Editors Note:

Staring at a Rainier beer poster plastered on the wall, I am harshly reminded that not everyone appreciates the same kind of art I do. After a few snide comments about my French poster reproductions, I caught on.

Within our lifetimes, we are exposed to many different kinds of art. Some we like, some we wouldn't consider close to art. But to someone, it is. The artists created their work with something in mind, so it has a particular meaning to them. It might have a completely unrelated meaning to someone else. All art, whether it is sculpture, music, drawing or writing, has an interpretation for everyone—if we recognize it.

We shut off our minds to much of our surroundings. Many times I have noticed a vivid painting in a seemingly obscure location and asked, "How long has that been there?" How do we allow beauty and creativity to go by, unnoticed?

Since we are at university to learn, this is the place to begin paying closer attention to the art and artists around. Rarely can you find greater variety or freedom of expression among artists. Artists just grasping their talent can be especially innovative. A university is also the place to experience art beyond art history G.U.R. classes. Western offers courses in sculpture, painting, music and different forms of writing. Try to discover your personal art.

Art is not just a hobby for many people. Some spend their lives working at being creative. They struggle to keep going, sometimes barely able to buy supplies but the drive to do their form of art spurs them on. Maybe it seems futile to those of us not included in the category of artists, but for them, it is necessity.

All cultures incorporate some forms of art, but not all can afford the freedom of expression we have here. It should be praised and celebrated. This issue of Klipsun is dedicated to the arts and the artists who make them possible.

Caron L. Monks
Editor
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F irst the guitarist plays a slow, Spanish song. Then the singer begins to sing, and the guitarist follows his pace. Soon the dancer in his black pants and brightly colored shirt is inspired by the music, and begins dancing, slowly at first. He raises his arms proudly, his feet skipping and tapping on the floor. This is flamenco.

Flamenco dancing is an art form that originated in a southern region of Spain. It involves hand-clapping, tongue sounds, arm movements and foot movements. If you have ever seen a Spanish movie with dancing in it, it was probably flamenco.

Theodoro Morca has studied flamenco dancing for nearly 35 years. Flamenco was an expression of life for the Gypsies who migrated to Southern Spain in the mid-1400s, he said. “It was a way for them to express their feelings and emotions of everyday life in music, song and dance.”

Morca, co-owner of Bellingham’s Morca Academy of Creative Arts with his wife, Isabel, believes flamenco sprang from the “melting pot” of many cultures. Africans, Greeks and Romans contributed to the dance, along with what he calls the catalyst—the Gypsies.

Flamenco (not “flamingo” dancing, as it is so often mispronounced), incorporates the total body, unlike many dance forms. It is unique because it uses segments of dance from the Western world (Europe and United States) where the movement is concentrated from the waist down, segments of dance from the Eastern world (East Asia), where the movements are concentrated from the waist up, Morca explained.

It also is a visually exciting dance—the performers dress brightly and move elegantly. It is an audible dance, using music, and clapping, tongue sounds, foot sounds, and occasionally, castanets. “It’s not foot-stomping. The floor becomes an instrument, the drum,” Morca said.

“T he guitar, the basic instrument for flamenco, usually begins playing first in the juerga, with the singer following, although singing is sometimes not used. Musicians and dancers usually sit in a small semi-circle on the stage. The guitar plays until the dancers are inspired, then they rise and follow the music. All are sensitive to one another. For instance, if the dancer is dancing slowly, the guitarist also will play

“I f I can share this with people and they remember me as having brightened their lives, to me, that’s fulfillment.”
—Isabel Morca

Morca describes flamenco as an art form that can be improvised within a structure. There are basic rhythms that are used in all flamenco dances, but never any written music.

The dancers and musicians use these rhythms and improvise, creating a dance that is never the same.

In a “juerga,” or jam session, the music, song and dance work together in improvisation.

“The guitar, the basic instrument for flamenco, usually begins playing first in the juerga, with the singer following, although singing is sometimes not used. Musicians and dancers usually sit in a small semi-circle on the stage. The guitar plays until the dancers are inspired, then they rise and follow the music. All are sensitive to one another. For instance, if the dancer is dancing slowly, the guitarist also will play

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—Theo Morca
slowly, and vice versa.

Morca says the feeling of the dance usually is experienced by everyone present. "It (flamenco) has serious numbers—tragic numbers, along with the happy ones. It runs the whole gamut of emotions.

Morca and his wife Isabel both feel that flamenco is a very exciting dance. "It's very hard to be passive because you are dealing on that emotional level. It's not dry, it's very real, because it was born in a situation with everyday people in their everyday lives, expressing what they felt," he said.

Part of the experience is a "jaleo" or cheer group, to encourage and provide the dancers with energy.

In flamenco, male and female dancers might dance together or separately. "It's not a unisex dance. It brings out the strength of both sexes. It can be masculine or feminine and strong at the same time," Morca said.

When a couple dances together, it is not domination of male over female. Morca feels that the dance can be sensual in a classic way. Sensuality that is not expressed blatantly, but by looks, feelings and body movements.

"You have to be sincere. You can't just wiggle your butt. I find relief and release in subtlety," Morca said.

Morca feels that when he dances he returns to the basics of the original art form, an important form of communication.

Each piece of music you pick suggests an idea, expression or thought you want to put into movement.

—Isabel Morca

Dance is very powerful. Now it has styles and labels, but basically it's still communication of your innermost feelings. Flamenco is easy to relate to the word art, because you become the dance, you don't just do it. People dance for something important, expressing something for the moment, never to be captured again," Morca said.

Isabel also has very strong feelings about flamenco. "Flamenco, to me, is the music, dance and song all coming together as one. It's like flying or soaring—not like being here in time and space, but out of it. It's a natural high."

"I like the vibrations and the heart beat type of rhythm of flamenco. It's an emotional and spiritual output. Flamenco is something I love very much. If I can share this with people and they remember me as having brightened their lives, to me, that's fulfillment," Isabel said.

Isabel likes to dance both types of dances in flamenco—happy and sad. "I don't really dance out of frustration, it's more of an intense feeling. When my father died, it was hard for

It's very hard to be passive because you are dealing on that emotional level."

—Theo Morca

. . . it's very real, because it was born in a situation with everyday people in their everyday lives, expressing what they felt."

—Theo Morca
me to dance the lighter dances for a while. But when I had my child, it was easy. I felt freer to express my emotions, it was easier to express them. I think I even discovered new feelings about being a woman," she added.

"Flamenco is not made for the really young person. They don't have the depth of emotions that someone that has experienced some of life does. By the time they are 30, they have experienced death, life, birth and many other things.

The Morcas teach a variety of skills in their dance classes. In a beginning flamenco class, a student is first taught the basic positions, such as good posture. "How to look flamenco is very important. It's a very proud art form," Morca said.

The second thing a student is taught are the "isolations"—the arm movements, torso movements and head movements.

The Morca's students appreciate this art form.

Ann Borst, a flamenco student from Seattle, describes herself as "in love with flamenco." She drives to Bellingham once a week on Fridays to participate in Morca's class.

"I first saw the Morcas dance at the Woodland Park Zoo. It was one of the most moving pieces I've ever seen. They are both so clever—so full of surprises. It was fun to watch," Borst said.

"I dance for myself, not for anything else. I dance Scottish dances too, but there isn't the range of emotions. In flamenco there's anger, flirtatiousness, unmitigated joy—even loneliness. They're all there in one rhythm or another."

Aisling Gilling, another student of the Morcas, is only 12, yet she has won awards in Canada for her dancing. She travels from Vancouver to her classes. She started classes after her father saw the Morca's poster in downtown Bellingham, and she has been taking lessons for about two years now.

"I like the music, rhythm and dance steps of flamenco. Especially the way you get to use your arms and hands. I like the look of it," Gilling said.

"It's challenging for me to get the steps and arm movements right, also to get the look of a Spanish person." Gilling says she comes down to take the classes because she and her parents think the Morcas teach well.

"They're excellent, and explain things well. They make me feel at home, not awkward," Gilling said.

Out of the nearly 300 students the Morcas have, 20-25 are in their flamenco class. Isabel teaches ballet.
along with flamenco and other Spanish dances. She learned Flamenco at age six in Arizona when her mother wanted her to learn dances of their country.

Although Morca is Hungarian, he feels that it doesn't matter. "I've never tried to be Spanish. It's the feeling of the art form—I'm inspired by it. It's something that transcends Spain," Morca said.

"You have to go through many stages even if you have the seeds of artistry within you."

—Isabel Morca

The Morcas came to Bellingham in 1975, when Theodoro was hired by Western to teach as an artist in residence. For 10 weeks he taught ballet and movement for actors. Both the Morcas enjoyed the area so much, they moved here on impulse and opened a dance academy in a former church.

Isabel feels the church "makes a good space. There's a special feeling in a church. A lot of positive energy is created."

The Morcas have danced all over the world, in opera houses, theaters and even a converted passion fruit factory in New Zealand. They have danced several places in Bellingham and the Seattle area.

The Morcas choose all of the music for their programs and classes. They choreograph all of their dances also. "Each piece of music you pick suggests an idea, expression or thought you want to put into movement," Isabel said.

"I believe dancing is something that you really have to want to do. I'm happy that I've experienced it. I've even had some great joys—'duende,' or feeling it to the ultimate. You have to go through many stages even if you have the seeds of artistry within you," Morca said.

