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Editor's Note:

Klipsun reflects much of our community at Western and the surrounding area through the observations of its staff and writers. This issue focuses on lifestyle and activities enjoyed by some individuals in our community and available to most.

A number of articles concentrate on individuals and their interests. An entire section is devoted to a variety of outdoor sports and activities. Perhaps not everyone has the resources or ability to participate in these. But realize, at least, the possibility is, once was, or could be there.

We live in a near-paradise, compared to the desolation or overpopulation of some areas, and their lack of true beauty. Our natural surroundings are awesome. The nearness of such splendor is, in itself, overwhelming. It should not be shrugged off as commonplace.

Klipsun presents a few ways to take advantage of our environment. Use it as an introduction, or addition, to your knowledge of these activities and their setting. It is fitting that "Klipsun" is a Lummi Indian word meaning "beautiful sunset."

Caron L. Monks
Editor
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Street Dance: Breaking into Studios
by Carol Hierck

Their stage is shopping malls and street corners. Their music, funk. Their wardrobe, a combination of the latest fashion trends. Their moves, so complex they leave onlookers scratching their heads with bewilderment.

Street dancers have spread from the inner city ghetto areas to the suburbs, and are part of probably the hottest fad since skateboarding.

Street dancing is athletic and highly stylized, borrowing moves from mime, gymnastics, martial arts, jazz and a dozen different funk numbers to create what many have called the dance style of the eighties.

Each dancer constructs his own routine which might showcase several variations of street dancing—
waving, locking, moonwalking, and the style that has received the most attention—breaking.

At 24, Allen Woo calls himself the "grandaddy" of street dancing in Vancouver, British Columbia. He has been at it for eight years, "long before anybody even cared for street dancing," picking up his first move, locking, at a high school dance.

Woo is one member of the three-member dance team, Dance Masters Dance Magic," which also includes a couple called Baby Girl, 21, and Hay Hay, 19.

The team has been together since January, performing at local clubs, giving demonstrations at high schools, and teaching street dance basics for $10 a class at a downtown studio.

Woo has trained as an Arthur Murray dance instructor and traveled extensively throughout Canada and the United States picking up moves from other dancers.

"The key to good street dancing is a creative mind, a creative head," Woo said. "That's all. Anybody can learn it.

"Sure, in it's most advanced forms, it's the hardest dancing in the world. Like Baryshnikov in ballet. In his form right now, who could beat him? The best can't be imitated," Woo said.

"But, in street, you try not to imitate," he added. "You start with the basics, and from there, you take a move and make it your own. You try to suit the dancing to your needs and evolve into your own style. You make your own form of street dancing, not through impersonation of someone else."

Baby Girl agreed. "You have to have your own style," she said. "If you copy someone else, you can't get self satisfaction. When you have your own style, you have the reward right there."

Baby Girl, who has been dancing since she was six years old, started street dancing a year ago after seeing a performance by Cooley Bop, a dancer on the television show Solid Gold.

She said she was the first girl to street dance in Vancouver. "It's a real challenge because I'm a girl," she said. "I'm not built for it, especially breaking, so I specialize in popping and waving.

"It's really hard. Sometimes I get depressed. If you don't keep making changes and adding to your style, you have to worry about people getting better than you," she added. "Anytime I think I'm really good, I always say to myself, 'I have potential.'

"Competitively, it's really depressing, really political. People who are jealous badmouth you. You have to be tough, imaginative and continually come up with new moves. It's always on your mind. Sometimes you can't sleep at night. It's like a nightmare because you take it so seriously. It's your pride and joy.

"It takes concentration, perseverance..."
ence, humbleness and you have to try not to get depressed if you can't get a step. And, you have to be on your toes,” Baby Girl added.

Woo compared street dancing to martial arts. “Once you learn one move, you go on to the next, and you keep building,” he said. “The main thing to learn is body control.”

People are fascinated by street dancing because it creates an illusion of complexity, Woo said. “You try to fool people so that they’re scratching their heads and saying, ‘How did he do that?’ That’s the whole fascination. I myself am still fascinated by it. I still like watching.”

The third member of the team, Hay Hay, said the fascination with street dancing is that it is different. “It’s something new, and it’s a real challenge,” he said. “If you make up a new move, you can say, ‘Hey, I made this up. I did this.’”

Hay Hay, who originally wanted to be a hairdresser, began street dancing last year. He learned many of his moves, including waving and ticking, in Toronto from his mentor, Ramone Ramose.

Hay Hay said the reason he chose street dancing over hairdressing was because “street dancing is great fun, something I enjoy doing. And, it’s really rare when a person finds a job they like.”

Future breakdancers learn the moves in a Vancouver studio.

Hay Hay’s tip for future street dancers is to have a good attitude and an open mind.

When the team first started giving classes, it had only two students. Since that time, hundreds of people have learned street dance basics from the Dance Masters team.

“There are a few other teachers in the city, but nobody teaches in our style,” Woo said. “We’ve broken down our own style of dance, our own unique system. We drill it in people’s heads by breaking it down like simple arithmetic.

People are hungry for street dancing now. But it’s so new, are they willing to gamble their conservative nature,” he asked. “We’re so conservative here, whereas in Los Angeles and New York, where it’s most popular, they’re more laid back.”

Baby Girl predicted street dancing will soon be as big in Vancouver as it is in Los Angeles. “It’s going to hit harder than disco because you have to develop and choreograph your own moves, whereas in disco it was just one or two moves that you could copy off of someone else,” she said.

Danny Dee, 23, who has been taking lessons from Woo for two months, said, “It teaches you posture, gets you in shape and gets rid of tension by occupying your mind completely.”

“And it’s an art form, a unique form of expression. There are so many variations and improvements so that you literally can express anything you want to in the way you street dance,” Woo added.

Juliet Li, 19, a criminology student at Langara Community College, first saw street dancing on television and was so impressed, she registered for one of Woo’s classes the next day.

“Everybody’s doing it,” Li said. “It’s the hottest thing around right now.”

Li said she hopes to eventually enter a dance contest and experiment with her newly acquired craft.

Robert Ruskey, 19, a University of British Columbia physics major, views street dancing as a hobby. “I saw it on television and I was just floored,” he said. “I thought, ‘This is great. This is gonna be hot and I’d better get into it.’ It’s new and creative, different and original,” he added.

As the popularity of street dance grows, so do the theories of its origins. Woo said it started about 15 years ago in the black-Hispanic ghetto areas of New York and Los Angeles. Instead of fighting, some ghetto youths began competitively dancing out their aggression.

“They still fight,” Woo said, “but
less now because they’ve got something better to do — something that keeps them creative, that allows them to channel their hostilities through dancing.”

Now when someone yells “Break” on ghetto streets, the reference is not to the traditional call to fight, but to a sophisticated outgrowth called breakdancing.

Calling themselves names such as the New York Breakers and Freeze to Rock, American inner city dance teams tend to live in the same apartment block or go to the same school, Woo said.

Like street gangs, they often wear their names on their jackets. Unlike street gangs, they also often wear protective gear — knee pads, shoulder pads and heavy gloves — to buffer them when they dive and spin on the ground.

Floor moves include fish dives to the ground, flips onto one shoulder blade and spins in dizzying circles. Super breakers twirl on their heads or on one hand, moving from one position to the next with a backflip or handspring. Woo explained.

Woo said several other streetdancing moves such as locking, waving and King Tut also originated in Los Angeles. Popping originated in San Francisco, which Woo calls the “mecca of streetdancing.”

