of tail feathers and struts about in an exaggerated pouter-pigeon pose. The Chinese owl breed, dressed in a pale rust-brown called Red Check, wears a collar of mutton-chop feathers splayed upward around the face.

Each of Walton’s birds costs from $5 to $20, with one exception. Dressed in pale silver gray with deep red chevrons on their wings, racers, or racing homers, are $5,000 each. Used as messengers by the armed services, racers can fly at speeds up to 65 mph.

“Of course, mine (pointing to a racing pair) were gifts,” Walton said, with a wink.

Sutherland, involved in pigeon fancying since 1938, said the start-up costs for a young person are minimal. Old-time fanciers willingly sell good birds to pigeoneer novices for $6 to $10 a pair.

A 4-foot by 5-foot open-air dovecote is necessary, but feed for two birds for six months amounts to less than $75.

“It takes the birds two weeks to adjust to the new loft,” Sutherland explained. “The hen lays after 10 days and eight days later, there ought to be a couple of youngsters.”

Fancying is an international hobby, Sutherland said, and in Belgium and the Netherlands, pigeon racing is a national sport.

“Even in ancient times, in places like Syria, the birds were raised as a hobby, or as squab,” he added.

Squab are seven-week-old baby pigeons, White Show King, which are served as a gastronomic delicacy.

More than 600 breeds of pigeons are known, although the most common or street variety is the ferrel. On the pigeon family tree, the basic breed is a rock pigeon, a common slate blue variety.

Sutherland truly believes that young people who delve into the pigeon fancying world will never go wrong.

Reflecting on all the young fanciers he’s launched in the bird business, he said, “It makes me kind of proud.”

Watching Walton tenderly stroke one of his birds while describing the spread of its wings or the delicate shape of its head, you can see Sutherland’s point.
Two o'clock in the morning is a bitch of a time for a 15-year-old to be dragging an oxygen tank in from outside.

Half dressed and half awake I cursed the tank, the back steps and the screen door making the difficult job impossible. I stopped short of cursing my father whose need for oxygen had dragged me out of bed. I quietly cursed his cancer for my discomfort.

Once inside the back door, it was an easy task pulling the tank across the carpets and into my father’s bedroom turned hospice.

Before I entered to face the man on the bed, I braced myself with a deep breath. My father showed the emaciation that only years of slow death can produce.

The sight of his deterioration didn’t bother me nearly as much as the memory of my father as a more vital man.

I quickly attached the tank and began to slink back to my room. Half way out the door, my mother gave me the dreaded “Thank you, son.” “Thank you” was guaranteed to make me feel guilty about hating to help out.

Back in my own bed, I was too tired to worry about the ever present guilt and easily fell asleep.

In what seemed like the next instant—but was actually two hours later—my sister was standing next to my bed and calmly telling me that dad was dying.

In a daze, I headed for the bedroom while she went to call the doctor and the rest of the family. The doctor was there in minutes and was followed closely by my oldest brother and his wife.

As each passed into the bedroom, they glanced at me. I tried to melt myself into the far wall.

Mom sat on the edge of the bed and cried quietly. She gently caressed my father’s face.

Dad gasped for air even though the maximum amount of pure oxygen flowed through the mask. A gurgling sound from the back of his throat echoed in my mind. His body shook with tremors; his head mechanically bobbled from side to side; his eyes were a milky cloud.

Everyone seemed to be crying, but there was no noise. The room was like a TV screen. I had become a dazed observer rather than a participant.

The ambulance drivers were hauling a gurney in the front door but with a hand signal from the doctor they left it in the living room and vanished into the shadows.

I heard a gasp. I couldn’t trace where it came from but I think it was mine. He was dead.

The room seemed to shudder. My brother visibly aged 10 years. My sister stood motionless for a while, then left. My mother was calling to my father. He was dead.

Helplessness has never been so profound as it was that night. I’ve spent the eight years since his death reaching back to build a portrait of my father as he had been before he became ill. His life was full of accomplishment, faith and respect. I use this portrait to hide my memory of his dying.

And just when the vision of that night seems forgotten, I’ll feel the chill of the dark air, I’ll hear the clink of that damned oxygen tank and I’ll taste the salt of my tears.

Brian VanderHaak
A Dignified Death

The terminal patient lives alone in a sterile, white world. A nurse, the only visitor, stops briefly to inject pain killer or adjust the intravenous drip. The patient lies still, awaiting the end of a once useful life, now ruined by a prolonged death.

The hospice alternative to hospital death returns the matter of choice to the patient. At home with family and friends in a secure, comfortable environment, the patient lives the last moments of life free from pain and loneliness.

The hospice program, unlike most hospitals and nursing homes, is concerned with helping the terminally ill with the psychological and spiritual adjustment to death. It stresses quality, rather than the quantity of life.

Sister Brigid Collins began work on the Hospice of Whatcom County two years ago. As a social worker at St. Joseph's Hospital, Collins came in contact with many terminally ill patients needing care and community support.

She attended hospice workshops in the first two years and enlisted support from the community in medical and nonmedical professions. Local businesses and citizens give financial support through donations and membership fees.

"The term hospice was derived from a medieval term describing a place of shelter for weary travelers on a difficult journey," Collins said.

Now the term means "giving support and service to terminally ill patients, prior to their deaths," she added.

Although some states have hospice buildings for patients in addition to home care, in Washington state they do not, Collins said.

"Hospice care is a concept of taking care of a patient wherever he is, in the home or in a hospital. The word 'hospice' does not mean a specific building, as 'hospital' does," she said.

The board of directors recently chose Rabbi Harold Rubens as a full-time program director for the hospice. Rubens applied for the position after reading an advertisement for it in a Vancouver newspaper.

He first heard about the hospice concept while studying gerontology at the University of Southern California. Rubens has a degree in business and experience in counseling various age groups. He previously was a chaplain in general and mental hospitals.