The dancer slows to the rhythm of the guitar. The singer's voice softens and begins to fade. One last stomp of the boots and he is finished. He stands proudly, his head is lowered.

A Stroke of Luck

Talk about luck.

That's what it was for Joel Blair when he came to Bellingham from Vancouver, British Columbia, to meet Theo Morca. The Morca's guitarist had just left, and they offered Blair a chance to play with them.

Blair had been living in San Francisco for about 15 years when he decided he needed a change. He moved to Vancouver. Upon hearing that Theo Morca was so close, in Bellingham, he decided to visit and meet him for the first time. He had heard of the Morcas through a flamenco magazine called Jaleo.

In the summer of 1981, Blair began working with the Morcas, and now plays during concerts and classes.

Blair, 47, started playing the guitar at age 12. He asked for one when he was nine, but his mother would not let him have it.

At age 19, Blair discovered a passage in his classical guitar book for flamenco. It was called "Malaguena." "That was me. I realized that was what I wanted to do," Blair said.

Blair says that his flamenco guitar (a special kind used only for flamenco) is made of Cyprus wood that makes it lighter and "ringier" than other guitars. He uses a technique on the strings called "rasqueado," a rolling of the fingers on the strings. He says that when playing flamenco, the guitarist is more forceful with his "attack on the strings."

Blair uses the Spanish stage name Josele del Rio for concerts and performances. But Blair is not Spanish—he is Jewish.

When Blair was in college and later in his career as an electronics engineer, he was not happy. "All those years my guitar was growing. Keeping me alive, so to speak," Blair said.

In 1961, when he heard a flamenco dance group play, he gave up his other life (and weekly paycheck) to do what he longed to do—be a flamenco guitarist.

Blair also plays at private parties, solo concerts, weddings and restaurants. He conducts a few private lessons, and will present a workshop on flamenco guitar this summer on the San Juan Islands.

"You have to do what you are. And I'm a musician. I'm a flamenco guitarist."
On any given day students are busy here, using power tools or designing intricate models, sorting through stashed materials like packrats. They mix paints, hoping for the perfect shade as a chemist or cook mustering a grand concoction. Landscapes, seascapes, bedrooms, bars— all are created at the Old National Guard Armory on State Street.

These fortified walls house the tools, materials, knowledge and manpower to create Western's theatre department's stage sets. Here the art of stagecraft is performed.

Professor Roger Germain, the chief set designer and stagecraft instructor explains that with stagecraft, students are able to perform and combine several skills. They use the literary arts, essential for designing appropriate sets for the play to be performed; the graphic arts, for designing models and plans for sets; and the industrial arts for the actual building of the scene.

Students of stagecraft must have a feel for literature and drama. When designing a set, a visual image of the playwright's intent is important. Set designers and directors collaborate in order to present a visual display in accordance with the play's theme.

"The director and set-designer come together and decide what is needed," Germain said.

An important element of design is graphic arts. The process of designing a set begins with a mental idea or image that must be graphically presented. Stagecraft artists must construct a scale model of their idea as well as various floor plans to graphically describe and elaborate the idea. When this is completed, the set is ready to be built.

When constructing a set, students use power tools such as the table saw, band saw, drill press and many smaller hand tools for refined work. They mix paints and install electrical devices for the particular need—bedroom lighting or an outlet for a TV set. "Because of budgets, we use anything we can get our hands on
that can solve the particular problem," says Richard Anderson, a technical theatre major.

Last spring, Anderson designed and helped build the set for the play, "Misanthrope" by Moliere. The uniqueness of the set allowed it to have a dual personality. Large wooden columns with colored lights installed gave the stage a discotheque appearance. When changing scenes, the set walls of the discotheque rotated to reveal a living room set. Likewise the bar of the discotheque flopped over to become a couch.

For the production of "Peter Pan" last year, the theatre department hired a Las Vegas firm that specializes in installing wire apparatus for "flying" on stage. This specialization is just one career possibility for stagecraft students.

Stagecraft is an art as well as a craft. As Anderson puts it, "The art is emphasized in the design, the craft is the technical construction. But to be fair you really cannot separate them."

Stagecraft majors may receive a degree in fine arts—technical theater concentration. Several Western students have become successful after graduation. Germain said three recent graduates went to work at Juilliard, a prestigious art school in New York. Others may find work at local theaters, dance companies, films and television.

Germain is a member of a local stagecraft union. He was called to work on the movie "War Games," filmed partly in New Halen, Washington. "When we were called, they (the filmmakers) thought they would get some old projectionists. We sure surprised them with our talent. They put us to work in various jobs, including special effects," Germain said. He laughed recalling how much money they were paid. The IATSE (stagehands union) is a difficult union to enter, but through educational facilities there are opportunities, Germain added.

Anderson is working on his master's degree in fine arts. He said he believes that with the fierce competition, he needs as much preparation as possible. Anderson is happy with the knowledge and skills he has acquired at Western—"Roger has really been a good instructor. He forces you to solve your own problems; that's when you're really learning."

Obviously stagecraft demands an interest in the theater. Germain said it goes beyond this. "Problem-solving is the thing. It demands organization, cooperation and resourcefulness at the least. This is what gets students excited."

Walls of History

Traveling up South State Street, a prominent sight appears—the sandstone walls of the Old National Guard Armory, a building with a memorable past and a functional present.

The Armory was constructed in 1910 by the National Guard Camp Murray in Tacoma. The building complex provided a floor for drills (which now is a roller rink); storage facilities for artillery, mortar and other types of munitions; and a rifle range for gun practice (which now are part of Western's theatre department scene shop).

The Armory was built for permanence. Two-foot thick sandstone walls enclose the 60,000 sq. ft. area and large timber trusses support the ceiling. The sandstone blocks were cut and delivered by the Chuckanut Sandstone Quarry. The complicated design for the Armory was drawn-up by Blackwell and Baker architects, an old Seattle firm no longer in operation.

In the early 1970s, the local unit of the National Guard left the Armory and moved in to its present headquarters at the Bellingham Airport. At this time, the leaders of the Washington State National Guard attempted to sell the Armory, but state law grants that state-owned lands are available to state agencies for first consideration. The Armory's availability was brought to the attention of Western's acquisition committee. At the time, Western needed storage space but had little purchasing power. They inherited the building in 1972. The title was presented to Dr. Herb Taylor of the anthropology department who was dean of research and grants at the time.

The Armory continues as a community recreation center for roller skating, storage for Western's physical plant, and a scene shop for the theatre department.

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At the start of each quarter, Dr. Edwin LaBounty tells his composition students he doesn't teach and they're not required to learn anything.

"If a student writes little, I don't worry about it. If he's a composer, sooner or later he will assert himself and cover page after page. Composition takes time—it's the first dimension," he said. Music takes time to write and to happen. The one characteristic all composers have in common is using time. "They must use time to make sense to somebody—not everybody," LaBounty said.

Composition graduate student Georgia Lockwood, 40, has been singing all her life, but composing music didn't occur to her until she was in her late thirties, when she attended a composition workshop.

LaBounty said becoming a composer requires "drudgery skills" such as learning how to conduct, being able to hear a score on sight, and having an ax—mastery of at least one instrument.

Lockwood's ax is her voice. For composition major Ron Averill, 21, it's a trumpet. Although he said he feels he's not as accomplished as some players, he has a good enough grasp of the instrument to compose music for five trumpets on demand.

The piece, performed at a recital last year, needs work before it will be a success in his eyes, Averill said. LaBounty feels the success of the music wasn't important.

"For Ron, that piece brought about a complete revolution in composition language. I'd made suggestions before, but they were like water off a duck's back. That was Ron's time to make a change. I didn't have anything to do with it," LaBounty said.

Averill conceded the pieces he'd written in class previously had been very conservative, but that didn't typify him. What had affected his style he said, was another class he was enrolled in at the time.

"I was taking a twentieth-century music history class that just amazed me. It inspired me and gave me ideas."
I always try to be as progressive as possible. Everything I do is an experiment. I keep trying things to see if I want to incorporate it into other compositions in the future,” Averill explained.

David McBride, the June 1984 outstanding graduate of Western’s music department, also considers experimentation an important element of continual learning in composition. His favorite piece so far, “Black Stars; White Night” he composed for an obscure keyboard instrument, the celeste, accompanied by a muted trombone. The sound of a celeste has a faraway, dreamlike quality that McBride took advantage of.

McBride, 22, composed the piece for a student who liked the sound of the celeste, but didn’t have any music for celeste and trombone, which he played. Averill wrote a composition for McBride’s ax, the french horn. As payment for the favor, McBride promised to play the piece in recital, whether he thought it was good or bad. Composition students often share their individual talents with each other like this, Lockwood said.

“We all know how tough it is to sit in a room and scribble black marks on paper. Everyone is crazy in some way. We (composers) understand each other’s craziness. To us we’re all normal,” she said.

Not only composition students, but music students in general are helpful. “People are very willing to answer questions. I’ll run up and down the hall, asking ‘Is there a trombone player in the house? Can your instrument do this?’ I would get a book, but it’s better to talk to someone about their instrument. I just barge right into the practice rooms,” Lockwood said.

Music students also play the composers’ productions at recitals and concerts, or just for fun. “I have heard every piece I composed that I wanted to hear. We’re very lucky. Not all composers can have that,” Averill said.