Anybody who learned streetdancing in Canada had to learn it in the States or from someone else who was trained in the States,” Woo said. “It’s really an American dance.”

A recent Vancouver Sun article linked some elements of street dancing to a Brazilian fighting dance called capoeira. Capoeira was originated by slaves who wanted to settle differences in a manly fashion, but didn’t want their masters to know they were fighting. It uses the same spins on the head and shoulders, and the same rotations on the back as street dancing.

The Sun article also noted the stylized entry and crouched spinning and strutting exit of a solo breaker surrounded by fellow dancers resembles some American Indian dances.

There also may be a link with the minstrel shows of the 19th century in which masters of ceremonies are believed to have performed the same kind of breaking and popping moves.

Woo predicted street dancing will peak this summer. Movies featuring street dancing, Harry Belafonte’s “Beat Street” and Sidney Poitier’s “Shootout,” are due for release this spring.

Rock videos and movies such as Flashdance have also added to the popularity of the fad. Fred S. Carter’s 32-page, how-to-breakdance book, “Free and Easy,” with photo illustrations and “rap-score cassette, became available in March.

The fad has become so popular in Vancouver that the Dance Masters team has become affiliated with Ramona Beauchamps, the largest modeling and talent agency in the area.

“It’s fun to do, fun to look at, and it bridges the gap between dancing,” Woo said, “Kids today couldn’t do the cha cha or ballroom. They don’t suit the eighties. Street is the dance of the eighties.”

— Alan Woo

“Making Moves”

To fully appreciate streetdancing as it grows in popularity throughout North America, here is an introduction to the latest body language.

**Breaking:** all of the bone crunching floor work, the spins as well as the fish dives to the floor, the gymnastic-like flips from hands to feet.

**Robot:** android, instead of the stiff mechanical robot moves of the past. A mechanistic kind of pantomime.

**Waving:** smooth-moving muscle contractions, like a wave going through the body.

**Locking:** quick locking and unlocking of joints in certain positions to create a kind of momentary posing.

**Ticking:** speeded up locking, like the rapid-fire stop-start of the second hand of a clock.

**Popping:** jerking or popping of a muscle.

**Bopping:** jerking or popping of the chest or whole body.

**3-D:** vibrating movements to give the effect of dancing under a strobe light.

**King Tut:** square corners, geocentric movements, done in one dimension so that it looks like an ancient Egyptian fresco figure come to life.

**Moonwalking:** one of the oldest streetdancing moves. It is a kind of weightless, mimed walk, like a floating on the moon.

**Puppet:** just like a puppet on strings.

Streetdancing has many other steps and moves with names such as the helicopter, swipe, rocking chair, floor rock, scissors and Bugs Bunny. Just corner your neighborhood streeetdancer who should be easy to identify.

There is a host of other individual steps and moves with names like the helicopter, swipe, rocking chair, floor rock, scissors and Bugs Bunny.

In Bellingham, The Bellingham Academy of Performing Arts teaches both streetjazz and breakdance classes.
Surfers Set Sail
by Shelley Nicholl

Since boardsailing emerged just 15 years ago, it has grown into one of the world's most popular and competitive pastimes.

In Europe it's even more popular than alpine skiing.

The sailboard was invented in the late 1960s by California surfers Jim Drake and Hoyle Schweitzer. Their intention, when they attached a sail to a surfboard, was to get their boards farther out in the ocean—not to create a new sport.

In 1969 Drake and Schweitzer patented their invention under the name Windsurfer, and the new sport was ready for the market.

Boardsailing first became popular not in California, but in Europe. By 1971 boardsailors could be found in Austria, France, Finland, Germany, Holland and along the Mediterranean coast.

Not until the mid-1970s did the sport gain widespread attention in the United States. But now boardsailors are a common sight in California, Florida, Hawaii and along the northeast coast, as well as in Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada.

The main attraction of boardsailing is the sensation of sliding across the water with the pull of the wind.

"It's really new and really different. It's very much like waterskiing without the boat, but you have more control and freedom. It's an expressive thing," said Jeff Davis of Lake-wood, the Associated Students-sponsored facility at Lake Whatcom.

Boardsailing is not only popular as a recreational activity, but it also has become a competitive sport. Regattas and triangle racing competitions take place around the world and boardsailing will be included as a yacht- ing event at this summer's Los Angeles Olympic games.

The sailboard design stemmed from surfing, but equipment and techniques, which have changed a great deal during the last few years, resemble those of sailing.

In 1980, reported Pete Nygren of Washington Windsports in Bellingham, only two types of boards were available. Now boardsailors can choose from more than 100 types of boards, varying in length from 11 to 13 feet and ranging in width from 24 to 30 inches.

Hull shapes vary as well. Planing boards are stable and flat-bottomed. Displacement boards are less stable, but turn more easily and are round-bottomed. All-around boards are good for various conditions and have a combina-

tion of the two hull shapes.

The size of a sail a boardsailor chooses depends on wind conditions and ability. Nygren said sail sizes range from 35 to 80 square feet. Smaller sails are used for beginners or for high-wind conditions. For added speed, boardsailors can use a larger sail.

Many boardsailing enthusiasts have two or three different sails to accommodate varying weather conditions, Nygren added.

All sails have a window panel to improve vision and safety.

Boardsailing can be mastered on lakes or the ocean. Nygren teaches at Lake Padden and sails year-round at Bellingham Bay, wearing a wet suit in colder weather.

Like the equipment, sailboard teaching techniques have become more sophisticated. Both Davis and Nygren begin instruction on land using a simulator.

The simulator acts like a sailboard and gives students a chance to learn about sail angles and get the feel of the board without falling in the water.

From here the leash method is used. The board is tied to the shore, a buoy or an anchor, so students won't stray if they lose control. Once students have mastered this step, they're ready to go out on their own.

Boardsailors don't need strength or perfect coordination to gain control of the board, Nygren said.

"Even kids who think they're total klutzes can learn. It's actually easier than walking," Nygren has taught students weighing as little as 60 pounds and plans to teach a man who has only one hand.
this a dog barks and how crazily houses eyes people smiles faces streets steeples are eagerly tumbling through wonderful sunlight
—look—
selves, stir, writing open-n-ing
are (leaves; flowers) dreams
, come quickly come run run with me now jump shout (laugh dance cry sing) for it's Spring
—irrevocably; and in earth sky trees everywhere a miracle arrives
(yes)
you and I may not hurry it with a thousand poems my darling but nobody will stop it
With All The Policemen In The World
—e.e. cummings

Mark Goodman, Scott Long, Mike Poutiatine, Tracy Bell and Denise Ackert enjoy hacky sack. The sport, developed in South America, requires balance and quick reflexes to keep the small leather sack airborne.

Don't Get Burned
by Leanna Bradshaw

With summer on its way and the sun making more frequent appearances, many Western sunbathers are seeking to recover their treasured golden tans. But sunbathing has its hazards—ultraviolet radiation can lead to sunburn, premature aging and in some cases, skin cancer.

Sunburn occurs when ultraviolet rays injure the skin's cells, causing them to swell. Pain and redness result from an increased blood flow to the damaged sections.

The skin produces two built-in defenses against sunburn. Skin cells divide and build up faster than they shed. The additional skin layers act as a shield against ultraviolet radiation. Also melanin, dark pigment appearing as a tan, is increased by exposure to the sun. Melanin protects the lower skin layers by absorbing ultraviolet rays.