Rubens said he would like to begin the volunteer training program, "in a month's time," and a pilot hospice project with one or two patients "by the end of the summer."

Some doctors are critical of hospice care. "Most physicians are trained in the curative process," Rubens said. "They find it difficult to give up on a patient."

Hospices don't give up, however, he said. "They turn from a curative to a care process."

The Hospice of Tacoma, in operation since June, 1979, has aided 205 patients in home care. The private, non-profit agency is supported by the local community through tax-deductible donations.

Medicare and many other private insurance companies pay the costs of the hospice in specific coverage plans determined by the patient.

Doctors in the Tacoma area generally have supported the hospice and frequently refer terminally ill patients to the program.

Hospice care often costs less than hospitals. The hospice provides a 24-hour, 7-day a week staff for the patient, care during the bereavement period and supplies volunteers from the community to give aid to those without family or friends.

Besides creating psychological support with the help of the family, hospices are concerned with relieving physical pain. Narcotics given by hospitals are either too standardized or too frequently misapportioned. Many hospices use a Brompton "cocktail," usually a mixture of heroin or morphine, gin, sugar syrup and chlorpromazine. Prescriptions vary, however, depending upon the patient's need.

One concern has been for possible addiction, but Collins said it is a minor consideration because patients usually do not have long to live. The Brompton cocktail prevents pain while keeping the mind alert, thus allowing the patients to enjoy the little time they have left with no anxiety or inability to function.

Rubens said he hopes the Whatcom hospice will meet the needs of all terminally ill patients, once the program is ready. Not all will choose the hospice solution, however.

"Some families will continue the curative process (in hospitals), hoping for a change," he said, adding that some patients will not be able to live in the home because conflicts make it impossible to care for them there.

"This is a choice the family must make," he said.

Susan Borier

Euthanasia: Merciful Or Not?

Is it right to "pull the plug" on a patient when he is suffering intense pain or has no hope of recovery? Is it a crime?

Some consider euthanasia an act of murder, but the courts have been very lenient to physicians who have practiced "active" euthanasia, an act of commission by a physician to promptly terminate his patient's life.

"Passive" euthanasia, now legal in Washington state, occurs when a physician does not use life-sustaining procedures to prolong the lives of those patients with irreversible brain damage or terminal illness.

This law, enacted in 1979, grants immunity from civil liability to any physician or health facility and states that such withholding or withdrawal of medical expertise is not murder or suicide.

Euthanasia, the act itself, is considered the cause of death.

The termination of a life is a very personal decision; one that individuals hope they will never have to make for themselves or for a loved one.

Mary Norvell
From the beginning, man’s ultimate fantasy has been immortality. Now, for a price, a person can attempt to live that fantasy through cryonic suspension—freezing of the dead for future “reanimation” and life.

Cryonics, begun in the early 1960s, is the science of preserving the recently dead at extremely cold temperatures in the hope that they can be reanimated at a later date.

In 1962, Japanese scientist Isamu Suda performed an experiment in which he froze and thawed a cat’s brain with no apparent damage to its functions.

This experiment convinced a group involved in cryobiology (the study of low temperatures in general) that the same could be done with humans.

In 1966, James Bedford of Glendale, Calif., was the first person placed in cryonic suspension after his death from cancer. Today, more than 15 “patients” are in suspension in the United States.

The process of preparing the body for suspension is simple. In most cases, the persons who prepare the body, the suspension team, have no medical training.

Lawrence Gale, executive officer of two cryonics businesses, the Alcor Corp. and Trans Time Industry of Glendale, said the first minutes after death are crucial for a cryonics patient because the body must be packed in dry ice immediately to prevent decay.

Gale explained the suspension team begins by removing the blood from the body and replacing it with a solution similar to anti-freeze, such as dimethyl sulfoxide, and glycerine, for preservation. The body then is placed in a dewar, a stainless steel container resembling a large thermos bottle, filled with liquid nitrogen. The temperature is maintained at a low of minus 320 degrees F. In contrast, commercial freezers maintain an average temperature of 10 degrees F. The encased body is checked for nitrogen evaporation.

In a phone interview from Alcor headquarters in Glendale, Gale explained that although Alcor and Trans Time are separate, they work together. Alcor handles the live “patients,” generating new customers and working the financial end, and in turn contracts Trans Time to prepare the “patient” for suspension.

“For those interested in potential suspension,” Gale said, “the first step is to contact the company, which will send information about the program. “You then go to your friendly neighborhood insurance salesperson,” Gale added, “and take out a life insurance policy with Alcor as the beneficiary. You are advised of the dollar policy to buy, depending on your age, but the average is $100,000 coverage.”

Once a suspension decision is made, a live patient pays an initiation fee of $1,000 and monthly dues of $105. After death, the returns from the insurance policy cover the costs of nitrogen and storage fees. Alcor stores patients in one half of a rented commercial building in Emerysville, Calif., across the hall from a welding shop.

Gale is a true believer. He said he will be going on the Neuro Preservation Plan when he dies, which freezes only the brain.

“It’s cheaper, and the mind is all that matters anyway,” he said. “I can always get a clone or something when I come back.”

Surprisingly, Gale reports the best customers are the young.

Deadly Statistics

For many Americans, college life has the mystique of being laced with sexual escapades, drinking binges, faddish drugs, tension-producing academics and other excesses designed to prepare the graduate for the real world.

Interestingly enough, it is just such a lifestyle that kills many Americans. Of the hundreds of thousands of Americans who died last year, most unintentionally were responsible for their own demise.

Suicide is the most obvious way to kill oneself. Most Americans, however, have chosen a slower and more subtle route.

Heart diseases claim around 780,000 American lives each year, a figure more than twice that of cancer deaths.