Lockwood uses a different process for composing instrumental and vocal pieces. With instrumental she decides the form the music will take, considers tempo, repetition of melodies and sections, and the sound—tonal, harmonious, etc. And she selects motives—pieces for a melody she can develop throughout the composition. She uses a keyboard to determine if the music is characteristic of the instrument used.

“Vocal music is very different. I start with the words. I write my own poems. I tend to have gloomy poems—it gets more interesting music out of me,” Lockwood said. The rhythm of the music complements the poem’s rhythm. Whether the poem is asymmetrical or repetitive, she composes the music the same, she said.

This is Lockwood’s routine, an important tool for a composer, according to LaBounty. “A composer must have a routine. It must be as rigorous as any football player’s, university professor’s or banker’s,” he stressed.

McBride’s composing routine depends on what he’s studying at the time, he said. But his external sound tool also is a keyboard.

“I will compose a piece as far as I can on the piano. But I must be careful not to compose a piece for piano, then change it to fit something else,” he explained.

Averill’s mainstay is a keyboard also. But to compose initial few lines involves another process. “I usually get started sitting alone in a room. I will think of something I like—maybe a two-measure piece. Then once I get started I don’t have too much trouble. It usually just comes out,” he said.

Lockwood said she feels the ability to compose is intuitive and instinctive. “A lot is a gift—an instinctive gift,” she noted.

For those who are interested in

Georgia Lockwood

Becky Bolen-Rubey

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composing but don't feel they have this "gift," the attempt to compose can be frustrating and disappointing. Ron's wife, Kari Averill, 20, took two quarters of composition classes.

"It was bad, but I tried. I did only the assignments—no composition on my own. I was never satisfied and I'd get very frustrated. I'd start a project and never finish. You need self-tolerance.

It's difficult trying to be creative... to be original in the twentieth century. Of course, I only tried for a very short time, but I couldn't be original. What's important is patience—patience to start with basics and work your way up to being good. You have to do that," Kari explained.

Of course, building up to being an accomplished composer takes time, but that is the main factor in composition, LaBounty says. "Time is the essential ingredient in all music. It takes time to write and time to happen. When someone is in it (composition) for four years, they have done a lot. They're not going to sit around and do nothing," he commented.

LaBounty recognizes all his students' achievements, not just those of successful composition majors. "Those who have learned the crafts of composition are just as precious to me as the winners," LaBounty said.

The students who succeed in composition, who have the "instinctive gift" Lockwood describes, delve into the art with profound enthusiasm. They know what they want.

Dave McBride wants to be able to improvise well.

"It's another musical concept—not churning out music to the rules, making my own rules. I won't totally abandon the rules, though. I'll always be anchored to what I've learned here. A good improviser follows his own impulse, but it's remarkably cohesive for improvisation from the soul—not from the head," he explained.

McBride also wants to tease his listeners with his music.

"When you come to the end of a song, you hear what you know is the next to last chord. In your mind there's a tense moment while you wait for the last chord. This idea of tension followed by release can be manipulated. I'd like to use the rules
they (listeners) know to lead them. Turn them upside down and around, then have the courtesy to set them down right again at the end,” he said.

Georgia Lockwood would like to write songs as a livelihood, but realizes it might be difficult to sell them, since “they’re not exactly the hit parade type.” She plans to find a market she can compose for, and try to tap it, she said.

Ron Averill also wants to compose as a means of living.

“I really want to compose. Maybe it’s not a practical way to make a living. I might end up teaching and composing on the side. Success would be ideal. Maybe I’ll be a janitor or something. It wouldn’t surprise me at all,” he commented.

Averill said every new composer today would have a problem trying to survive only by their talent.

“I’m not striving for greatness, just to make a living from it. Maybe that’s asking too much…” — Ron Averill

“So many people are composing now. It used to be uncommon, just for the aristocracy. Now there are lots of composers, and it seems to me that generally, no composers in the U.S. are very well-known except by other musicians. I’d like to be performed. I’m not striving for greatness, just to make a living from it. Maybe that’s asking too much, but it gives me a purpose for writing.” Averill conceded.

The number of other composers striving for success doesn’t stop McBride from having high hopes. He thinks there’s a good chance he’ll be famous in his lifetime. But he admits that’s an aspiration that will require more than hope.

“I have to keep getting better. It requires working step-by-step, piece-by-piece, becoming more me, less them (other composers),” McBride said.

That will require lots of time, a most essential ingredient. As LaBounty says:

“A composer works with time, works in time. then he can find his own time.”

Georgia Lockwood, graduate composition major at Western, composes music to accompany lyrics. The lyrics here were written this year in memory of a friendship in 1979. At the time, Lockwood lived in a small trailer, 10 miles outside Flagstaff, Arizona. Her sole companion was a half-crazy Malamute dog, she said.

“He was schizophrenic—literally. His eyes would glass over and he would get wolfish. I feel he was neither wolf or dog.”

“After the dog threatened a child, Lockwood decided to have him put to sleep. The lyrics represent her memories of that period in her life. The song, including accompanying music Lockwood composed, is available on a master tape in Western’s music library.
Life drawing models pose nude but are not the only ones in the art studio exposing themselves. The artists bare their creativity, thoughts and emotions.

"I saw the sign for life drawing. It had a really cute girl on it. I found out it was nude modeling: that's not what I thought at first. I went in and said I'd like to volunteer.

"I made some kind of crack about having a good body to draw. And she (art department secretary Claire Mayer) said something that really impressed me—that they (the art students) were more interested in capturing my personality. That put me more at ease.

"I signed up for class. Then I went home and bit my fingernails about it.

"I went to class about 15 minutes early and she introduced me to the instructor, whose name I do not remember, having been in a frenzy of anticipation.

"I went into the bathroom and got undressed. I had a little zit on my chest so I covered it up with makeup real quick and then went in to the art studio.

"I was expecting a class of 20 people and I was going to have to get up in front of all these football players and stuff. But there were only four.

"I didn't know whether to keep my robe on or take it off because that was the big thing—taking off my robe.

"We experimented a little bit. I kept my robe just because I wasn't going to take it off until he told me to. And then he said, "Well, why don't you just put your robe on the chair?" I think he was a little impatient with me.

"God, that was the worst—undoing the thing (the robe tie). It was really hard to get it off and embarrassing for about the first two minutes.

"Their (the students') attitude was very much an artistic attitude. They were just standing at their easels saying, 'Put her in the light more.' and 'Do we want her reclining this time? We did standing last time.' It was very business-like.

"Nobody said anything regarding my body or about the fact I was the only naked person in the room.

"They (the students) didn't refer to the picture as you, like 'I'm having trouble with you.' They would say, 'I'm having trouble with the figure.' It was courtesy on their part, but it was also that business-like attitude. It made it easier, them not saying, 'I can't get your tits right.'

"I took three breaks. Every time after the break, there was momentary
embarrassment about taking off my robe. That was the only thing that bothered me—the act of undressing, exposing myself. And that was real scary, but once I took it (the robe) off, it was like it's off now and nobody cares."

This is how Western sophomore AnnaLisa Houk described her first modeling experience for life drawing class.

Debbie Allen, a Western graduate with a degree in visual communication education, believes life drawing is a misunderstood art form.

"People have a misconception of life drawing and like to read more into it than there actually is. For the artist, it's a challenge and not some academic means of seeking thrills," Allen said.

"People have a misconception of life drawing and like to read more into it than there actually is. For the artist, it's a challenge and not some academic means of seeking thrills."

—Debbie Allen

Carol Pohl, who is working toward her master of fine arts degree, says drawing people probably requires the most discipline from artists.

"I don't think you can draw the human figure and not be damn smart. The human figure is one of the hardest things to do well," she said.

It is easier to find mistakes in drawings of people than any other object, Pohl said. Even abstract life drawings have to show the viewer what the work illustrates, she continued. "You can't get away with putting feet on backwards."

"The issues involved with the human figure are the issues of art itself." These issues include proportion, abstraction, aesthetics, media, philosophy, psychology, color, texture, volume, mass and depth.

"I can remember, as a child, doing art from my imagination, and usually it would end up being people," she said.

Pohl, a returning student, drew her first nude 20 years ago at the college she attended after high school.

"I was really excited about it because I had never been able to do that (draw a nude model) before," Pohl said.

It was the first time the college had used nude models and it was quite controversial, Pohl commented. The windows were painted over so people could not look into the classroom.

Controversy about nude modeling depends on the community's social values and how those in authority view the practice, Pohl said.

Before Pohl's class drew nudes, the models wore shorts or swimsuits "which is a real hindrance because it alters what is real. You have to be free to do the whole thing."

Pohl says it is important to get exterior things correct, such as proportion, but interior qualities also matter. "Those type of things that happen on the interior of a person can show up on the exterior."

Pohl says she portrays the internal happenings on canvas through the bond she feels with the model—her perception of the model's feelings plus her own internal emotions. "It (a drawing) will look different tomorrow than it does today, working with the same model, because tomorrow I will be a different person.

Sometimes Pohl does not use any model, working only from her imagination and occasionally viewing a body part such as her hand.

"There are some models that you
The issues of art include proportion, abstraction, aesthetics, media, philosophy, psychology, color, texture, volume, mass and depth.

like and some you don't like. Some can hold a position better and some are just more interesting,” Pohl said.