Yearly accumulation of melanin and ultraviolet damage to the skin's class continued
ticity encourages the premature onset of wrinkles and liver spots. Ultraviolet radiation also can change the proteins in the lens of the eye, generating a yellowish color. A dense buildup of this pigment is the main cause of cataracts.

Skin cancer is a more threatening, long-term effect of ultraviolet radiation. The skin cancers most often associated with sun exposure are almost always curable when treated early. These forms can be identified by dry, scaling patches and small lumps that may ulcerate.

Yearly accumulation of melanin and ultraviolet damage to the skin's elasticity encourages the premature onset of wrinkles.

The most dangerous skin cancer, malignant melanoma, has not been directly linked to ultraviolet radiation, although it usually appears on exposed body parts. It kills 45 percent of the 15,000 Americans stricken with it each year. Melanoma is identified by dark mole-like growths that easily ulcerate and bleed.

Prevention
Sunbathers can take measures to limit the damage of ultraviolet radiation. Tanning products with sunscreen filter some of the destructive rays.

Sunscreen is effective in protecting against sunburn and helping reduce the risk of skin cancer, said Robin Johansen, a pharmacist at Fairhaven Pharmacy.

Sunscreens offer a sun protection factor (SPF) ranging from two to fifteen; the higher the rating the greater the protection. A rating of two doubles the time a person can safely be exposed to the sun. Level 15 allows the wearer to stay in the sun 15 times longer than usual.

The Food and Drug Administration has identified six skin types:
• People with type one skin burn easily and never tan (SPF 8-15 are recommended for these individuals.)
• Type two burns easily and rarely tans (SPF 6-15).
• Type three burns moderately and tans slowly (SPF 4-8).
• Type four burns minimally and tans to a medium brown (SPF 4-6).
• Type five seldom burns and tans to a dark brown (SPF 2-4).
• Type six never burns and has deep pigmentation (SPF 2-4).

Johansen said he recommends PreSun to customers interested in a sunscreen. PreSun is available in SPF 4, 8 and 15. “Most people have had good results with it,” he added.

A new tanning product on the market this year is a bathing suit called the “Unsuit.” Designer Hans Buhringer said the Unsuit’s 100 percent cotton weave allows ultraviolet rays to pass through and provides SPF 6.

Unsuit wearers can get an even tan by using a sunscreen with a six rating. If more protection is needed, a stronger sunscreen should be worn under the suit and on exposed body parts. The Unsuit is available at Jay Jacobs in Bellingham.

For further protection, remember the following precautions:
• Reapply sunscreens after swimming or perspiring.
• Protect the upper ear, nose, lips and other exposed skin during all outdoor activities.
• Limit initial exposure to 15 minutes and increase by five minutes each additional time you sunbathe.
• The sun’s rays are most intense from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

• Light summer clothing and nylons do not offer the skin much protection against sunburn.
• Avoid sun reflectors that expose the more sensitive chin and eyelids.
• Cocoa butter and mineral oil do not provide protection against the sun’s rays.
• Umbrellas do not fully shield deflecting ultraviolet rays.

• Ultraviolet radiation produced by sun lamps and tanning booths also is more intense. One hour of sunbathing in natural sunlight equals about three to four minutes in a booth.
• Goggles are essential in tanning booths and sunglasses should be worn outside to protect the eyes from ultraviolet radiation.
• Tetracyclines, sulfa drugs, diuretics, barbiturates and birth control pills may encourage sunburning. People taking any of these medicines should use a sunscreen liberally and avoid the sun between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

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Going *With the Wind*

by Shelley McKedy

The lake is quiet. The linen-white sails rustle as they stand, waiting patiently in the morning breeze.

Suddenly, a scherzo of shrill whistles pierce the air, signaling the countdown. Each sleek, white craft tries to cross the invisible starting line with full speed at the moment the last whistle is heard.

The race begins. A small fleet of Alpha Ones hasten to cut the water's glossy surface with power harnessed from the wind. Each tiny sailboat is skillfully navigated by two people decked in vivid red and yellow gear—presumably the skipper and first mate.

"Starboard, hike, port!" The commands echo across Lake Whatcom as each crew tries to strategically outmaneuver its neighbor on the triangular course.

The 14-foot crafts, gliding at about three knots, tack 90 degrees from side to side heading north, never pointing the bow directly into the wind. As they approach the windward mark, designated by a large, orange ball, the skipper is careful to "read" the wind before thrusting his or her weight on the opposite side of the deck to bolt the boat over on its side and shift course to the west.

"It's great! I love it," a smiling Tom Burkett exclaimed. A veteran of Western's little-known intercollegiate sailing team, the blond biochemistry major said he enjoys the challenge of competitive sailing.

Burkett, the team's commodore last season, explained sailing's excitement is in operating between two unpredictable mediums—air and water.

"You're not really moving that fast, but it seems like the speed of light out there. Your stomach muscles are hiking out....It's just a lot of fun."

Industrial design major Mark Harang echoed Burkett's sentiments. Harang learned how to sail at an early age from his father. Now he is the team's commodore. He enjoys comparing his sailing ability with others.

"It's a great time to test your skills against others. What can I say," he asked.

The team focuses on using those skills cooperatively when competing. Cooperation is the strength of the 10-person team, Harang said.

The team's weakness is its leaner experience when compared to its formidable foe, the University of Washington, the nation's third best sailing team.

continued
Western's sailing team practices and hosts regattas at Lakewood, a spacious 10-acre facility nestled among the pines on Lake Whatcom's southwest shores. Lakewood, owned and operated by the Associated Students, sports a lodge, boathouse, a trio of docks and a collection of sailboats, sailboards and canoes.

The sailing team began two decades ago as the Viking Yacht Club, said Lakewood Caretaker Jeff Davis. "In the '60s a group of people interested in racing wanted to buy boats, but the AS felt the expense for such a small group wasn't worth the cost. So in exchange (for buying the boats), the team was responsible for offering lessons to anyone interested," Davis explained.

In 1981, club sports administration was shifted from the AS to Departmentally Related Activities. The sailing team now receives $800 through the intramurals department.

The team also is funded by the Seattle Sailing Foundation. Two and three years ago the team used these funds to travel to Annapolis, Md., to compete on 44-foot yawls owned by the Naval Academy.

In March the team competed at Stanford University in California, placing fifteenth out of 24. Also in March, the team placed third out of 10 at Western's Invitational, trailing the University of Washington and Oregon.

Every fall and winter the team sponsors Sunday regattas for Western students. In the spring and summer it races long, yellow "banana-like" Etchels in the series of regattas sponsored by the Bellingham Yacht Club. It has placed first in its class for the last two years. "We just make like a banana and split," Burkett bragged.

Fellow navigator Scott Lindberg also enjoys racing competitively. "It's such a challenge because there's wind direction, tides, currents and rain. To combine all these natural phenomena and the rules of the game—it's not a simple sport," the junior business major said.

In competition, Lindberg said he concentrates on strategy. "I'm always thinking about what everybody else is doing—how can I get my boat to go faster than theirs?"

One maneuver for gaining an advantage while racing is "steeling air," which is done by positioning one sailboat in front of another to block the wind that drives it.

Lindberg has learned this and many other strategies as well. "In the last six months, I've learned more than in the last three or four years I've been sailing."

But learning strategy isn't the only advantage of being on Western's sailing team, Lindberg said. "It's just great to get together with your ol' friends and cruise around every summer."

Burkett summed up his love for sailing. "It screws up school, your social life and your wallet, but it's great!"
Randy Vernon is getting excited. He always gets that way when he talks about his favorite activity.