According to the Heart and Lung Association, 65 percent of coronary heart disease develops as a result of the buildup of cholesterol and other fatty substances in the arteries, although most who die from heart disease show some form of genetic predisposition.

Cigarette smoking exacerbates the problem. A 1978 Boston University Medical School report stated that smoking caused 75 percent of heart attacks among women.

Certain personality traits increase chances of dying from heart troubles. Persons who are particularly aggressive, ambitious and competitive have an additional risk of suffering heart disease.

Death, the most deadly, has been linked directly to smoking habits. The American Cancer Society claims that 80 percent of those deaths could be prevented if no one smoked cigarettes. Further, 22,000 deaths from other forms of cancer are linked to smoking.

Carcinogenic (cancer-causing) chemicals have been found everywhere: in medicines, in food preservatives and in the air we breathe. As soon as the government takes one carcinogen out of the marketplace, a new one is discovered.

Strokes claim almost 200,000 lives annually to rank third in the death stakes.

Many strokes are linked to the same sorts of abuses which trigger cancer and heart disease deaths, such as high blood pressure.

Accidents are responsible for more than 100,000 deaths annually, with more than half perishing in vehicle-related mishaps. Most automobile tragedies are caused by drunken drivers, according to the National Safety Council.

A majority of Americans don’t consider themselves suicidal. Yet, in spite of a “health hungry” and “scared to death of death” attitude, Americans go on killing themselves.

Brian Vander Haak

“The average age of people signing up for suspension is late 20s and early 30s,” he said, adding that he felt this was because the young are open to new possibilities.

Critics charge that no medical or scientific basis supports the methods of the cryonic movement either in curing a terminal disease or reversing freezing damage.

Gale espoused the opinion of many involved in cryonics when he said “no one can predict the future.”

“I’m personally more afraid that we’ll have an atomic war and completely destroy everything than I am of those in the future not being able to find a way to bring us back,” he said.

Gale said he felt those going into cryonic suspension are at least giving immortality “a fighting chance.”

“No more of this death-with-dignity bullshit,” he said. “To hell with mortality.”

Susan Thorsfund
The Last Word

Some people always act as though their words are engraved in stone. Bellingham resident Wally Minor, however, can make that assertion quite literally—he engraves tombstones.

As a man who always gets the last word, the 56-year-old Minor is, not surprisingly, self-assured. In fact, he is so proud of his work he even has toyed with the idea of making his own gravestone. After all, nobody does it better.

Currently in a partnership with Cecil Otly at Fussner's Monuments, 1431 N. State, Minor has been practicing his craft for 30 years. He said he has noticed some changes in the industry that booms when people bust.

"Cemeteries are not using as many tall stones," he said, adding that more and more cemeteries are placing restrictions on large monuments.

Minor has also noticed a greater variety of stone being quarried and shaped into monuments. Many are marketed with exotic names like "Ebony Mist"—names that seem more akin to a Charles Revson product than something one might associate with a Lon Chaney movie.

Minor wiped the dust off an example of Ebony Mist to reveal the rich texture and deep coloration of the granite.

"Some of the stones come from quarries in Norway, Sweden and Finland," he said. "Some even come from as far away as Wisconsin."

Ah, the rock from Wisconsin. As Minor has dubbed it, "Wausau," is "the Cadillac of granite, the top of the line."

The engraving process is not an especially difficult or complex one. The first step, Minor said, is to "take a piece of stencil—it's like an old tire patch, sticky on one side and rubbery—and place it on the stone." A decade ago, the letters on the stencil were cut by hand. Now a machine does that work, he said.

Place the stenciled monument in the sandblaster and voila! —a tombstone for eternity. What could be easier? Minor cautioned that the process is not an assembly-line one.

"It is a craft. I like to do nice ones, so I can take pride in my work."

Depending upon the circumstances, Minor said he rarely feels his job is unhappy or morbid. Many of the monuments he engraves are "pre-needs," those that a person arranges for while they are still alive. Minor said such people are very relaxed and "not at all depressed."

Although one suspects that it might be unsettling to see your name and birthdate etched onto a gravestone, Minor said most people treat it rather nonchalantly.

"Most just come in and say 'Oh, that looks just fine,'" he said.

Because many people procrastinate on the purchase of a headstone, by the time they do get around to buying one for a "loved one," it isn't as painful.

"When the person has been dead since 1973, a lot of the grief is gone, too," Minor said.

The job can be depressing, Minor said, however, when he has to sell monuments to grieving people, especially young ones.

"The older people seem to accept it a lot more and are ready to deal with death more than the young."

While Minor and his partner, Otly, are not depressed by their work, neither are they glib. It is a business. The pinned-up calendar tells all. On the wall above the stencil cutter was not Bob Dero, but a calendar from Dakota Granite—with their special design of the month: Twin headstones.

Gregg Olsen
minimal landscaping and an average interment cost of $117, offers an option for low-income families.

Since January, five babies have been buried at Bayview. Lowe said some years they get as many as 25. Most babies buried are stillborn or premature at birth, he said.

Jackie Lowe said that a Russian Orthodox funeral was one of the most unusual she remembered at the cemetery. It resembled the funeral scene in the movie, "Doctor Zhivago," she said, with balalaika music and a priest in black flowing robes.

Bayview was self-supporting until 1979 but now is subsidized by $71,475 annually from the city's general fund, Linda Nelson, city accountant, said.

Lowe said he remembers when the cemetery operated on a budget of $20,000 a year with five groundkeepers. Now the budget is $100,000 a year with only three workers. Because of rising costs, most of the flower beds have been eliminated and Lowe estimated that it costs $25 a week to fuel the lawn mowers. Further, Bayview Abbey, the mausoleum, must be regularly maintained, but can no longer bring in money because all space is filled.

Plenty of lots, however, are still available on the grounds. Jackie Lowe said. She added that it will probably be several years before the land closest to Lakeway Drive is used.