Pohl's work has been in many contests and displays. “When you're hanging it (the art) up for display, it leaves you feeling kind of naked. You've bared your mind and emotions, just like baring your body—only scarier because you have to be able to back it up. You have to be able to answer for anything you've done, both visually and philosophically.”

Life Drawing model Houk says she decided to pose to learn to see her body more objectively and for the money, $5 an hour, to help pay her room and board. “I feel I got what I went for.”

“There’s an idea in our culture that your body is a shameful thing. Everybody is real self-conscious about it (their body) and I'm probably one of the worst,” she added.

“T here’s an idea in our culture that your body is a shameful thing.”

—Carol Pohl

Houk says she learned “just to realize that I have something to offer and I don't have to be like Cheryl Tiegs to be beautiful or appreciated. My body is something beautiful on its own and worthy of imitation—worthy of art. It (modeling) gives you a feeling of self-confidence.”

“I don't think it (modeling) was exposing my sexuality because it was not a sexual atmosphere. I think I imagined that there would be men in the class that would be evaluating me sexually, but they were only evaluating me artistically. I wasn't being rated on a scale of 1-10 on what a great lay I'd be,” she commented.

Houk said the artists gave her breaks whenever she needed them. “It got a little tiring. My hand was tilted up a little bit so it fell asleep.”

“One of the guys said, ‘You have a body Rubens could have painted.’ I was really flattered. Rubens was a great painter who loved graceful and voluptuous women. He would have adored me,” she said.
Three of the artists were doing abstract work, Houk said. "I couldn't honestly say there was one body in there (on canvas) that looked mine. It's not really me, it's their (the artists') view of me.

Before taking life drawing class, Western graduate Allen said she wondered how she would respond to live, nude models. "I looked upon the model no differently than the first vase I had to draw in my 101 class."

Allen said her first experience with a male model was initially a little awkward because she wasn’t accustomed to seeing nude men. Later, it was like drawing any other object, she added.

Life drawing is useful for anybody interested in graphic design, illustration, fine arts or those who just like to draw people Allen noted.

"In drawing, it's very important to be able to create a third dimension on a two-dimensional surface," she said. The artist wants the work to stand out and attract attention.

"To me, drawing the human body is very much a challenge. If I can master it, all other things will follow," Allen said.

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"In drawing, it's very important to be able to create a third dimension on a two-dimensional surface."

—Debbie Allen

Duke McQuoy is duplicated by a life drawing artist.
Did you know our letter “a” comes from the Egyptian hieroglyphic symbol for eagle? Or that “z” was an early hieroglyph for “duck”? And how many people do you know who could tell you the origin of our letter “p”? It’s derived from the Phoenician word for mouth, of course!

These and countless other esoteric pieces of alphabetic information all are included in “Litera Scripta Manet, A History of the Roman Alphabet,” by Elsi Vassdal-Ellis, a 31-year old technology and graphic arts professor at Western.

“Litera Scripta Manet” is a phrase taken from Latin writings of Horace, an Early Roman poet, meaning, “The Written Word Remains.” Vassdal-Ellis’s book is a beautiful blending of the art and the history of the written word as we know it, and the intricate technology of typesetting.

“My students are not trained to be typesetters,” Vassdal-Ellis explained. “I try to train them to be designers who can communicate with the typesetter to manipulate the type aesthetically.”

This “literary labor of love” has truly been a one-woman project for Vassdal-Ellis—she designed, wrote, printed, bound and published the book herself.

The book, of which only 100 copies are available, is printed on rough, oversize paper, consisting of 26 pages, one for each letter of the alphabet. The top half of each page displays the letter, and each letter is set down in a different typeface. The body of the letter is composed of the history of that letter as it has been
implemented in our alphabet. As the history is read, eye movements follow the flow of the particular typeface. The bottom half of each page contains a detailed history of the typeface itself.

The book has become known to many dealing with books in graphic arts and type. Most of the attention, however, has been garnered by Vassdal-Ellis herself.

In 1979, Vassdal-Ellis had the germ of the idea for a book like this. As it happens, about that time the tech department acquired a computer that could produce an art form called “contour typography.”

Armed with her ideas and this new technological opportunity, Vassdal-Ellis experimented, setting the letters “a” and “b,” along with a Chinese ideogram in a format similar to the one in her book. In 1982, she submitted these three entries into a competition sponsored by the National Composition Association in Chicago. Her entries won the competition’s honorable mention, prompting her to finish the book.

“They say a prophet is never accepted in his homeland, and it’s the same thing with this kind of work.”

—Elsi Vassdal-Ellis

She completed the book in December of 1983, and then entered the book, as a whole, in the NCA competition. The book received the Judge’s Choice Award. She then submitted it to a couple of publishers dealing with type.

“T hereir reaction was, ‘It’s very interesting, but there’s no profit in it.’ So I decided to publish a limited edition book,” she said.

The “icing on the cake,” according to Vassdal-Ellis, came when she learned that the book would appear in a show held every two years in Czechoslovakia. The show ran from June 13 to Sept. 23 of this year. (At the time of this writing, the results of the show were not known).

Even with this recognition, the book has received little attention at Western.

“They say a prophet is never accepted in his homeland, and it’s the same thing with this kind of work,” she said. “There aren’t very many people on campus who understand this kind of stuff, and who even know why I’m doing it. It’s hard to describe it in a paragraph.”

Vassdal-Ellis said she enjoyed the appreciation shown by her peers in Chicago. Not all of her peers at Western have shown the same appreciation.
“One professor, who shall remain anonymous, said, ‘Oh, it’s cute!’ And it really hurts when someone says it’s ‘cute,’ because it really isn’t,” she said.

Not only did Vassdal-Ellis do all of the work to get the book published, she also had to pay all the production costs—about $700—from her own pocket. If she had to pay for typesetting, it would have cost her about $200 per page. Adding to that about $1,800 in printing costs makes this an almost $7,000 project. And, should the book win an award in Czechoslovakia, she plans to travel there at her own expense.

Why did she bother?

“Part of me wouldn’t be able to survive if I didn’t,” she said. “Teaching, alone, just doesn’t keep me going.”

So that others might learn from her efforts, she has reserved about 30 copies to submit to competitions and donate to libraries. Among the libraries are the Rochester Institute of Technology, which has a special collection that deals with printing, the Graphic Arts Foundation in Pittsburgh, the Carnegie-Mellon Institute and the Smithsonian Institution.

The remaining copies are for sale for a “donation” price. Minimum donation price for students is $25. “Corporations will have to pay more,” she said, smiling. “They can afford it.”

Any money that comes in will be earmarked by Vassdal-Ellis for new type discs for the tech department’s computer. Vassdal-Ellis also is trying to raise funds to upgrade the whole typesetting system.

“The school is desperately in need of a new typesetting system. The one we have now is in its death throes,” she said. “It’s hard to come up with about $35,000 in one lump sum. You get $5,000 here, a couple thousand there, but it just doesn’t add up.”

Vassdal-Ellis is working on the second volume of this three-volume series, a history of unique alphabets. She is hoping that in exchange for a future edition for advertising, she can entice a typesetting machine company to “donate” some equipment to the school.

Nevertheless, she says people are surprised to see the kind of work she does with such primitive equipment.

“People think that it’s always the machine that sets the limit, but the limit is in the person who is using the machine,” she said. “And I’ve maxed out the machine’s capacity here, so now I’d like to have a new machine.”

When Vassdal-Ellis has surpassed the limits of Western’s machines, or can no longer outreach their capacities, she will be remembered because “The Written Word Remains.”

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Above: Vassdal-Ellis helps a student with an assignment.
Right: A page from Litera Scripta Manet, A History of the Roman Alphabet.
Kaylin script has been used for the letter 'V.' This script face is patterned after Parisian Ronde from the Stephen­son Blake typefoundry. Blake's face was a faithful reproduction of a common 19th century upright script acquired from the Inland Type Foundry (USA) in 1905, where it was known as French Script. It was also called Typo Upright by the American Type Founders.

The face is characterized by flour­ished capitals and close-fitting lower­case letters with tall looped ascenders and long descenders. The variation in the color of the type is considerable. Classified as a ronde, it is a formal script and a latinized derivation of the civilité script used widely in France and elsewhere in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. Civilité was introduced to the printing field in 1557 in Lyons by Robert Granjon, a Parisian printer and type founder. The face was based on a cursive Gothic handwriting style in use during that period. The name of the face was derived from two children's books on manners that were printed in 1559 and 1560. Henri II granted Granjon a ten year "privilege" to the use of what he called lettre françoise d'art de main. The face was used first in Dialogue de la Vie et de la Mort, the French translation of a book by the Italian, Innocen­zeno Ringhieri. The civilité face proved not to be popular in France. It was based upon the "lettre batarde" and not the contemporary current script in use at that time. It did not become the national face of France as Granjon had expected. It enjoyed wider use in the Netherlands, however, with Granjon supplying the type to Plantin and other printers.
Shapes of Western
by Lynann Bradbury

Twelve thousand pounds of black steel shades the sun from the northeast corner of Red Square. Its geometric shapes catch the fancy of a blond three year old who stands one-twelfth its size. He walks underneath the steel cube where three sides meet at a point directly above his head. He squints, trying to see through a carved-out circle in each of the squares.
Red Square is filled with clusters of jean-clad students making plans for the weekend, exchanging test scores, and talking about last night's dates. Some sit around Fisher Fountain, people-watching. Others bustle across the square with notebooks clutched in their arms, some have backpacks slung over their shoulders. They smile at recognizable faces and hurriedly greet passing friends.