"Once you get your buoyancy adjusted so that you're not rising or sinking, you can float through the water in a full lotus position if you want. Or you can lie on your back and blow air rings, watching them expand as they float to the surface, while every kind of fish imaginable swims around you. It's like you belong there." His eyes bug out and his voice rises in pitch as he describes how, with a mere flip of the fins, a person can shoot through the water, staring down into the void below the underwater cliffs and ledges.

Vernon is a scuba diver.

Most people live mundane, terra firma lives in relative dryness, taking vicarious journeys to other worlds through television, newspaper and magazine accounts of space conquests. Scuba divers, on the other hand, routinely explore what they believe is the last true frontier. That frontier is here in our own back yard.

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Devotees call it "getting wet." To most of us who live in this soggy corner of the world, getting wet holds little romance or fascination. But for a large and growing group of scuba diving fanatics, getting wet is a way of life.

That life includes chasing down scallops off Keystone on Whidbey Island (one diver said it was like going after "false teeth on the move.")., plucking crab off the sea bottom at the Larrabee Park boat launch, or marveling through the ethereal world of the Marine Gardens off San Juan Island. The possibilities for underwater exploration of the Puget Sound are only as limited as the amount of air in the tanks and gas in the boat.

Because of the extensive training and equipment necessary to make even the first dive, scuba divers tend to be very dedicated to their sport. Once a diver starts talking about the sport, he is likely to keep up a marathon discussion.

This enthusiasm must be infectious, as more people are participating in scuba diving than ever before.

Larry Elsevier, owner of Bellingham Dive and Travel, opened his business in 1972 and has since added a swimming pool to his shop.

"It's a convenience for divers who
want to drop by and tune up their old equipment or test some new stuff," Elsevier explained. "Divers who haven't been in the water for a while also can use the pool to refresh their skill," he added.

In March, Elsevier's shop sponsored two dive trips to Mexico, one to La Paz and another to Cozumel. About 20 people went on each trip. He is also planning a trip to Hawaii in September and the South Pacific in February.

Dennis Jobe-Withner started a business in 1973 in a "hole in the wall" on Champion Street, but has since moved his business to more spacious quarters on State Street.

"More people are getting into the sport, and they're staying in it longer because it's being run like a business rather than a hobby," Jobe-Withner said.

And a business is exactly what it is. Beginners can expect to spend at least $1,000 for new equipment. For top-of-the-line gear, it's easy to spend up to $2,500. Add to this about $150 for the required three-week training period and beginning diving becomes a substantial financial commitment.

Once they've begun, most divers are committed, taking advantage of any opportunity to get wet.

"A person has to do 20 or 25 dives the first year to really be considered a diver," Elsevier said. A refresher course is recommended for anyone who hasn't dived for a year or so, he added.

The training period usually consists of five or six classroom and pool sessions and four or five open-water dives.

Safety is highly stressed during the training sessions.

After completing the course, a diver is given an internationally-recognized certification card, which allows him to purchase air from any dive shop. The card is the diver's proof he is trained in safety techniques. The emphasis on safety has paid off, instructors noted.

"I've taught over 2,000 students since 1969 and I've never heard of any of them having any trouble," Elsevier said. "Diving is an extremely safe sport, and due to equipment and training improvements over the last five or six years, it has become even more so."

Jobe-Withner agrees. He has been diving since 1969 and also couldn't cite any instances of trouble either for himself or his students.

Although the instructors weren't eager to talk about them, the dangers of diving include running out of air, becoming tangled in kelp patches, getting swept away by strong currents and the "bends," a malady caused by the saturation of the blood with nitrogen. After reaching depths of 60 feet or more, if a diver rises to the surface too quickly for the nitrogen to dissipate from his bloodstream, the nitrogen then forms bubbles in the bloodstream.

Once you get your buoyancy adjusted so that you're not rising or sinking, you can float through the water in a full lotus position...It's like you belong there."

—Randy Vernon

Dennis Jobe-Withner makes a final check of Mark Urich's diving equipment.
“It’s kind of like your blood is suddenly the consistency of a shook-up bottle of warm Coca-Cola,” Vernon said.

All of these dangers can easily be avoided. A diver always dives with a buddy, so if one runs out of air, the two can share the other diver’s air. This is called “buddy breathing.”

A large knife is part of the equipment ensemble, so kelp patches don’t usually cause problems.

Tide and current books are readily available to avoid unexpected changes.

The danger of the bends in sport-diving is almost non-existent. Sport-divers usually don’t dive deep enough for long periods of time to make blood saturation a problem.

Although requirements are stringent to get started, most divers believe the rewards make it worthwhile. One of diving’s rewards is the wealth of fresh food in the water.

“A diver can get a meal in about two minutes. It’s a real storehouse of goodies down there.”

—Dennis Jobe-Withner

A diver can get a meal in about two minutes,” Jobe-Withner said. “It’s a real storehouse of goodies down there.” In waters around Bellingham, crab, shrimp, scallops, lingcod, abalone and halibut, among others, abound.

But most of diving’s rewards have a more aesthetic appeal, as Vernon’s descriptions made clear.

“You feel weightless, like in space,” he said. His face took on a quizzical look as he paused, searching for the right description. Finally, he said, “Flying. Yeah. That’s what it’s like. It’s a lot like flying.”

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The ocean kayakers drove to the edge of Bellingham Bay. They emerged from their cars and together scrutinized the weather, squinting at the gray morning light of the horizon beyond Lummi Island. They spoke briefly before turning to unload their kayaks from fiberglass racks on the tops of their cars. Randy German, a tall slender man wearing rubber hip-waders, and the smaller woman, Myrna Gladheart, in a baggy sweater, pink sweatpants and big black rubber boots, carried the kayaks down to the shoreline one at a time and set them half-in the water. Myrna climbed into her one-person boat first and shoved off with the long double-bladed paddle. Moments later she was far offshore.

"When you're out there it's incredible. On clear days the water is just like mercury—perfectly smooth. One day I heard a pod of whales coming around the point: they made a pff noise..." —Jenny Hahn

She stopped paddling to wait for Randy and started off again as he caught up with her. They paddled the lightweight boats steadily through the water toward a buoy, passing comments occasionally as they went, then turned south toward Chuckanut Bay as sunlight broke through the clouds and glanced off the water.

Myrna paddled about 50 yards ahead and stopped from time to time, suspending the paddle across her lap. She and the kayak floated, gliding with the momentum of the current. She was waiting, listening, and watching. The cool and quiet April morning was clearing into a calm day.

"I've always loved the water, especially in California," she said later, "but the water here is too cold to go swimming in the ocean, so kayaking is my only way of getting out there." She bought her kayak as a kit, put it together herself, and often kayaks with friend Randy German, a local kayak builder, who is also fascinated
by the sport.

“Kayaking is a real luxury way to see the outdoors. You can take any gear that you want to, as far as you want to go...”
—Randy German

He and a partner rent kayaks for $10 per half-day, which is enough time to cross Bellingham Bay and return, German said. A booklet on water safety and equipment is included in the cost.

“I’m concerned about safety precautions. I wrote the booklet myself. It’s in the third edition now,” German said.

German would like to make a living constructing kayaks and guiding trips to Matia, Sucia and Patos Islands. Bellingham is a safe place to learn kayaking because the coastal waters are protected from the storms and wind of the open sea, he added.