Graves at Bayview are excavated with a backhoe, the same procedure followed by other cemeteries, she said. Only her husband and one other employee are qualified to operate the machine.

Living within a cemetery doesn't bother the Lowes except that it becomes a "24-hour-a-day job, seven days a week" unless they leave the premises occasionally. Jackie Lowe said.

Bob Lowe remarked that attitudes about death have changed in his lifetime. "When I was a kid, I believed in ghosts and was afraid of cemeteries," he said. In contrast, he said last year three classes of elementary students visited the cemetery to learn about death and burial.

"Death is like sex," he said. "More people are talking about it now."

--Tracie Hornung

Underground Connection

Funeral directors. The phrase conjures up visions of elderly men in three-piece suits, solemn, morbid and mysterious. As death itself. As with any profession, however, that stereotype seldom holds true.

One example is Paul Spinelli, a 25-year-old funeral director and embalmer at Jones Funeral Home in Bellingham. There is nothing mysterious about Spinelli. In fact, his constant chatter and enormous smile is a paradox amidst the quiet grief of the funeral home.

As a licensed director and embalmer, Spinelli deals with all facets of the funeral business. He helps families make all the necessary arrangements, from purchasing a casket and burial plot to providing a chapel and transportation. He takes care of insurance claims and newspaper notices and prepares the deceased for viewing. He is at the dispense of his "customers" 24 hours a day.

Unlike many funeral directors, Spinelli entered the profession by his own choosing. He can't recall any family members ever having worked in funeral homes. He simply was a college drop-out looking for a job.

After deciding that school was "not his thing," Spinelli picked over the job market in Bremerton like a true critic.

He finally heard of an opening at a local funeral home and decided to try it out.

"I knew I could quit if I didn't like it," Spinelli said.

What followed was a two-year apprenticeship beginning in 1976. The first few months were spent watching the embalming process.

"It didn't bother me a bit," Spinelli recalled. "You don't know who they are. Most of us knew they were just forms. The real people weren't there anymore."

After one and a half years Spinelli was doing embalming himself.

"I can still remember the feel of touching my first dead person," he said. "There's a definite difference, sort of a waxy feel."

Despite that initial experience, Spinelli moved on to the next phase of his apprenticeship—funeral directing. Although he was nervous at first, funeral directing turned out to be "the most enjoyable part of the business."

Spinelli spent a total of three and a half years as an apprentice and student before receiving separate licenses for funeral directing and embalming. This included one year of mortuary science school in Mount Hood, Ore., and additional classes in Spokane, a requirement of Washington state laws.

After his graduation, Spinelli and his wife Vicki came to Bellingham where he began working for Jones Funeral Home. He has worked here almost two years and enjoys it.

Embalming is still an important part of his job. He spends 45 to 60 minutes on this process, which involves closing eyes and mouth, injecting embalming fluid, dressing and applying cosmetics.

Most families still have their deceased embalmed, though it is not required by law. The sole purpose of embalming is for viewing the deceased at the funeral home, or for long-distance shipping.

Spinelli said he feels this process is very important. Viewing is generally encouraged as a means for the family to accept the death. Spinelli works hard to make the deceased look as "peaceful and healthy" as possible.

Although he thinks open-casket funerals are preferable, he admits he was "mortified when people kissed the deceased person...I don't think I would do it."

Being around death every day has not affected Spinelli's optimistic and energetic outlook on life.

"If this work wasn't rewarding, I wouldn't be in it," Spinelli said, with a smile. "I certainly won't get rich."

--Leita McIntosh
Cremation has always had a low profile in Western society. Its use as a means of disposition has been discouraged by religion and tradition through the years. This prejudice, combined with a lack of common knowledge about cremation, has led to the belief that cremation is uncommon.

Not true, Douglas LeVeck of Bellingham's Veroske, Jerns and LeVeck Funeral Home said. LeVeck said nearly one-quarter of all bodies in Whatcom County are disposed of through cremation. This figure compares with an average cremation rate of 6 percent in other parts of the country.

LeVeck said one reason the cremation rate is so high in Whatcom County is a lack of religious customs. Cremations are viewed as a means of disposing of a body and often are not combined with a religious service.

Greenacres Memorial Park in Ferndale is the only crematorium in the area. Family counselor Paul Elvig said that in areas with a lot of rainfall, a higher incidence of cremations occurs. Most people cannot bear the thought of water getting into the grave and hastening the decaying process, Elvig said.

The process of cremation is rather simple. The body is taken to the crematorium by the family or the funeral home, placed in a cardboard coffin and wheeled into the crematorium where it is pushed by hand into the retort oven.

The retort is a brick-lined propane-burning stove, about six feet high and nine feet long. It resembles the ovens used in pizza parlors.

After the doors are closed and locked, the retort is heated to 2,000 degrees F. The cremation process takes about 90 minutes.

By definition, cremation is the complete consumption of human protein. Bones, however, remain behind and are raked out by the retort operator.

Major bones and parts of the skull are still identifiable. The operator uses a mallet to break down the larger bones, then puts it all into a grinder to reduce it further.

The final result is about five pounds of bone fragments with the consistency of sand. They are placed in a plastic urn and returned either to the family or funeral home.

Cremation done through the auspices of a funeral home costs about $400. The remains then can be deposited in an urn ranging in price from $70 to $3,000.

Death Wish

At spring quarter break, the two students went home to their small town. There they had graduated the year before as part of a high school class of 35, after 12 years together in school. Now they were living in the same dorm as Western freshmen.

In the spring, only one returned. The other had committed suicide.

A student regarded as a serious suicide threat by Western's Counseling Center is put in touch with his residence hall director or the Whatcom Counseling and Psychiatric Clinic, has volunteers trained for suicide intervention.