"I was tremendously impressed that Western would have major works from major artists who are internationally known. The sculptures were the first thing that attracted me to this campus."

—Artist in Residence Saul Nesbitt

Like many of Western's sculptures, "Skyviewing Sculpture" isn't appreciated by most students unless they are artists or studying the sculptures in a class.

Saul Nesbitt, artist in residence from New York City, not only appreciates "Western's outdoor museum," his decision to come here was based on the sculptures.

Last year, Nesbitt drove through Bellingham to British Columbia and stopped at Western to view the sculptures.

"I was tremendously impressed that Western would have major works from major artists who are internationally known. The sculptures were the first thing that attracted me to this campus," he said.

"The environment that these sculptures create is so magnificent—I'm surprised it doesn't immediately influence students in a positive way.

Nesbitt, who taught art at New York City College in 1955, is at Western as a teacher, student, guest lecturer and artist. He also is a sculptor.

The Skyviewing Sculpture, installed in 1969, was produced by internationally-known sculptor Isamu Noguchi.

This sculpture attracted Virginia Wright from Seattle, whose father had given her a $1 million trust fund to support art in public places. She was so impressed that Western would take the initiative to acquire sculptures from internationally artists that she donated money to Western from the trust fund.

That initiative began in 1957, the year Barney Goltz came to Western, when it was a College of Education. Goltz, now a Washington state senator, was responsible for the planning and construction of the college at that time.

"The Board of Trustees wanted to develop plans for facilities which would reflect what the university stood for," Goltz said.

Each time we read "Tina Chopp is God" or that "Terry Loves Chris," it costs $400 to $500 to get it off the sculpture.

The people involved in the process "wanted the architecture on campus to be a statement of the university. The things we teach about, we should have in our environment," he added.

The school became Western Washington State College in 1961. That change both symbolized growth of the college in enrollment and facilities, and brought a change of attitude.

"The 1960s through 1980s represent an energetic creative period—a time that could be called the Renaissance period in American Sculpture," Art Acquisition Committee Chairman Richard Francis said.
Main decorates university stationery.

The campus sculpture collection—called “Western’s outdoor museum” by those acquiring and placing the sculptures—consists primarily of “large metal pieces of an unfinished nature,” Francis said.

“Diagonal Curve,” created by Western graduate Robert Maki is located near the entrance to the commons dining hall. Its curved rear panel is partially blocked by a diagonal front panel, creating an illusory effect of depth.

“Stone Enclosure: Rock Rings” appears like a fortress guarding the south entrance to campus.

Across the street, a box constructed by sculptor Donald Judd sits in front of Old Edens Hall. This untitled piece has been ridiculed by students who question the “reason” for it. However, the rectangular form with two internal and external metal walls, creates shadows of different geometric forms as the sun moves across the sky. Looking through its sections of rectangular space toward the Olympic Mountains gives the effect of a framed photograph.

“For Handel,” the bright red-orange painted tripod of steel beams dominates the plaza in front of the Performing Arts Center. The builder, Mark di Suvero, hoped to convey a relationship between abstraction and humanity. He named it in tribute to George Frederick Handel, an eighteenth-century composer.

“Stone Enclosure: Rock Rings,” between Fairhaven College and Arntzen Hall.
A rope swing used to hang from the top of the sculpture, but, too many students swung on it simultaneously and the rope broke, crushing the leg of a girl who had been sitting on it. The swing was removed.

"India," located between Old Main and the Humanities building, was created by British sculptor Anthony Caro. He intended the piece to be viewed as a whole, noting the relationship of its parts to each other.

Two towering pieces near the lecture halls are "Totem" and Scepter.

"Totem" stands 12-feet high between Lecture Hall 2 and the Humanities Building. Its thin, steel, cylinder walls are decorated with torch-cut patterns and crowned with 16 prongs. Seattle artist Norman Warsinske created a steel version of Northwest totem poles through his sculpture.

"Scepter," next to Lecture Hall 4, was created by Steve Tibbets while he was a student at Western. The structure has similarities of a human figure.

"Alphabeta Cube," was created in 1975 by Fred Bassetti who also designed the Wilson Library second addition and the Ridgeway residence halls. The cube, located on the south side of the library, is composed of 12 logs.

On the north side of Wilson Library sits a carved stone sculpture. "The Man Who Used to Hunt Cougars for Bounty" was carved at its location by artist Richard Beyer and his son, Charles. The sculpture portrays a segment of an old, Northwest legend: the last hunter and cougar on Sehome Hill, embracing and singing to the sky.

Across from Arntzen Hall, on south campus, a pyramid of logs serves as bleachers for students of a "The Man Who Used to Hunt Cougars for Bounty," north side of Wilson Library.

The campus is structured on a peat bog. At that location, anything heavy will settle and eventually disappear."

—Bob Hascall
Physical Plant Director

In a brochure presenting Western's outdoor museum, Bassetti describes the collaboration of his art and architecture: "The reason to have artworks in and around buildings is the same as the reason for art itself. It interprets our world and ourselves visually. It is literature, drama and music speaking to us graphically ... its primary purpose is to enlighten us."
sunny day. “Log Ramps” was first constructed in 1974, but had to be removed while Parks Hall was built, because it was in the way of builders. The artist, Lloyd Hamrol, positioned four triangular ramps in a pyramidal configuration with an imaginary circle at the top.

"Trying to vandal proof the sculptures may be impossible. Some pieces have lights but to illuminate all of them each night is too costly."

—Richard Francis
Art Acquisition Chairman

Farther, south, toward Fairhaven college, “Stone Enclosure: Rock Rings” appears like a fortress guarding the south entrance to campus. The Rock Rings, composed of Brown Mountain stone from British Columbia, are 20 and 40 feet in diameter. Four arches on the rings are calculated from the North Star running north to south. Circular holes in the outer ring are aligned with the points on a compass. Away from the main campus, the rings offer a place of solace to students.

Near the Rock Rings is a different kind of sculpture titled “Steam Work for Bellingham.” Usually disguised as a long bed of rocks, the steam sculpture emits its rising, billowy images from 9 to 11 a.m. when the physical plant releases the steam at irregular intervals.

Two other pieces that fit the category of unfinished, large metal sculptures, are “Normanno Wedge” and “Wright’s Triangle.”

“It’s not that we’re not cultured, it’s just that we have never been exposed to art such as this. Once we get exposed and have it around, then we begin to appreciate.”

—Pat Angus
Art Acquisition Committee

Beverly Pepper’s “Normanno Wedge,” between Parks Hall and the Environmental Studies building, was constructed in 1980. It was Western’s first outdoor sculpture commissioned under the art in Public Places Law. The law, established in July 1974, allocates one-half of one percent of state capital construction for purposes of art.

“Wright’s Triangle,” is one of the controversial sculptures on campus. Richard Serra, an internationally-known sculptor, originally had designed the piece for the Northeast corner of Carver Gym, between the Art Annex and Miller Hall. It was intended to be viewed from above, either descending the slope from the south campus or walking down the steps from Red Square. But the campus is settling at that location.

“The campus is structured on a peat bog,” Physical Plant Director Bob Hascall said. “At that location, anything heavy will settle and eventually disappear.”

The 101-ton sculpture now is located above the tennis courts near Carver Gym. Crafted of cor-ten steel, the surface of the triangle was meant to age naturally to a “lovely, velvety texture,” Francis said.

“Serra didn’t intend for it to look like rusty steel.”

The natural oxidation process has been interrupted numerous times by the spraying and cleaning of graffiti on its surface. Each time we read “Tina Chopp is God” or that “Terry
loves Chris," it costs $400 to $500 to get it off the sculpture.

"One of these days we will have to sand-blast the sculpture because the graffiti leaves a background of the paint," Hascall said. That will cost $4,000 to $6,000.

Trying to "vandal proof" the sculptures may be impossible. Some pieces have lights but to illuminate all of them each night is too costly, Francis said.

Placing a sign or plaque near each sculpture has been suggested.

"If students don't know what it is, they'll picture it as a big slab of rusty steel instead of what it is supposed to represent," Paul Noot, a junior in accounting and business said.

Francis said the Art Acquisition committee also had that idea, but is concerned about vandalism and "the plaques intruding on the aesthetics of the sculptures."

"At one time there were plaques on major trees around campus. Practically all of those have been ripped off," he said.

Construction of the new tech building will bring funds for more art through the Art in Public Places Law. What kind of art has not yet been decided.

"A lot of students don't care a bit for the art we have here on campus, because when we think of art, we don't think of logs or metal, we think of colorful paintings and such. It's not that we're not cultured, it's just that we have never been exposed to art such as this. Once we get exposed and have it around, then we begin to appreciate it," said Pat Angus, an art history major, and two-year representative on the Art Acquisition Committee.

A man picks up the little boy and holds him just high enough to touch the base of a circle in the Skyviewing Sculpture. The boy hesitates, then gently runs his hand along the cool curvature. He laughs. ❖

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"The reason to have artworks in and around buildings is the same as the reason for art itself. It interprets our world and ourselves visually. It is literature, drama and music speaking to us graphically...its primary purpose is to enlighten us."