“Kayaking is a real luxury way to see the outdoors. You can take any gear that you want to, as far as you want to go and you don’t need a lot of expensive equipment. I sometimes take my dogs. I slip them inside the boat. One of them sits way up front and the other sits kind of between my legs where he can put his head in my lap and look around.”

German sees a lot of wildlife on his kayaking trips: “I see foxes and deer, mink, racoon, sea lions and sea
Adventuresome Huxley student Jenny Hahn has had similar experiences.

"When you're out there it's incredible. On clear days the water is just like mercury—perfectly smooth. One day I heard a pod of whales coming around the point: they made a pffft noise. The nine whales came within 70 yards, then dove. I was extremely excited and scared," she said.

Hahn uses a kayak for overnight excursion. She sometimes ventures to Orcas Island—at least a one-and-a-half day trip.

"...The nine whales came within 70 yards, then dove. I was extremely excited and scared."  
—Jenny Hahn

There are woods there, and animals. In one day you can go from the city to this quiet wooded island, and you feel like you are miles and miles away. The water acts as a natural barrier to civilization.

"Time slows down when you go to the San Juan Islands."
The first frightful sight I encountered at Issaquah’s Parachute Center was an ambulance racing toward the landing site.

When embarking on a life-endangering mission such as this, that is hardly reassuring.

I asked somebody nearby what happened. I was informed a skydiver had made a bad landing, twisting his ankle.

Terrific! Far be it from me to criticize others if they wish to endanger their lives for the sake of sport. I’m certain it must be titillating to hurl yourself into the atmosphere with only a few yards of nylon being the difference between life and death.

Mickey Bevens, weekend manager of the Blaine Airport Parachute Center, has completed more than 3,000 jumps. Bevens, who has been skydiving since 1969, became hooked after making his first free-fall. A free-fall is a jump in which the parachute is activated manually.

A skydiver’s first five or so jumps are controlled by a static line, a heavy-duty cord attached to the plane and the individual’s parachute. The 10-foot-long cord automatically pulls the chute open.

Many beginning skydivers mistakenly believe the odds of survival decrease with an increase in jumps, Bevens said.

“The more jumps you make, the better off you are,” Bevens said. The greatest risk periods are within the first few jumps when you’re a beginner, since you are unfamiliar with the equipment, and around 200 jumps when you think you know everything.

“The most common injury is what you saw today—a sprained ankle,” Bevens said.

I found myself sitting on the floor of a tiny plane, strapped in a seatbelt and harnessed in an emergency parachute. The plane appeared larger from the outside. The interior dimensions were approximately three-and-a-half feet wide by seven feet long—nice and cozy with two divers, the pilot and me.
As we ascended I tried to relax and enjoy the ride. The view was resplendent; rich, vibrant colors in a patchwork of unbelievable beauty. I was sitting across from the door. When we reached 3,000 feet, the door swung open to allow the first jumper out. A torrent of gushing wind blew in my face. Even though I was here to watch, not jump, an open door at 3,000 feet terrified me. But the view was hypnotic. I couldn’t tear my eyes from that opening.

I lost my composure and began reciting “Hail Marys” when the first jumper climbed onto the wing. He smiled, waved and then vanished. I almost wished I had vanished, too. I wanted out of that terrifying aircraft.

Injury is not the only aspect of skydiving that can scare of prospective beginners. Skydiving’s costs can be prohibitive.

“The intensive training course, equipment and first jump costs $70,” Bevens said. “Your next jump, which includes a practice run and review of your last run costs $20.

“Until your sixth or seventh jump, you’re still hooked on a static line. Depending on your performance, normally on your fifteenth jump, you’re ready to free-fall. Until that point it still costs $20, Bevens explained.

Bevens then explained the rates for free-fall jumps. “It costs $1 per one thousand feet, plus $1—meaning if you go 4,000 feet, it will cost $4 plus $1. Normally, people who have reached this point own their own equipment. If not it will cost them $2 per jump at my parachute center at Blaine Airport.

“If you don’t have your own equipment, it costs around $500 for a complete system. This includes a harness, which contains your two parachutes (your main and reserve).”

By the time Bevens was on the wing, preparing to jump, I was working on my “Our Fathers.”

When the plane finally landed, I got out, went to my car and immediately chain-smoked two nerve-calming cigarettes. The entire process took only half an hour.

I realize that by not jumping I passed up what could have been one of the most exhilarating and rewarding experiences of my life. So be it.

I have but one parting word to say to those of you who are willing to take the “plunge.” And that word is: ONIM00000000

Skydiver Mickey Bevens prepares to jump.

By John Klicker
Curving around the foot of Mount Baker, the Nooksack River gracefully makes its way toward Bellingham Bay. Between Nugent’s Corner and Deming the fertile soil on its banks renders fruit trees, sugar beets, corn and tomatoes.

The farmers of the Nooksack Valley have long known that along this part of the river, the climate is friendlier to their crops than in most other parts of Whatcom County. But when, in 1977, retired army surgeon Albert Stratton planted his first grapes here, they frowned in disbelief. Few thought it possible a winemaking venture would succeed in soggy Whatcom County.

Now, on any sunny spring Sunday, the winery that Stratton, his family and horticulturalist Jim Hildt started in 1981, attracts 200-250 visitors. The first commercial wines from the Mount Baker Vineyards have won several awards and are hailed by newspaper columnists for taste and rarity, while Stratton is becoming known as a winemaker for innovation and breaking age-old traditions.

The first of Stratton’s many experiments was to grow grapes in the unlikely climate of Whatcom County.

Winegrowing has been attempted all over Washington state since the turn of the century. But today most of the 8,000 acres of vines are in the Yakima Valley of central Washington and the Columbia River basin, east of the Cascade Mountains. Although Whatcom County is on the same latitude as the Rhine Valley in Germany and Champagne regions of France, most of the area is too cold to grow grapes. It takes an average of 210 frost-free days a year to have a successful crop.

“When I went to Mount Baker

continued
High School as a boy, all of us knew about the longer growing season in this part of the Nooksack Valley,” Stratton said, referring to an area mere two miles long and a quarter-mile wide. “The farmers here always started their corn growing much earlier than the rest of the county and were harvesting until Thanksgiving.”

Knowing this, Stratton returned to his native valley when he retired from a 24-year military career, which took him all around the world. He grew fruit trees on the land he had bought in the valley and was joined by Hildt, who was doing independent research as a Fairhaven student.

On Christmas Eve, 1972, Stratton received a home winemaking kit as a gift from his wife, Marjorie, and his two sons, Mark and Charles, who had no idea what their present would bring for the family.

They thought Stratton was “just going through another phase,” when he started reading about the subject. Applying his medical knowledge of microbiology, he became a volunteer winemaker with an experimental agricultural unit in Mount Vernon.

Robert Norton, head of the Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Unit of Washington State University, recalled Stratton’s involvement with the experiment.

“Al seemed very interested to find out what grape varieties could grow in Whatcom County and started testing some 40 different kinds,” he said.

“The samples from his experiments were so well received that they (the tasters, professional judges and his personal friends) urged him to try a commercial winemaking business,” Hildt commented.

In the seven years he worked for the research unit, Stratton started planting grapes on his own land in the Nooksack Valley. Using cold-weather varieties from England, France, Austria and Hungary he harvested his first commercial crop in 1982. With the first yield came the first break from winemaking traditions.

“We were expecting to take in only 25 tons, but we ended up with 66,” Stratton said. The winery, a stucco and tile one-story building, wasn’t yet completed, he added.