New pressures in college life can exacerbate problems in a student's mind, Director Alex Whitehouse, said. As an example, Whitehouse said, a student away from home for the first time might feel unable to cope with his new independence. In other instances, he might be under parental pressure to get good grades, or find he is not blending in socially.

He said a person serious about killing himself often hides his problems, leaving it up to close friends and relatives to look for the subtle warning signs, such as giving things away or becoming obsessed with putting finances in order.

Western student Tom Melo, a crisis services volunteer, added, "There's one dominant thing about suicide. It's something, maybe the only thing, the person has control over that no one else can control."

The crisis service hotline is 734-7271.

Terry McGuire
For Pets Only

In spring, the tiny graves at Pet Haven Cemetery are decorated, abundantly, with daffodils and lilies, chrysanthemums and Easter baskets. This resting place for cats, dogs, horses and birds is as well-visited and as well cared for as any human cemetery, anywhere.

The markers are small and unpretentious but their inscriptions symbolize the strong bond between pet and owner. "Kitty Kitty—my dearest friend," said one. "Bum Bum—our beloved Chow Chow," said another.

The minimum cost for a funeral at Pet Haven is $100. This includes a plot at $52.82, opening and closing of the grave at $20, a plywood and plastic grave liner at $20 and a $6 yearly maintenance fee. The pet's owner also has the option to pay a $100 lump sum for perpetual care instead of the annual fee. This amount is deposited in the business account and the interest covers Nell's maintenance costs.

Pet Haven's casket room displays various models ranging from $45 to $300. Most are purchased from the Hoegh Casket Co. in Gladstone, Mich. They are constructed of fiberglass, plastic or wood and fashioned after human caskets, complete with satin lining, pillows, lace trim and fancy appliques.

An integral part of a funeral is Nell's solemn reading of a short poem called "In Remembrance." The poem comes from a collection titled "The Purr Affect," by Ann Cassel Daniels, a Northwest poet who will attend pet funerals at Nell's request.

The final step in the pet funeral process is the laying of a tombstone. Nell will order granite markers inscribed as the pet's family requests. These range in price from $116 to $150. Many have etched likenesses of the deceased pet, others have ornate ceramic pictures.

Every grave has a special story behind it, but of the thousands of pets buried here, two stand out in Nell's memory. The first is the story of "Cabbie," a stray mongrel adopted as a mascot of the Seattle Yellow Cab Co. After years of faithful companionship, Cabbie died. Nell remembers the day vividly.

"It was really something," she said. "Seven cabs came out from Seattle for the funeral. Mrs. Daniels came and read a poem and then one of the drivers said a little something at the grave."

Another outstanding memory concerns "Calypso," the first horse to be buried at Pet Haven. Calypso was a 30-year-old appaloosa put to sleep at the cemetery.

"Before Calypso came to Pet Haven my husband and I had to go out and measure him for a grave liner," Nell recalled. "I was measuring around his back end and he turned his head and looked right at me. That really did it. It was the hardest thing I've ever done." Nell's eyes filled with tears as she told the story.

The people who take the time and spend the money for pet funerals would not stand out in a crowd. "They come from "all walks of life," according to Nell. What makes them special is love and respect for their animals.

"These aren't just pets, they're family," Nell said. "Pets bond us together."

Nell views her job as do most funeral directors. She encourages pet owners and their children to attend the burial as an aid to dealing with the loss. The Marlett children and Nell have learned to adjust to tearful family members and offer sympathetic support.

Once the burial is over, the owners visit regularly.

"They're the most honest, loyal people," Nell said.

Several pet owners help with maintenance, mowing lawns and clipping around markers. The cemetery's busiest visiting time is Christmas.

"It's just incredible," Nell says. "People bring out wreaths and Christmas decorations and even little trees with dog bones on them."

The cemetery is not as morbid or unusual as some might think but Nell admits, "People who don't own pets think we're crazy."

Pet Haven Cemetery, Inc., of Kent, Wash., is the 30-year-old "baby" of Nell Marlett and family. Purchased and specially zoned in 1949, the cemetery represents what Nell affectionately calls "a labor of love" and a business in one.

Currently, more than 3,500 pets are buried at Pet Haven. Among them are three horses, hundreds of cats and dogs (mostly poodles), ducks, raccoons, skunks and a 75-year-old parrot.

Pet Haven is not a financially profitable operation. In fact, the Marletts rent out an adjacent automotive shop just to cover the yearly taxes on the cemetery.

The amount of business Nell receives is "very spasmodic," with an average of 10 burials a month.

"We'll go weeks without anything," she said, "then there'll be three burials in one day."

Up For Grabs

"You can't take it with you," is most often the case. A few have tried, however.

A California celebrity decided to be buried in her Ferrari rather than bequeath it to family or friends. This was a final wish, carried out through her last will and testament.

Though many of us don't want our Ferraris along on the final ride, a will is still a necessary and vital document.

Many Western students probably haven't considered making out a will and most really don't need to. In Washington state, however, if a single student dies and does not leave a will, one half of his belongings would be awarded to his parents and the remaining half would become the property of siblings. The state would take possession of the estate if no known relatives are found.

Valid, acceptable wills vary from state to state. In Washington, holographic wills, (handwritten, signed and witnessed) are illegal and ineffective. When this type of will is signed by legal witnesses, however, it becomes a valid ordinary attested will.

The noncoupable or oral will is permitted under some state laws and special emergencies. For example, if a soldier is on active duty and expects immediate death, he may tell witnesses what disposition he wants made of his property. But the testator must die within a specified time for the will to be valid.

Beneficiaries of large sums of money or property must pay state and federal taxes. Roughly one-third of an estate is paid to the federal government, with the remaining two-thirds subject to a state inheritance tax.

An average will costs between $25 and $75 and takes a few days to complete.

Kathy Zalewski
Old Folks At Home

Whatever label society finds most agreeable, whether it is called a nursing home, convalescent center or retirement manor, it is a place where the elderly are sent when they have outlived their usefulness and are incapable of taking care of themselves.