—Fred Bassetti
Artist
Galleries Galore!
by Sandy Watchie

"Quality art is a unique investment. Not only does it grow in monetary value, the very nature of it helps a person grow by its very presence."
Linda Enfield and Caroly Oltman
Owners of Hamanns Gallery

The multitude of art galleries in the Bellingham area range from pottery exhibits to jewelry displays. The following is a sampling of the major galleries around town.

• Bellingham Hardware Gallery: This gallery consists of 16 rooms, rented by individual artists. The rooms are showplaces for artwork, but serve as work studios as well. The viewer not only can inspect the finished product but also watch the artist at work.

  The gallery features local and internationally known artwork, from photography, pottery and fabrics to textiles and jewelry. The gallery is part of the Bellingham Hardware Building.

• Blue Horse Gallery: This gallery is a creative outlet for two frustrated artists—Wade and Tonie Marlow. They call it their “barebones” gallery—no carpet, no frills, just art.

  The gallery focuses on local artwork along with regional and Alaskan works. It specializes in etchings but also carries pastels, drawings, prints and some pottery. It’s located at 301 W. Holly in Bay Street Village.

• Collectibles by Jody Bergsma: Jody Bergsma began selling her artwork at age 14, and now her work is nationally known. Her gallery, at 1756 Iowa St., originally served as her business location. She expanded it into an art gallery two years ago.

  Bergsma specializes in two types of artwork: complete children’s illustrations and contemporary water colors. Her children’s illustrations are shown around the country. She also has a limited edition of porcelain collectibles.

• The Elements Gallery: The elements is Bellingham’s first cooperative fine arts gallery. It presents continuing group exhibits of fine art by Whatcom county artists and craftspeople, as well as featuring individual artists in special presentations of their works.

  The artists use diversified media including wood, glass, pottery, sculpture, collage, enamel, drawing, paint-
Fiction to Tickle
Your Fancy
by Cindy Lamphere

Classes started two weeks ago and already, interest in academics has begun to fade. Tossing textbooks aside, students search for relief from studying. Reading provides an escape from the pressures of daily life for many people and creates a bridge between them and the world of their imagination.

There are about 15 book stores in Bellingham that can provide reading material to help in the escape from school. Here is a guide to some of these stores.

- Aardvark Books and Records, 1222 N. State. “We have an excellent collection of science fiction books,” said Mike Osborne, a clerk at Aardvark. Indeed, this store offers a large assortment, especially books from the “Dr. Who” series.

Both new and used books are sold, from drama, poetry and spy novels, to contemporary fiction. Also sold are classical records and tapes, and several comic books.

Aardvark means “earth pig” in South African Dutch, but I couldn’t find any aardvarks.

- Akasha Metaphysical Center and Book Store, 1122 State St.

The intense and exotic smell of incense adds to the mystical atmosphere of this store. The books sold here also are mystical, covering subjects like astrology, I Ching, Christianity, Hinduism, and metaphysics, which is the branch of philosophy dealing with the ultimate nature of existence, reality, and experience. The posters, cards, calendars, records and tapes sold here hold to themes focusing on different or unusual concepts of life.

Special events also are held here, including speakers, to psychic readings and spiritual healings.

- Books Unlimited, 1215 Cornwall Ave.

You can find this shop by following your nose, as it is near the Cookie Cafe. This book store is stocked with only new books. They sell several books on art and humor, but the literature section is probably the strongest collection in the store. The selection of reference books is good, and the children’s section is large and fun to browse through.

Books Unlimited offers a special order service direct from the publisher to customers, and sells cards and stationery, too.

- Bristol Antiques, 310 W. Holly.

This store is a good source of rare and hard-to-find books. Several interesting old books such as a set of Bret Hart works, copyright 1906, are displayed among many antiques.

Several paperbacks of more recent date also are sold. Most of these are either romance novels or science fiction books, but some books of literature and poetry also are carried.

For antique collectors, a large set of books on that subject also is stocked.

- King Arthur’s Book Shoppe, 1824 Cornwall Ave.

Walking into this store seems like entering another world, where dragons lurk behind corners and unwary shoppers are slashed with broadswords.
Actually, most of the excitement in this store is within the hundreds of science fiction and fantasy books lining the walls. Both new and used books are sold, along with some valuable first editions. A large collection of comic books fills several boxes in one room.

As headquarters for the local "Dr. Who" Fan Club, they stock most of the books from that popular series. They also carry several other series along the fantasy and escapist literature lines.

Buttons, calendars, and photo books from movies, such as "Blade Runner," also are sold.

  The specialty of this store is used books. Michael's has an impressive selection of books in all fields. Philosophy, ethnic studies, photography, and business and technology are a few of the categories of books they stock.
  Their science fiction collection is extensive, containing almost every author available, from Issac Asimov to John Wyndham.
  You also can sell your books here for cash, or trade them for some of their books. Students sometimes can sell text books here if they can't sell them on campus.

- The Paperback Place, 511 Wilson.
  Although it is a little bit out of the way for some, this store in Fairhaven is well worth the trip. The store actually is a converted garage, filled with thousands of used paperbacks.
  Owner Sue Lorentz said they sell every kind of paperback book. Most of these books are romance novels, popular fiction, westerns or mysteries. This would be a good place to find a Sidney Sheldon potboiler or a horror-thriller by Stephen King.
  The paperbacks are sold one-half of their original price, but if you trade in some of your books, the price is lowered to one-fifth.
- Village Books, 1210 11th.
  According to part-owner Dee Robinson, this Fairhaven book store has a little of everything. Books on technology, history, art and computers are sold here. The strongest collections are the women's studies and the children's sections.
  Only new books are sold, and sometimes authors come here to sign their books for customers.
  The most unusual aspect of this store is its magazine selection. "It isn't the largest in Bellingham, but it's unique because these magazines aren't offered elsewhere," Robinson said. Some of these include the "Yoga Journal," "Zoom," and a French women's magazine, "Elle."
- Walden Books, Cornwall and Magnolia.
  A crisp aroma of new books pervades Walden's. Current national best-sellers are stocked here, and a just-published section is filled with new books. The magazine selection is large, carrying all the major publications.
  The reference and social sciences sections are good, and there are several interesting books on photography, including many books by Ansel Adams, and the popular "Hunks" book by the editors of "Playgirl" magazine.
  The other book stores in Bellingham include:
  The Firs Book Store, 4605 Cable Griggs, 120 E. Holly
  Quest Book Store, 115 Unity
  Unity Metaphysical Book and Gift Center, 2200 F.
  Great Northern Books, 1306 Railroad

Erica Gast
Above: “Two Lines of Oblique”
George Rickey.
Top Right: “Heron” by Phillip McCracken.
Located at the Bellingham Museum of history and art.
Right: “Conference Table” by Tom McClelland. Located at Boulevard Park.

Art Around Bellingham

September 1984 • Klipsun 31
Once, not so very long ago, a violin player was traveling through the wilderness of Africa. On his first night in the jungle he pitched up a tent under a large tree. Suddenly he saw a large, hairy, poisonous-looking spider approaching from the corner of his eye. He reached for his violin and started playing Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik." The tones came out beautifully and the spider, who happened to be a fan of Wolfgang Amadeus, mellowed out and returned to his web.

Before he could put his violin away, his life was threatened by an enormous cobra, which slid down the tree above the tent. This time the artist played Brahms. Snakes love Brahms. Soon the cobra was on his way, the notes still ringing in his ears.

Then the violin player heard a hungry growl. He turned around and was eye-to-eye with a lion. The player plucked some Vivaldi—good enough for most of us—but the lion was not impressed.

The artist tried a series of other composers. He played Bach, Handel, Debussy and Tsaikowski until he was almost out of breath. But to no avail. The lion grabbed him by the collar and wolfed him down in one bite.

His belly filled, the lion took off and a few minutes later ran into an elephant, who had heard the unusual concert and wondered where he could find the violin player. He asked the lion.

The king of the jungle stopped and cupped his hand behind his ear. "Eh?" he said.

—an Israeli anecdote

The fine arts have survived at the whim of affluent societies for centuries. As civilizations flourished so did the arts. Today the number of fine artists is growing rapidly. New York alone is the residence for 60,000 to 70,000 visual artists more than the entire Renaissance period.

Do Western Washington's artists find the support from society to live and work as professionals?

Ron Rondello has a partnership in a guitar shop in the Fairhaven district. Steve Johnson is a free-lance photographer in Port Townsend. John Zylstra works at Western's art department as an instructional technician.

When someone is hopelessly struggling, I tend to think there's something wrong with the musician, not the audience."

—Ron Rondello
Classical Guitar Player

As varied as their jobs may seem, these graduates from Western have one thing in common. They majored in the arts and are surviving as artists.
First and foremost artists, they have had to compromise in different ways to meet the cost of living, because just being a musician, painter or sculptor didn’t pay the bills.

When Rondello, 34, graduated in 1980 with a degree in classical guitar performance, he played in restaurants around town. He soon discovered he couldn’t make a living that way. He got together with David Feingold, a classical guitar instructor at Western, and decided to start a business. Several months later, in March 1983, they opened the Harris Avenue Music Store, selling acoustic instruments and sheet music.

But Rondello’s own guitar has not disappeared into the closet. “I enjoy the work as a shopowner, but I still practice the guitar everyday,” he said. “I am satisfied I can do both, without having the pressure to practice as I did in school. I have reached a point where I enjoy it. I am addicted to it.”

Rondello has even continued to play for local audiences. He frequently performs at the Dos Padres and Primo Provare restaurants, and in Sudden Valley.