A flexible entrepreneur, Stratton decided to freeze the crop the winery couldn’t handle. After the grapes were picked, crushed and pressed the juice was put in cold storage.

“The traditional winegrowing technique is to avoid planting in excess,” said Gordon Hill, chemist at the Ste. Michelle Vineyards in Woodinville Washington. “We would either just leave them on the vines or try to sell them. One of the problems with cold storage is spontaneous yeast fermentation if the temperatures aren’t low enough.”

If the freezing is done correctly, cold storage could be a perfect solution for a small winemaker, who then can use the fermentation facilities year-round, Stratton said.

Although Stratton is not the first to use the technique, he is one of the few to advocate it.
Disregarding another tradition, Stratton used stainless steel fermentation tanks instead of oak barrels.

To get the oak flavor Stratton sets aside a few gallons of his wine and mixes it with oak chips. He then soaks the residue and adds the resulting extracts to his wines.

"There is more than just flavor you get from oak barrels, Hill said. "Tannin compounds and the oxidation process are necessary for a rich and complex wine."

"The wine really doesn't age in oak barrels, but just gets its flavor from the wood," Hildt said.

"The wine industry is stuffy and snobbish," Stratton said. "Some ways are perfectly all right for the end product."

"The wine industry is stuffy and snobbish."
— Al Stratton

"The sensation is in the end product," Norton said. "It is also far more economical to apply some of the techniques Stratton is using. Those who hold onto traditions may not be around in the end, because some of those ways are not efficient any more."

But Ste. Michelle's Hill disagrees. "There is more than just flavor you get from oak barrels, Hill said. "Tannin compounds and the oxidation process are necessary for a rich and complex wine."

Despite these revolutionary concepts in an industry of old customs and traditions, the venture succeeded.

Mount Baker Vineyards sold out its 1982 harvest. The 1982 Madeline Angevine won a bronze medal at the Tri-City Northwest Wine Festival while the 1982 Okanagon Riesling and the 1982 Madeline Angevine took silver medals at a San Francisco wine fair. The winery also sold 50,000 cuttings from its vines to producers all over the Northwest.

Not surprisingly, Mount Baker Vineyards is expanding.

What started out as a small family enterprise has developed into what Stratton calls a "middle-sized operation." Marjorie Stratton helps in growing and production, Mark Stratton, 24, is the apprentice cellar master and Charles Stratton, 34, is stockholder and helped in the construction of the building.

"We are trying to maximize our capacity to 30,000 gallons," Stratton said. "At a certain point you have to choose. You either stay a family-sized winery or you pick the middle ground with one person for each department."

The winery employs an assistant winemaker, a vineyard crew of three, a cellar crew of two, a salesperson and three hosts for the tasting room. During harvest season, August 25 through October, the company increases to a staff of up to 23 employees, who pick and crush the grapes. Bottling and labeling is also done manually.

However promising the enterprise looks, there are some hurdles to overcome before becoming a booming business.

Land in Whatcom County that could yield grapes is limited and most already is planted with other crops or is used for dairy production, said Hildt, the winery's business manager.

"We need about 20 more acres for the production of grapes," he said. "But the land around here turns over from owner to owner very slowly."

The winery is contracting with a grower for seven additional acres, although his land is located in the Columbia Valley off the Sumas-Kendall Highway.

The climate that makes vintners such as Stratton look for new technologies continued
niques to improve efficiency is the wine economy. The American wine industry as a whole is in competition with European wines, which are produced with subsidies from the European Economic Community. The European wineries can often spend enormous amounts on production promotion.

"The total promotion budget of all the 47 Washington wineries combines is perhaps $300,000," Hildt said. "Some European wineries will spend that much on a single television ad."

"The success of an enterprise such as ours depends on whether or not the family is willing to move along. It takes a strong commitment."

A number of Washington wineries, Mount Baker Vineyards included, have combined their voices in the two-year-old Washington Wine Institute, supported by a five-cent-a-gallon surcharge on their wine.

With their contributions members support a lobbying effort and the promotion of Washington state wines. But Hildt still believes the wine, itself, is the best promoter.

"The only reason for the success of Washington wines is quality and consistency," he said. "In price it is hard for us to compete."

But Stratton is still looking for new ways to increase production and restrict the winery's budget. He travels to California to research the merits of replacing his stainless steel tanks with polyethylene containers, while his family and Hildt keep a professional eye on the new crop.

"The success of an enterprise such as ours depends on whether or not the family is willing to move along," Stratton said. "It takes a strong commitment."

The family agrees and works all-year-round to keep the business running. But they have learned from giving Stratton a do-it-yourself kit.

"No more hobbies for him," they said.

The taste is the wines' best promotion. Mary Sucker serves customers in the Mount Baker testing room.

Brent Chamley, assistant winemaker, checks the fermentation process in the stainless steel tanks.

The Fruits of Success

Using some 20 different cold-climate grapes, Mount Baker Vineyards in the Nooksack Valley produces six white wines, three reds and one rose.

The whites are made with grapes from a variety of countries. The Okanogan Riesling, from grapes that also grow in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley, is of Hungarian heritage. It won a silver medal in San Francisco last year. French grapes, which also are cultivated in England and Tunisia, are used for production of the Madeline Angeline, a winner at the San Francisco Wine Fair and the Tri-City Northwest Wine Festival. The other whites include the Gewurtztraminer, Muller Thurgau, Pinocce de Malingre and Crystal Rain Blanc.

All red wines at Mount Baker Vineyards are French hybrids. They include the Nouveau Foch, Leon Millot and Crystal Rain Rouge. The winery's Crystal Rain Rose is a blend of several cool-season grapes.

Two fruits from the Pacific Northwest, plum and apple, are used in the wines that conclude the list in the vineyard's tasting room.

The tasting room is in the winery's main building, at 4298 Mount Baker Highway, 11 miles from Bellingham. It is open Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. All wines, which are sold by most local supermarkets or wine dealers, can be purchased at the winery for prices varying from $3.50 to $6.50.

The three parts of the winery's cultivated land can be seen when driving along Sunset Drive (Exit 255 off Interstate-5) toward the winery. The first vineyard can be seen on the left of the road before crossing the bridge over the Nooksack River. The second vineyard is on the right, one mile from the bridge, and the third announces the winery and tasting room on the left of the road.
A tomblike silence settled over Loeb Hall. The contestants stared intently at the paper as puzzles were handed out, face down. The only sound was the shuffling feet of proctors. Paul Grandstrom waited nervously, his heart inching toward his throat. The bell rang. Grandstrom flipped over his puzzle and without a glitch, his computerlike mind shifted into warp drive.

Grandstrom, a 1965 Western graduate, was competing in the United States Open Crossword Puzzle Championship. He was one of 250 finalists out of 13,000 entrants in the competition held last August at New York University.

Finalists were selected on the basis of their performances on four puzzles. Contestants had two weeks to complete the puzzles and were allowed the luxury of reference books.

"Two of the four puzzles were continued..."
extremely difficult, almost impossible to complete,” Grandstrom said. One puzzle had a clue that read “Kilenc plus Kilenc.” Methodically, Grandstrom searched through more than half a dozen Eastern European language dictionaries before coming up with the solution.

“There are really not any trade secrets. It’s just being able to make consonants and vowels go together…” —Al Power

“Kilenc” is the Hungarian equivalent of the number nine. The correct answer was “tizennyole,” the Hungarian translation for eighteen.

It was this kind of diligence in tracking down solutions that made Grandstrom, a Seattle auditor for the United States Fidelity and Guaranty Insurance Company, one of the finalists.