"Most of the patients are long term," Nancy Gullikson, director of nursing at Highland Convalescent Center, said. "They're here because they need physical care and emotional care," she said.

Life at the home at 2400 Samish Way is routine. "They're up by six, then lunch and supper at five—it all sounds so empty, and in a lot of cases it is," Gullikson said. "They all have one thing in common and that's food. Their lives revolve around the mealtimes."

Gullikson said one of the most painful questions she has to ask a family when they admit someone is what funeral home is preferred.

"It's a bummer because here's a question that implies the patient has come here to die," she said.

But death is a reality to the patients. Gullikson said the most common deaths are related to pneumonia and influenza because "they just don't have the capability to fight."

"When a patient dies, we do the whole bit, like closing hallway doors. But they know—probably before you do," Gullikson said. "You just can't hide it, especially when the mortician comes dressed in his black suit, wheeling the stretcher," she said. "They can see the hearse parked right out front."

The home has a 44-bed capacity—five private rooms, a few multi-bed wards and an "activity" room with a donated color TV, piano and some couches and tables.

There they spend their days lying in bed, sitting in chairs, thinking about their once active lives. It's a quiet place, a nice little out-of-the-way place, where they can stare blankly out the window and wait.

Funeral For A Friend

The other five pallbearers and I were the last persons, besides the family, to be given the opportunity to view the body.

I hesitated, tempted to heed the advice on the funeral home announcement: "Those who prefer not to pass the casket should feel free to leave the chapel by any aisle."

No, I had to look. I had to see the proof. I had to know, positively know, that this whole ritual was not some gruesome charade. My mind may have known Chris was gone, but my eyes demanded absolute assurance.

I peered over the edge of the fine-grained coffin. He looked good. His thinning blond hair was combed neatly over the bald spot on his upper forehead, a last minute vanity from his life. His full reddish beard, which had always given him the appearance of a worldly sailor, was fluffed. His eyelids were tightly drawn over his baby blues. His face was taut. His favorite blue and yellow rugby shirt stretched tightly over his small, sinewy frame. His face was taut.

His favorite blue and yellow rugby shirt stretched tightly over his small, sinewy frame. His face was taut. His hands were tightly drawn over his baby blues. His face was taut.

His favorite blue and yellow rugby shirt stretched tightly over his small, sinewy frame. His face was taut. His hands were tightly drawn over his baby blues. His face was taut.

How could you do this to me? We had so many good times ahead. Things to do. Lives to live.

Goddamnit, Chris, you mean so much to me. I need you. Man, I really need you. And here you pull some crap like this.

I finally snapped out of my personal diatribe and stared blankly into his lifeless face. I took a long, long look at that beautiful person, fighting the urge to touch his face, tap his chest to let him know that he would be alright. That he'd be OK.

Yeah, but I never would. -Dave Miltenberger
¡LA REVOLUCIÓN!
Dateline: El Salvador

By Bruce Yeager
Pedro Romero wondered if it would be another long, hard day. Pulling himself out of bed, he realized that quite likely it would be 24 hours before he'd get another chance to sleep.

The sun had not risen yet as he made his way from his small apartment to the street corner where he would catch his bus. As he quietly waited at the corner, the morning stillness was broken by a barrage of distant gunfire. Now he was certain he'd have a full day of work. For in the wake of his country's bloody revolution, many El Salvadoran hospital employees were expected to work double and triple shifts.

* * * * *

For the past year, Pedro worked as an intern in the Social Security Hospital of San Salvador, the capital city of the Central American country. In that same year, he watched the political situation in El Salvador and much of Central America completely deteriorate.

For Pedro, the violence of his country's revolution was extremely bitter.

As an intern, he saw bodies torn apart by bullets. He watched hundreds of young men and women die because they objected to a corrupt government. And, he witnessed the killing of a close friend.

I met Pedro Romero last January. I had been traveling through Mexico and Guatemala and planned to make a quick stop in El Salvador before moving on to Honduras. But it was not to be.

The morning after I arrived in San Salvador, a large demonstration occurred. What started out as a peaceful march turned into a massive gun battle. While making my way back to my hotel, I was pinned by gunfire. I suffered a gunshot wound in my leg during the exchange.

I spent two weeks nursing a broken leg in the Social Security hospital. During that time, I spent many hours talking with Pedro, learning about him and about the uprising in his country.

Pedro was born on a large coffee farm in northern El Salvador, called Los Lagartos Hacienda. One of the largest land holdings in the country, the farm was owned by a single family for generations. More than 1,000 families live and work, many for all their lives, on the 6,000 acre farm. Along with his mother, father and three older brothers, Pedro worked the fields. The hours are long and the pay is minimal, but it is the only work many Salvadorans know.

El Salvador, or "The Savior," totaling 8,000 square miles, is the smallest of the seven Central American countries. It is bounded on the north and east by Honduras, on the south by the Pacific Ocean and on the west by Guatemala.

In spite of its small size, El Salvador is the third largest producer of coffee in the hemisphere, following only the giants of Colombia and Brazil. The country also grows cotton and has the biggest industrial base in Central America.

With what would appear to be a prosperous internal income, I was surprised to learn that the majority of the people live in conditions of poverty. About half the citizens are unable to read or write.

Unfortunately, the situation in El Salvador is much the same as that of many of its neighbors. Although the Central American countries claim to be democracies, there exists in most a small, powerful upper class, consisting of the so-called "principal families," who rule the countries with military control. Only Costa Rica, whose democratic government is 80 years old, and Nicaragua, where the Somoza regime was only recently ousted, are exceptions.

In El Salvador, the ruling elite is made up of about two percent of the population. For the last 50 years, the same families have ruled the country through one military dictatorship after another.