“The opportunities are definitely out there,” Rondello said. “When someone is hopelessly struggling, I tend to think there’s something wrong with the musician, not with the audience. We live in a musical, musical society.”

Rondello generates his income from his performances, sales in the store and private guitar lessons. His teaching helps him regard his own music more objectively. He makes continuing progress in his art, he said.

“I have a love for music,” said Rondello, who has played folk, rock and jazz since he was 15 and classical economics classes, before this became the trend, McIntyre said. After graduation Pettus moved to the East Coast where she opened a business combining her interests and education. She now advises museum gift stores on inventory purchases and helps them reflect the character of their exhibitions. Her company is a “thriving success,” McIntyre said.

Instead of starting a business to generate income, one also can reduce the cost of living and survive as an artist. That’s what painter Steve Johnson did.

After Johnson graduated from Western in 1969, he spent several months in the wilderness on the Olympic Peninsula, where he took an interest in wilderness conservation and photography. When he returned to the city, Johnson found himself dividing his time between photography, oil painting and odd household and maintenance jobs.

“In the beginning I had a traumatic time switching from one to the other,” he said. “I had to make a living, but I was also an artist. I had to balance the two. I have never regretted my decision.”

“Just think of all those millions of American homes that have at least four walls on which there could be a piece of art. There are too many empty walls.”

—Steve Johnson
Painter/photographer

Steve Johnson hopped trains from Seattle to Los Angeles to do the photography for “There Among the Sacrificed,” a poetry-travel journal. Johnson (top right) with poets Jim Tordoff (top middle) and Finn Wilcox (top left) in Fresno.
other," Johnson said. "I would start a painting and suddenly a more urgent photography job would come up. Being involved with that job meant I simply couldn't touch my painting. Eventually I got that mental block out of my mind. Now I can work on a painting one day and on another project the next."

Johnson, who shares a two-bedroom farm cottage near Port Townsend with his partner, Barbara Morgan, and their 8-year-old son, Jeremiah, earns up to a mere $2,000 a year. Johnson and Morgan milk goats twice a day in return for their accommodation, which is part of a larger property.

Most of Johnson's income comes from his photography. Last year he furnished the enlarged photographs for exhibitions during the National Fishermen's Conference in Seattle. The $450 assignment was his "biggest job ever." Besides taking on photography work and contributing the photographs to a poetry-travel book Here Among the Sacrificed, (for which Johnson hopped trains with the hobos his poet friends wrote about), Johnson shows his oil paintings and photo prints at fairs and exhibitions and in galleries and restaurants. But it's hardly ever worthwhile.

"I recently had an exhibition of my photographs," Johnson said. "I sold four of my prints at $50 a piece, but it cost me $300 to put up the show. Those expenses are more than what we can afford."

He ascribes his low sales in part to the lack of society's support for visual arts. "Just think of all those millions of American homes that have at least four walls on which there could be a piece of art," Johnson said. "There are too many empty walls."

Johnson spends up to seven years on an oil painting. He charges only $20 to $50 for a piece on which he works three weeks. And still people come up to him and expect him to practically give his art away, he said. "A lot of people somehow think the artist should feel honored if they put one of his paintings on their wall," Johnson said.

Many fine artists long for more support from the society they live in. "Every artist feels disappointment with their own culture's appreciation of the arts," said Gene Vike, chairman of Western's art department. It's unfortunate such cultural activities aren't a natural by-product of society's way of life, he said.

"If you asked me: 'Who is the most successful artist in this country?' I would probably have to answer: 'Walt Disney,'" Vike said.

Artists have a couple of choices, Vike continued. He or she can seek a teaching profession with a college or university or "hang out their shingle and get started."

The artist may find himself pumping gas for a while, but those are ways he can finance himself before getting established and gaining credibility in his work," Vike said.

"The artist may find himself pumping gas for a while, but those are ways he can finance himself before getting established and gaining credibility."

—Gene Vike, Chairman of Western's Art department
Michelangelo was a top commercial artist in his days. He was paid to do his art and had his clients' wishes to deal with.”

—Saul Nesbitt
Artist in Residence at Western

Vike and McIntyre distinguish the true fine artist from the artist who will go into art-related areas.

“When you are an artist you feel you have to do your art. If you don’t work with it that particular day you feel you have completely wasted that day,” McIntyre said.

“Society needs a whole spectrum of aesthetic decorations such as commercial illustrations, signs, advertisements or graphic designs,” Vike said. “A lot of artists end up in the applied arts area.”

Society is also becoming more interested in the arts, Vike claimed. He has seen the number of art galleries grow in the last decade and Art 101 fills five or six classes each quarter, even though it is no longer a general university requirement, he said.

“I think it is kind of a knee-jerk reaction to the influence of the computer and technology age,” Vike said. “There is a feeling of disorientation and the individual has a growing need for personal identity and self-expression. People want to participate. Look at all the murals that sprout up on the sides of buildings in large urban areas.”

Saul Nesbitt, Western's visiting industrial designer and artist-in-residence from New York, agrees, but for a different reason.

“Through automation the work week has become smaller and smaller,” he said. “We're practically down to a 37-and-a-half hour work week and more people are using their extra time to get involved in the arts.”

Nesbitt, who is also a sculptor, has worked in commercial art since 1938. He sees little chance for the fine artist to survive, because his audience is too select.

“In commercial art you communicate with masses of people,” he said. “You are restricted by the specifications of your assignment. In fine arts you do it to please yourself. Michelangelo, for instance, was a top commercial artist in his days, not a fine artist. He was paid to do his art and had his clients' wishes to deal with.”

Being a fine artist can be an insecure occupation. In 1981, the Census Bureau reported that the median income for a visual artist under 29 was only $4,700 a year, and for 30 and older, $8,600. In comparison, a police officer in Bellingham makes $20,460 a year and the average public school teacher in Washington state makes $21-22,000 a year.

Zylstra, who graduated in 1975 with a master's degree in fine arts from Cranbrook University, Michigan, was concerned about the economic stagnation during the late 70s. While being employed as a house painter in Whatcom County, he decided to get a bachelor's degree in education. To Zylstra this was the only way to stay close to his art.

“There are two sides to being an artist,” he said. “Some will say it's a gift. In many ways, however, it's more like a curse. When you are a true artist you have to do your art. There's a part in you that dies if you don't do it.”

Zylstra got a job as an instructional technician with Western in 1983.
This (spring) quarter is the first real opportunity for me to do my art work," he said. "Previously I had only one hour a month to spend on sculpting. Now I get up to 20 a hours a week."

Zylstra calls his work "site specific." His sculptures have a lifetime of half an hour to three years. He sponsors his art by investing part of his income in materials. With an annual salary of $14,350, Zylstra no longer has to worry about a struggle for survival. But there was time when he had to choose between food and art, he said.

"On a few occasions I made the decision to skip a few meals and buy materials," he said. "But I never really starved.

"The motivating force was the emotion, the curse. You get the feeling that if you don't finish this or that particular part of the art work, it starts to gnaw at you."

Besides using half of his house as an art studio, Zylstra spends 10-20 percent of his pay on art materials. The 11-11-17 foot sculpture he is now working on will be finished in another three months. When it is completed he will charge anywhere between $4,000 to $20,000, depending on transportation costs and the amount of red tape (in case the State of Washington were the purchaser).

Zylstra said his situation is a good balance between meeting the cost of living and pursuing the fine arts. "The educational system is the largest support system for the arts," he said. "It's really the best solution for artists."

American society, however, is not the most supportive. Other countries are more concerned with the position of the artist, such as the Netherlands, Zylstra said. Holland has extended subsidy programs for visual artists. They receive grants, housing and studio space and their works are shown in government-sponsored museums and galleries.

"There is little respect for artists in this country," said Larry Hanson, sculpture instructor at Western. "Most people think only weirdos involve themselves in art."

In France, being an artist is a legitimate and prestigious occupation. The artist is a respected member of society, Hanson said.

"In America artists tend to band together in little isolated communities usually in the larger cities," he added. "They all know each other, help each other out and hire each other for maintenance work and other jobs that will provide the artists with an income."

Hanson, who spent two years as guest teacher at California State University in Los Angeles, lived in the downtown Los Angeles, "artist community" for two years.

"Most artists are in their thirties and practically live from month to month," he said. "The life style is very unconventional and if you have a family you shouldn't be in that situation."

Even though many artists in cities like Los Angeles have to compromise in the same ways that Rondello, Johnson and Zylstra have, Hanson said "you can't be a professional artist in place like the Northwest.

"If you want to make a living as an artist you have to move," he said.

On the other hand Hanson is optimistic about the growing interest in the arts.

"As we are slowly moving into a high-tech era, society will reach back to its roots. It will value the human warmth it can feel from hand-made art."
Indian Art: Tradition and Turmoil
by Shelley Nicholl

The Lummi community carved this totem pole which stands near the edge of the reservation.

To look at Lummi Indian Jules James, an observer might not think he is a traditional Indian artist. His permed black hair and tinted glasses suggest more modern ideas. Appearance aside, James carves Lummi legends as his predecessors did, despite problems facing Indian art today.

Jules and his brothers, Dale and Douglas, carve in a variety of mediums. They make traditional totem poles, usually in cedar, cedar masks and bone carvings, and also apply their talents to more modern forms such as two-dimensional drawings, glass etchings and medallions.