Once in New York, each of the finalists had to complete five puzzles (no reference books allowed). They were given 15 minutes per puzzle and were judged on accuracy and speed. If the puzzle was completed within the allotted time limit, bonus points were given.

Grandstrom completed all the puzzles within the time limits and missed only two letters. He finished 28th in the competition.

Grandstrom said he plans to return to New York next summer and hopes to place in the top ten.

In preparation for his return he does at least five puzzles a day. He conducts his most intensive training at home, lying on his sofa, the television blaring in the foreground.

When doing puzzles, he prefers the company of a televised baseball game, but will settle for whatever sport happens to be in season.

Grandstrom, who must come up with such words as “twaite” (a European fish) and “nene” (Hawaiin snow goose) daily, prefers doing his crossword puzzles in pen.

“I do my field audits in pencil because there is always the remote chance of error,” he said. “But I always do my puzzles in ink—arrogant ink, that is.”

Although Grandstrom may be more tenacious than most, he is just one of an estimated 50 million Americans who find crossword puzzles fascinating. Almost all of the country’s 1,700 newspapers print a puzzle and dozens of crossword books are published each year. More than 35 crossword magazines are published monthly.

Who are the people who do crosswords? New York Times Puzzle Editor Eugene Maleska, in an article published in Psychology Today, has drawn some conclusions based on his large daily mail intake.

Women puzzle-solvers outnumber men five to three. Among the most avid crossword fans are retirees, university students, lawyers, doctors, nurses, teachers, office workers, recovering patients, and prison inmates.

But the ones that outnumber all others are “average housewives,” he wrote.

Maleska said most puzzle-solvers are motivated by a need to escape from personal troubles or “from the jungle out there when criminals roam, politicians squabble and nations take up arms against one another.”

—Eugene Maleska

The first crossword puzzle appeared in the New York World on Dec. 21, 1913. Arthur Wynne is credited with its invention.

While searching for a novelty item to use as a space filler, editor Wynne came up with a variation of the word square—a pattern of words of equal length that are arranged horizontally and vertically.

- P A N E
- A L E C
- N E A R
- E C R U

Wynne introduced blank squares and dropped the duplications. Eventually he started adding the blacked out squares.

His puzzle was an immediate hit. The crossword, however, didn’t become a national craze until 1924. Richard Simon and Lincoln Schuster had just opened a publishing company and were seeking books to publish. Simon’s aunt, a crossword puzzle addict, asked him if he knew where she could get a book of puzzles. Simon discovered that no such book had ever been published. So he made arrangements with the editors of the New York World to print one.

At first most bookstores refused to stock the book. But eventually they yielded to public demand. Within three months of the publication of The Cross Word Puzzle Book, more than 40,000 copies were sold.

By the end of the year, Simon and Schuster had printed four puzzle books. Total sales were nearly half a million copies, and all four books were on the non-fiction best selling list at the same time.

That series of books is still being printed. Book 133, the 60th anniversary issue, was released in March.

Following Simon and Schuster’s success, newspapers across the country began running syndicated puzzles and several magazines devoted entirely to crosswords appeared at newsstands.

One football coach publicly declared that the demoralization of his team was the result of players doing crossword puzzles.

The first crossword puzzle contest was between Harvard and Yale in 1925 and crossword checks appeared in patterns on clothing and jewelry. One football coach publicly declared that the demoralization of his team was the result of players doing crossword puzzles.

The crossword puzzle has changed only slightly since the 1920s. In the 1950s puzzle makers began dropping the unwritten rule of one word per
definition. Today the trend leans toward more imaginative definitions and the insertion of verses, puns and quotations.

One person who decides how imaginative today's puzzle solver must be is Bellingham's Al Power. His puzzles appear daily in The Bellingham Herald and more than 200 newspapers across North America.

A crossword enthusiast since the age of 17, Power, now 70, decided to attempt puzzle making as a sideline. It was more difficult than he anticipated.

"In the beginning I would do some work on it and then put it away. I figured 'this must be for college professors and I can't be bothered.' For a long time I thought it was beyond me. But I kept coming back and struggling with it.

"Finally I caught on to the fact that there is a symmetry and I developed enough samples to put a presentation together. It took me about five years to perfect the technique."

Power's first puzzle was published Dec. 16, 1961. He uses 24 different preprinted patterns when constructing puzzles. The patterns are a symmetrical 15 by 15 square. He fills in the largest words first and tries to use words with alternating vowels and consonants. He then fills in the rest of the white spaces, experimenting until he has a combination that forms definable terms or words across and down.

The process requires a strong knowledge of words and repeated trips to reference books. After the pattern is filled, he jots down the definitions or clues. The whole process takes about five hours, Power said.

"There are really not any trade secrets. It's just being able to make consonants and vowels go together. A good memory helps," he commented.

Although this talent appears difficult to develop, there isn't a lot of money to be made as a puzzle maker, Power said.

"You can't depend upon it to make a living. There are too many gifted amateurs in the field, such as retired doctors and lawyers who don't care what they get paid as long as their names appear in the paper."

Power said he tries to keep esoteric words out of his puzzles. For example, he will not use the names of lesser known authors or opera singers. Names like these only would be known by a small minority of the public. "I try to make puzzles challenging, but not impossible," he said.

The question of difficulty aside, crossword puzzles have become an entertaining and rewarding pastime for millions of Americans.

"You can't depend upon it to make a living. There are too many gifted amateurs in the field..."
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He uses 24 different preprinted patterns when constructing puzzles. The patterns are a symmetrical 15 by 5 square. He fills in the largest words first and tries to use words with alternating vowels and consonants. He then fills in the rest of the white spaces, experimenting until he has a combination that forms definable terms or words across and down.

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Grandstrom disagrees with Power about not using esoteric words. Grandstrom's philosophy is "the more difficult the puzzle, the more challenging it is."

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The Profession Pursuit
by Lynann Bradbury

The lobby was too cheerful. Huge chrome-framed posters sparsely lined the unblemished walls, announcing events from the 1964 Seattle World's Fair to the 1983 Santa Fe Music Festival. The floor shined from a recent waxing. Professionalism echoed from the high ceiling.

I sunk into the overstuffed couch, pretending to read an issue of Smithsonian, hoping to lose my nervousness by concentrating on reading. As the minutes ticked toward my appointment time, concentrating on anything became difficult.

I began wondering why a prestigious, nationally acclaimed consulting firm would want to hire a Western Washington University journalism student. Then I reassured myself with the thought they granted me the interview, so I must have something they are looking for.

A month earlier I visited Western's Career Planning and Placement Center to compile a resume. I had to read it twice to remember who it was promoting. I also had researched the company and talked with the owner two weeks before the interview. Every step of preparation was covered.

Unfortunately, all that knowledge seemed to melt into perspiration, accumulating on the palms of my hands. My only thought now was that I had to muster a convincing handshake with sweaty palms. As I heard my name called, I tried wiping them inconspicuously on the magazine. Realizing I couldn't turn back, I took a deep breath. "Besides, this company needs you," I thought, semi-convincingly.

"The job interview is an opportunity to do a face-to-face sell," said Louis Lallas, Career Planning and Placement Center director. "It gives us the chance to market ourselves. We are the product, the service."

Yet an interview is only part of a five-step process of selling yourself in the job market.

"The resume and basic contact letter set the stage and tone," Lallas said. Following the initial contact you complete an application form and disseminate references. The interview and follow-up complete the process.