Statistically, the oligarchs of El Salvador own 60 percent of the ara-
ble land, while 90 percent of the farmers must divide the rest. Many people, such as Pedro's family, are forced to spend their lives working the farms of the rich land owners. In 1978, El Salvador exported $650 million in coffee. Yet the peasants must supplement their meager incomes by working for about $2.20 a day during harvest time.

El Salvador also suffers unbearable population pressures. It is the most densely populated nation on the American mainland. More than 4.5 million inhabit the 8,260 miles of El Salvador's territory, about 550 per square mile. With the population expected to double by the year 1990, even the most conservative government officials acknowledge that before long something has to give in terms of the society's survival.

Like many of the poor farmers, his parents had a dream, Pedro said. “My mother and father hoped that one day one of their children would be able to go on to college, learn a profession and escape the hard life they had known,” he said.

“So when I turned 18, my parents gave me their life savings and sent me off to the capital to study medicine.”

When Pedro began his schooling, he knew very little about the political situation in his country. About all he did know was that the current president, Colonel Arturo Molina, was in the fifth and final year of his term.

“During my schooling,” Pedro said, “I met many students who wanted change. They belonged to left-wing opposition parties, and in the '72 election they all voted against Molina. But the election was a cheat, and the government declared Molina the winner.”

Theoretically, free elections are to be held every five years; yet since independence in 1821, the government of El Salvador has been controlled by the oligarchy. In the 1930s, satisfied with remaining on their coffee plantations, the rich families found it convenient to let the military run the government and maintain repression against any opposition, while they themselves concentrated on making money. Since 1931, every president but one has been a career soldier, all controlled by the powerful land owners.

Pedro met and became good friends with a fellow medical student, Martin Armas. Like many others, Martin voted against Molina in the last election and looked forward to the next election as an opportunity for change.

“The power must be taken out of the hands of the rich and returned to the people,” Martin had told Pedro. “The huge land holdings and the
large coffee profits must be fairly distributed. We need new schools and housing, but more than anything, we need honest elections.”

The next election was scheduled for Feb. 20, 1977. Pedro, Martin and thousands of other El Salvadorans hoped that they would be able to bring some changes to the government. Three popular opposition parties united and formed a coalition. They advocated social reform, chose a candidate for the presidency, and set out to challenge the supremacy of the oligarch/military combine.

As the election approached, many leftist supporters proclaimed themselves “absolutely convinced” that government intervention in the election would prevent them from winning, no matter how large their vote. The government party proclaimed as a slogan, “We are going to win legally!”

The free elections, as in the past, were nothing more than a fraud. In many polling places voters were either barred entrance or arrested by soldiers. Many ballot boxes were filled before voting began. Pedro himself was turned away by soldiers who told him the election was over and that General Carlos Romero, the military candidate, was the new president.

The matter might have ended there, as it had so many times before in El Salvador and in many of the nearby republics. But this time popular frustration, smoldering since the 1972 fraud, ignited.

Opposition party leaders urged their followers to the streets, and by early evening of the day after the election, 7,000 people gathered at the Plaza de la Libertad in downtown San Salvador. Pedro and Martin, outraged by the election, joined the crowd. Within a few hours the group doubled in size and marched through the streets.

The demonstration continued for six days, with the crowd reaching 60,000. Finally, in the early morning hours of Feb. 28, the National Guard moved in.

“They sealed off all exits but one from the plaza,” Pedro recalled, “and then began to move in on the crowd with fire hoses. The crowd started to sing the national anthem and the soldiers opened fire. Panic broke out and hundred of people sought refuge in the plaza’s church. Martin and I, along with thousands of others, ran down the only open street, toward another plaza several blocks away. It was the last time I saw Martin.”

When it was all over, more than 500 were dead and 1,200 wounded.

Pedro miraculously escaped the slaughter unharmed. Martin, however, lay dead with a bullet in his back. It was one of the worst massacres in recent Latin American history. It was also the beginning of a full-scale civil war in tiny El Salvador, a war that continues today.

By the time the bus pulled up next to Pedro, the gunfire had stopped. It had been a short burst. Maybe no one was killed.

As he rode the bus into town, Pedro thought of his parents’ dream. The dream that one day he would be able to escape the injustices they had suffered.

Gazing out the window, Pedro saw scribbled on the side of a building some popular words of the day: “Rather than die of hunger, of ignorance, of humiliation and discrimination, we prefer to die fighting for a better tomorrow.”

Pedro couldn’t help but wonder if his parents’ dream would come true.
El Salvador in mid-January was a frightened country. As the bus I was traveling on came across the border, everyone was forced out for an inspection.

"If you're carrying a gun, hide it inside the bus," an elderly man told me as we got up to leave.

"Why would I carry a gun?" I asked.

Glancing back at me as he made his way down the aisle, the man whispered, "When you're traveling in El Salvador, you never know when you may need one." El Salvador's latest time of trouble began last October when Gen. Carlos Romero, the right-wing dictator, was ousted by a military coup. The young officers who overthrew Romero installed a five-member broad-based junta. But the new government's efforts at reform were blocked by the oligarchy, the small group of rich families who have dominated El Salvador's political and economic destinies for a century.

The new government lasted only 76 days. In early January, three of the five members resigned, claiming that the government was controlled by the military and all efforts for reform were futile.

On Jan. 22, the morning after I arrived, I was up early and out of the hotel.

"Today is the day of the people's march," yelled the desk clerk as I started out the door. "It's to be without violence, but these days you can never tell. You better be careful."

Stepping out onto the corner, I looked up the street and saw a crowd of more than 100,000. In an effort to show the right-wing military leaders that the people supported the leftists, four of the top parties united in a march through the city.

For more than two hours, they wound through the streets of San Salvador. Young kids, students and old people alike carried signs and chanted anti-government slogans.

The crowd made its way toward the city's main square, where several spokesmen were scheduled to speak out against the faltering government. But the speeches were never made.