Another traditional Indian art-form is beadwork. Lummi Indian Mary Cagey, beads necklaces, earrings, chokers and hairpieces. She also applies beaded designs to the traditional Indian costumes she makes for her husband and herself, used in Indian ceremonies. Cagey adds an Indian flavor to shawls, small carvings and knitted caps, socks and mittens.

Lummi art is influenced strongly by Coastal Salish art and is similar to Alaskan art, which is more refined. Although mediums vary, many of the designs are similar. Traditionally, Indian art uses animal forms, especially those native to the area. For the Lummi, animals which inhabit the coastal area are most often drawn upon: eagles, ravens, wolves, killer whales, owls, seals, frogs, hawks, otters and salmon. Also, the mythical Thunderbird frequents their art. Further north, sometimes stylized human or spirit faces are used since fewer animals are available to influence the art.

When carving or doing two-dimensional art, Jules said, the different animals and birds can be difficult to identify. The styles depend on the clan, but usually the Thunderbird and the eagle are similar; both have a hook on the snout and plumage above the head. The hawk has an extra curve on the snout and no plumage. The bear and the wolf can look similar as well, Jules said, but the wolf has a longer snout.

Cagey said she uses coastal designs in her beadwork, but also creates her
ally use. Cedar is used a great deal in poles and masks, but because of government regulations, the artists no longer can go into the surrounding forests and take as many trees as they once could. Also the government has clear-cut some of the nearby forests, Jules explained.

“This strikes at the heart of Indian country,” he said. Not only do they lose the cedar for carving, but they also lose the animals familiar to the forest which they depend on. Many Indians have to scan the beaches for cedar logs. “We feel regulated... restricted. We’re always trespassing. It intimidates our culture.”

Cagey is not as affected by the forest problems as much as the James’, but is restrained by the government when it comes to one of the more prestigious art symbols: eagle feathers. Killing eagles is illegal so now no one can make use of them. In the past eagle feathers were a prominent part of jewelry and masks.

Cagey also said she has problems getting antique cut glass beads which she favors, but can get other beads in Tacoma or on the Yakima reservation. The shells and bone she uses have become more expensive and harder to obtain.

However, Indian art has other ways to express Lummi legends. Two-dimensional art is becoming more popular, Jules said. It is an easier form of expression because materials are more accessible.

Totem poles are still carved, but less frequently. The James’ carved a pole last April for Senator Warren G. Magnuson. The pole incorporates two Lummi legends having a modern connotation.

The first legend concerns the 200-mile wide salmon fishing zone Magnuson set up in his efforts to protect the salmon in Puget Sound.

Jules voice softened when he recited one of the Lummi legends which is carved into the pole: A long time ago some men were out in the ocean in their canoe, searching for food, when they got lost in the thick fog. Then, they saw Salmon Woman, sometimes called Fog Woman, and she filled their canoe with salmon. She sang a song for them which lifted the fog, and they recognized their way. The men promised Salmon Woman they would not abuse their privilege to take salmon out of the ocean. But the men took too many fish and Salmon Woman was displeased. She called back her salmon children into the rivers where they were born and allowed them to go into the ocean only part of the year. This is why to this day the salmon always return to their spawning ground and never spend the whole year in the ocean.

The other legend in the pole also shows how legends can reflect modern political concerns. It represents Magnuson’s salmon management act.

Again, Jules took the role of story-teller: According to legend, Bear’s wife was pregnant which meant he couldn’t hunt or fish because birth is held in great respect, so his brother, Raven hunted for him. But, Bear was restless and decided to go up the river and fish. Everytime he caught a salmon, the salmon died. He took a chinook. He took a sockeye. He took a coho and he took a chum before Raven finally stopped him. The only salmon saved was the steelhead. This is why when steelhead spawn, they don’t die and all the other salmon do.

Totem poles are used for other reasons than commemorating an important person. The most common pole is the clan pole, outlining the roots of a family. Jules said when he is commissioned to do a pole for someone outside the clan, he must be careful not to give them a story that isn’t their own. Traditionally every family has particular story which shouldn’t be applied to anyone else.

Other poles are the spiritual pole acting as a guardian spirit, and a potlatch pole, made in accordance with the Indian’s potlatch ceremony.

“They may be superb artists, but they’re not Indian. It doesn’t do the Indians any good, when we’ve been doing it all our lives.”

—Jules James

Poles also are used to reveal the dark side of a person or family. The community will carve and raise a pole in front of a person’s home who has wronged someone else in some way—stealing for example. The pole remains until the person apologizes. During a special potlatch ceremony, the pole is taken down, but if the person knocks down his own pole, he is further disgraced.

These legends surrounding Indian art are passed down by the elders of the tribe. Dale began carving 15 years ago under the direction of Morrie Alexander, a Lummi elder. Three years later, Dale encouraged Jules to join him. Their brother, Doug, began to work with them five years ago.

Learning how to carve does not involve lessons; it is a skill gained as it is practiced. The elder master is only a guide, but a new artist must earn his elder’s respect before he considers himself a true artist, Jules said.

One of the most important techniques to learn is consistency in the artwork, Jules said. As the artist carves out the animal figures, all the lines must be continuous. The lines cannot break because a two-dimensional figure should be able to be applied to a three-dimensional figure. No parts should be floating, he stressed.

Jules also said his art has spiritual influences. When making totem poles or two-dimensional art, the artist can carve what a person wants, but when carving smaller projects,
especially in bone or a horn, the artist doesn't know what he will discover until he finishes. Jules said what's inside reaches out as it comes closer and the artist must be sensitive to what's hidden inside the medium.

**When making totem poles or two-dimensional art, the artist can carve what a person wants, but when carving smaller projects, especially in bone or in a horn, the artist doesn't know what he will discover until he finishes.**

"It's like if I covered your face with clay and then started to carve," he said, "you wouldn't want me to cut off your ear, would you?"

Jules said many new artists don't follow these rules, which are very important to Indian art. The Lummi also are sensitive about non-Indians making Indian art. Jules said, "They may be superb artists, but they're not Indian. It doesn't do the Indians any good, when we've been doing it all our lives."

"You feel like you're on the outside looking in, watching someone else do your art," he said.

Cagey has begun to feel pushed out of her artwork in another way. Competition among Indians selling beadwork has increased so much in the last few years that Cagey finds it difficult to make profits.

Five or six years ago, she said, she used to travel around the state and into British Columbia selling her beaded jewelry and shawls. One weekend in British Columbia, she made about $2,000. "But it's not like that today," she said. And, even though she carries much of her work wherever she goes, she doesn't travel as much as she used to.

The competition is too great and the cost to rent a table at an open market has increased, she said.

Regardless of problems she has had with her artwork, Cagey said, she will continue to make and teach beadwork. "It's something that comes to you and you have to work with it," she said.

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**Practical Native Art**

Some of the finest North American Indian art is made on the Northwest coast of the continent. Here, the combination of the distinct environment and the Indian's culture provide the foundation for their art.

According to Evan M. Mauer's *Native American Heritage*, for the Northwest coast Indians, the "environment was rich enough to allow them to develop a highly structured and complex society in which wealth in goods and objects played a central role."

Their situation was unique because they had a naturally productive environment. This provided them the stability of an agricultural society, even though they were hunters and gatherers, because their main food source, fish, migrated in cyclical patterns similar to a seasonal agricultural harvesting pattern. Fish and berries were such a stable food source that the Indians needed less time to hunt, and had more time to develop a highly refined formal art.

The abundant wood supply on the coast was another advantage. Not only did the forests provide materials for canoes, homes, furniture and tools, but it allowed them to create totem poles and wood carvings which are particular to the coast. Most of their every-day utensils were wood carved.

On the upper-North coast, the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian Indians carved clan crests on all their belongings as a sign of ownership. On the North coast, each clan had its own stylized crest. In making these crests, the Indians developed a very refined type of carving, usually in fairly flat surfaces. Often only the best artists in the tribe would carve the crests and any art used in ceremonies. If it was going to be shown, the Indians wanted it to be the finest work.

Farther south, however, the Kwakiutl felt it was more important for the individual to do the art for himself. Art was more of a personal ritual. Therefore, most of the Kwakiutl art was more energetic because the process of making the art was more important than the final art project.

For whatever reason the art was made, it was an important symbol of wealth for the Indians. Potlatch ceremonies especially were used to display a person's wealth. His status was determined by the amount of goods he could afford to give away at the potlatch; the more he gave away, the better status he would have.

Art also was prevalent in other Indian ceremonies such as dance festivals where the Indians would dress like animals by using wooden masks and costumes. The Indians believed they shared a common soul with the animals' ancestry.

The masks also were used to portray different spirits in the rituals of the Shaman, the Indian medicine man. The art of the Shaman was very different from other Indian art. Based more on spiritual than real forms, it was harder for other Indians to understand. The Shaman used carved, wooden rattles and masks in his secret art.

Another prominent art form on the coast is basket weaving. This probably began for utilitarian purposes but developed into a type of art used for presents and display.

Beadwork was found mostly in the interior, but as material became available, it also was adopted by coastal Indians. Weaving and beadwork were done by the women and wood carvings were done by the men, but the men would make the designs for both.

The Northwest coast Indian art has changed a great deal because of the explorers who brought metal tools for the Indian carvers, the settlement and development along the coast and the fluctuating market for the art. The coast still yields most of the richest Indian art in North America.