An interview is not a single event, but a process in three stages: preparation and research; the interview itself; and the post-interview follow-up.

Preparation is an important step that is often neglected. Learning about the company not only boosts your confidence, but also shows your initiative to the prospective employer.

Job-seekers should research a company by tapping into all available resources long before the interview. The Career Planning and Placement Center maintains files on more than 1,200 businesses and 2,000 school districts. Lallas suggested checking the library and newspapers for other pertinent information.

Visiting the organization, reading bulletin boards and talking with employees of the firm are other good ways to learn about the company.

Lallas cautioned against appearing too informed during an interview. "You don't have to be an expert. Don't try to outshine an employer," he said.

In a brochure on "What Students Should Know About Interviewing," General Electric suggests four aspects of readying oneself for an interview:

1. Know specifically where you want to go, what you want from a job and what you don't want.
2. Research the company to learn about its operations, corporate personality and especially the particular field for which you will be interviewed.
3. Make sure any paperwork is complete, understandable, grammatically correct, has no spelling errors and says what you want it to.
4. And finally, know the routine of an interview. This can be learned from a placement counselor, from someone who was interviewed previously or from a contact person at the firm.
In recent years, the hiring decision has changed at some companies from one person's responsibility to a consensus of management personnel. If an interview deviates much from the usual hour or so, during which you might meet one to four interviewers, the applicant generally will be notified.

This was the case for Steve Hobbs, a Western senior in accounting and economics. After an interview in Western's Placement Center with a Georgia Pacific representative, he was called for a second interview in Portland, Ore. Before the interview, Hobbs received information about travel arrangements and an itinerary. Four applicants were flown to Portland and taken to a hotel for the night, credited on the company's account.

At 8 a.m. the next day a company chauffeur drove them to the Georgia Pacific offices for a full day of interviews. The interviewers also had flown in from G. P.'s regional offices in Bellingham, Toledo, Ore. and Fort Bragg, Calif.

The morning was filled by two, one-hour interviews.

"It was fairly casual," Hobbs said. "They asked us questions like 'What could we do for the company,' questioned us about strengths and weaknesses, and gave us situational problems in accounting. Two-thirds of the time we asked questions of them."

The four applicants were joined by three staff accountants for lunch.

"Again, this was casual. But we found out afterward they had written reports on us," Hobbs said with a chuckle.

The afternoon was similar to the morning interviews. As the chauffeur drove the four applicants to the airport, Hobbs finally loosened his tie.

"The key is to be relaxed, to be yourself," he advised.

General Electric's education services division advise the same in their brochure. "There's one important thing to remember about how to act during an interview. Don't act. Be yourself."

Yet "being yourself" should fit the context of the interview. Professionalism, competency, courtesy, cooperation and organization lead the list...
of attributes an interviewer looks for in an applicant.

In his article, "What do Companies Expect From Young Graduates" (The Woman Engineer, Winter 1984), Eugene Raudsepp writes that competence heads the list. Yet he warns that such a capability, by itself, is far from sufficient.

"Ideal graduates must also possess social skills, such as congeniality and cooperativeness, so that they can work well with others in the pursuit of common goals."

Pam Smith-Large, personnel manager at All-State Insurance Corporation in Salem, Ore., said she observes attitude and motivation when interviewing someone. She stresses openness, leadership and organizational skills, strong values and the ability to get along with others.

She also promotes the idea of selling yourself. She said she believes a job-seeker must find the qualities within him or herself that he or she wants to portray to the interviewer. She suggested listing your strengths and weaknesses, making a mental note of your positive qualities, and emphasizing those.

"If you can't convince yourself you're good, how can you convince your employer?"

But Smith-Large cautioned against going overboard, noting that appearing conceited will have a negative effect on the interviewer. Enthusiasm, ambition and initiative are positive qualities, but if taken to extremes or falsely portrayed, can be disastrous, she warned.

Lallas advised students to show ambition during the interview, but to be aware they probably will begin working in entry-level positions.

"Employers want people who will start at entry-level positions. Strive for promotions as they are appropriate, but don’t try to start at the top," Lallas emphasized.

Raudsepp's article echoed Lallas' advice "Many graduates expect good pay and responsible positions right away. This is unrealistic. If the ability is there, it will be recognized. Employees cannot expect to get ahead before they learn what is expected of them."

First impressions can be a deciding factor in hiring decision. Appearance makes a difference. It is important to be clean, well-groomed and professionally dressed keeping in mind the job you're applying for. If you have

"Ideal graduates must also possess social skills, such as congeniality and cooperativeness, so that they can work well with others..."

—Eugene Raudsepp

only a half-hour to sell yourself, don't waste time deciding what to advertise.

Too little time was not a problem for David Merrifield, but too much time could have been. Merrifield, a Western economics professor, was hired last year after six years at Wichita State University in Kansas.

He was flown to Bellingham the day before the interview, allowing time to prepare for a day with the economics department faculty.

Interview day began with a 7 a.m. breakfast with the department chairman.

"Then they just tossed me around for the remainder of the morning.... A half-hour with each faculty member, and each one wants you to have a cup of coffee. You can guess what I was like by the end of the day," Merrifield said.

After lunch, he was "tossed around" some more with the final station at the office of College of Business and Economics Dean Dennis Murphy. After that meeting, Merrifield gave a seminar to the faculty, followed by questions and answers.

Merrifield said he believed his professional work set him apart from other applicants. "Most students don't realize the importance that is placed on research. When the market is really competitive, professional work makes you more valuable."

Merrifield was asked at the end of the day to take the job. The only follow-up he had was to nod his head. Generally, this isn't the case.

The after-interview letter is another step that many job-seekers neglect in the interview process. Lallas suggested writing a short thank-you note to the employer, mentioning the time and date of the interview and reiterating key points.

"Tell them again why you're the right person for the job and how your qualifications fit their requirements," Lallas said.

When closing the interview, ask what the best way is to keep in touch. And then, do it.

Not everyone was born to be a sales person. But to get into the profession were born for, we must start by selling ourselves in the job market.

Before I left the firm, I shook the hand of the woman who would dictate my future. My palms were not as sweaty as they were an hour earlier. I felt I had properly and completely presented myself, my product, to a prospective customer. Would she buy it?"
Do's and Don'ts for Interview Attire

Poor personal appearance tops the list of why candidates fail to land jobs after an interview. First impressions are a factor in most hiring decisions, noted Katherine Peterson, wardrobe consultant at Kathleen Peck Finishing School and Models Agency in Bellevue.

When deciding how to dress, Peterson advised, "Always be clean and well-groomed. Take each company into consideration, but dress one notch better than the position you're looking for."

For men and women applicants in business, she emphasized wearing a conservative suit in blue or dark gray. She suggested that women with long hair pin it up or pull it back in a bun. Men should wear a sports jacket or sweater. Always wear a tie and never wear open shirt sleeves—keep them buttoned.

Peterson's list of "No-nos" includes chewing gum, wearing colored fingernail polish, sunglasses, the color green, too much jewelry or open collars for men. Using too much perfume, having "mod" haircuts, overplucked eyebrows and displaying any item that identifies a personal association or belief also can have a negative impact.

Whenever possible, before meeting the interviewer look in the mirror to catch any flaws such as a hair out of place, smeared make-up or an unzipped zipper.

Another point Peterson emphasized was poise. "Be confident. Hold your head up high. Have a purpose. Look the person in the eye. And be positive. If you believe in yourself and act it, others will believe in you, too."