A sudden stammering crash of gunfire came without warning. As the front of the group had made its way into the plaza, rooftop snipers opened fire with automatic rifles. Two demonstrators fell dead.

Several blocks back where I was standing, the crowd grew uneasy as the march stopped. When word of what happened reached us, panic set in. Protesters dropped their signs and ran. In the chaos, several people were knocked to the ground and trampled as the crowd fled for safety. In a matter of moments the street was empty, except for about a dozen steadfast demonstrators.

Alarmed, I started back for my hotel. The streets were almost empty. As I neared the hotel, I met an elderly woman coming around a corner. She asked me if I would please help her home, so together we started back up the street. I left her at her door and again started back toward the hotel.

As I neared it for a second time, I met a group of young men standing on a corner. They told me that just up the block a man had been shot and killed by the National Guard. I stepped off the sidewalk and looked up the street. A man lay there, dead from bullet wounds. I decided to bypass the area.

I made my way down a side street that entered into a park. I wasn't alone. On the far corner, a group of National Guard soldiers equipped with high power rifles were firing down another street.

In a matter of an instant, one of the soldiers turned and fired in my direction. The shots missed but hit a concrete wall behind me, showering me with chips of cement. I fell to the ground and took cover behind a pillar and waited. The soldiers resumed their firing down the other street.

Glancing around, I could see an old man with a little fruit stand sitting in the park near me. I decided to make a dash and sit with this man, for he was unarmed and certainly not a threat to anyone.

I made it safely to the fruit vendor and said I thought it best if we cleared out. As we talked, I noticed the soldiers leave the corner and head into a building adjacent to the park.

A single shot rang out. I was hit in the leg. The impact of the bullet lifted me into the air. I landed stomach down in the middle of the street.

As I fell, the gunfire resumed. I tried to get out of the street, but was too afraid to move.

I covered my head with my hands, put my face to the ground and waited.

I don't really recall when the gunfire stopped. When I saw the Red Cross ambulance, I realized it must be over. I was loaded quickly into the back. As the vehicle crept through the streets, the driver's partner leaned out the open door, waving a white flag. Outside, it was horrible. Dead bodies littered the streets.

I had been lucky. The bullet passed through my leg, missed the knee cap, but broke the femur. Six months in a cast and I'd be all right.

But for many others, events had not been so kind. At least 40 people were killed that day, and the war in El Salvador raged on.

—Bruce Yeager
IMAGES

Susan Fried

Charles Loop

Klipsun
What we have here, folks, is the coming to age and importance of the mechanical horse. Their breed names are Honda, Harley-Davidson, Suzuki, Yamaha, Kawasaki, BMW, Triumph, et al., and like their four-legged predecessors, they can provide dependable transportation to man for years to come.

The day of prominence for the motorcycle as a transportation force in Washington and the rest of America rapidly is approaching.

Subtle signs first appeared during the 1973-74 Arab oil embargo. Gas lines and rocketing fuel prices prompted consumers to cast envious eyes toward the petroleum-stingy creatures. Motorcycling, previously the domain of hoodlums and policemen, was attracting the attention of dollar-conscious citizens.

Washington state motorcycle registration leaped from 91,184 in 1973 to 109,483 in 1974, according to figures from the Department of Motor Vehicles. Since 1974, Washington state motorcycle registration has increased steadily. During 1979, more than 130,000 motorcycles were licensed.

And, if reports from local motorcycle shops are any indication, 1980 registration figures will be substantial.

Salesman Rob LeCocq of Northwest Cycle in Bellingham said the firm has been a "month ahead" of its normal selling pattern since January, while parts manager Tom Noyes said it completed more sales in February and March of this year than in all of 1979.

The affable, wise-cracking LeCocq has been selling Hondas and Harley-Davidsons, the firm's lines, for two years. He cited rising fuel prices and society's acceptance of motorcycles as reasons for increased sales.

"It used to be when an old lady saw three kids on mini-bikes she thought the Hell's Angels were in town," LeCocq said, smiling. "Now, it's an acceptable, practical form of transportation."

Noyes said Harleys are "just road machines" but that Hondas appeal
“to every type of person, young, old, male and female.”

“People are looking for bikes they don’t have to do anything to,” Noyes remarked. “Honda appeals to the customer’s wishes.”

Honda has obliged its customers with features like electronic ignition, shaft drive, water-cooled engines and overall technically sound machines.

“Since 1978,” Noyes continued, “Honda has made their bikes virtually maintenance free.”

Salesman Rich James of Yamaha Northwest in Bellingham said he’s seeing many first-time buyers this year, including one 78-year-old man.

“People are looking for something to get them to and from work,” he said. “With a bike, they can have a little bit of enjoyment on the way.”

James said he’s surprised at the number of middle-aged people showing interest in bikes and predicts they will compete with the youthful buyers as the motorcycle industries’ most fervent customers.

Sales manager Bob White of Bellingham Cycle in Ferndale, which primarily sells Kawasakis and Suzukis, reported trends similar to Northwest Cycle and Yamaha Northwest.

Sales are strong, he said, with people buying bikes to commute.

“In the past, bikes have been a toy, a sport, a hobby. Now it’s transportation and fun transportation at that,” he said.

White said that carpooling is not practical in the United States and predicted motorcycles could be the “to work and back” vehicle of the future.

And well they should be. Reasons:

They’re relatively inexpensive, ranging in price from $900 to $5,000 for a new machine, depending on make, style and size.

They’re economical, achieving 80 miles per gallon on a small bike (125cc), 60 mpg on a mid-sized bike (400cc) and 40 mpg on a big bike (900cc).

They’re FUN! There’s no feeling quite like riding a motorcycle. It’s like sex, the circus and a bottle of good wine combined.

And you don’t feel guilty, broke or hung over following the cruise.