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KLIPSUN

SPORTS SPECIAL
Health, Fitness and Fun in the Northwest
EDITOR'S LETTER

The January/February issue looks at health, fitness and fun winter months. Holistic medicine is back in vogue, and Bellinghamsters are getting back to nature, watching what they eat, exercising regularly and keeping their bodies healthy.

In "Natural Medicine Takes Thyme," writer Stephanie Bixby examines natural healthcare methods including herbal remedies and massage, which are options to "modern medicine."

The state has an abundance of winter playgrounds, from ski to sea. KLIPSUN looks at three "board" sports: cross-country skiing, snowboarding and surfing.

Cross-country skiing is a favorite winter pastime. Its popularity now rivals that of downhill skiing. Journey to the Mt. Baker area with writer Tom Davis as he humorously contrasts cross-country with the "wimpy" sport of downhill.

Unbeknownst to most, several of the world's top competitors in snowboarding, a relatively new sport, live and train in Whatcom County. In "The Best of the Best," writer Jeff Galbraith talks with one young champion and explores the how-to's of riding a frozen wave.

A few hardy surfers inhabit the waves of Washington's coast most weekends. Though secretive about top surfing spots, several students show and tell what catching a wave is all about in "Killer Waves: Surfing the 'Ever-Wet' State," also by Galbraith.

To research the cover story "Skydiving: A Different High," writer Vicki Stevens took the plunge and jumped from a plane at 8,200 feet. Now that's participatory journalism.

On the cover: Two skydivers float toward earth in the fading twilight at Snohomish Parachute Club near Everett. In the accompanying article, "Skydiving: A Different High," writer Vicki Stevens explores the sport with several Western students and other enthusiasts, beginning on page 7.

Cover photo by Pete Kendall
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Holistic (organic) medicine has been around for centuries, but because it is time consuming and requires careful attention, many do not consider its possibilities. Medicine first began in the kitchen with soothing herbs, but natural remedies are gradually dying out. Most people find it easier to go to the doctor and get a prescription than to burn wood for charcoal, buy herbs or prepare garlic tea.

Medicinal herbs are primarily used to prevent the progression of ailments rather than to cure illnesses currently in the body, said Linda Quintana, a local herbalist and owner of Wonderland Tea Spice and Herb Shop in downtown Bellingham.

There are, of course, skeptics who question the validity and safety of using natural remedies in lieu of drugs. Medical doctors and holistic medicine practitioners often do not agree on methods for curing ailments, "But we tolerate each other," said Dr. Wade Henrichs, of Western's Student Health Services.

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- Linda Quintana

"Most drugs are made from herbs and teas. But in making a drug, an ingredient which prevents addiction is taken out of the herbs and teas to make the drug more concentrated," making it potentially more addictive.

Quintana cited other reasons people come to her, including unsatisfactory results from medical doctors and a desire for more control over their own bodies. Holistic medicine is also a less expensive alternative to drugs and there are no adverse side effects from herbal remedies.

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Drugs cure health problems, but they can also affect the entire body — not just the problem area. They sometimes affect certain parts of the body beneficially and other parts adversely.

Quintana makes custom formulas from herbs grown in her herb garden in Demming and in herb farms along the West Coast. Her herbal remedies are sold in the forms of tea, capsules (powdered herbs) and tinctures (extracts of herbs).

To eliminate the risk of getting poisonous wild herbs, it is advisable to purchase herbs from herb stores or herbalists.

Another pathway to natural health is through massage. Many experts are convinced massage has healing qualities that benefit the circulatory system.
and regulate the water content of the body. It increases sweating and adrenaline secretion, which enables the body to fight allergies, pain and infections.

"Massage is enjoying a resurgence in respectability," said Peter Young, a local massage practitioner who works with Riggs.

Some of his clients seek massage for pleasure and others for health reasons. Through massage the patient is curing himself without a medical doctor or drugs, Young said.

Agatha and Calvin Thrash, both medical doctors, have written books including, "Home Remedies: Hydrotherapy, Massage, Charcoal, and Other Simple Treatments" (1981), and "Natural Remedies: A Manual" (1983). They state a foot massage can cure the hiccups, and back rubs activate the immune system, which can help cure the flu.

Two of the oldest and most effective remedies to common ailments are charcoal and garlic. Charcoal is one of the best antidotes for poisoning and intestinal infections. When charcoal tablets are swallowed, the sponge-like quality absorbs poisons quickly before they enter the bloodstream.

"The medical field commonly uses charcoal in cases of poisoning," Henrichs said.

Charcoal placed on the skin is effective in curing ant, mosquito and poisonous spider bites, bee stings and snake bites. Ingested charcoal tablets cure aspirin and mushroom poisoning. It can also cure sinusitis by removing toxins from the body.

Quintana advocates the use of charcoal, but admits most people do not know about its healing properties. She sells it primarily in tablet form for people with stomach ailments.

All studies show charcoal is harmless when ingested, inhaled and when it comes in contact with the skin. But briquettes used on outdoor grills are not safe to consume because they contain dangerous fillers and chemicals.

Charcoal can be bought in tablet form or made more potently at home from charred fireplace wood. The most common present day charcoal is made from coals, peat, sawdust, wood char, paper mill wastes, bone and coconut shells.

Like charcoal, garlic has combated and prevented illnesses for centuries. According to the Thrashes, garlic helps in curing coughs, colds, sore throats, allergies, headaches, dizziness and many other ailments. It reduces stomach problems by sedating the stomach and intestines. Garlic tea helps relieve the stuffiness of sinusitis.

Henrichs makes and sells garlic capsules and adds parsley to mask the odor. She said they are a popular item. Garlic is available in tea and pill form, in tinctures (garlic oil extract), or the whole garlic can be eaten raw or cooked.

"The sulfur content in garlic is therapeutic," she said.

Henrichs agreed garlic is a proven health aid. He saw it firsthand recently when he volunteered to work in Nepal's Himalaya mountains. There, garlic was commonly used to treat illnesses.

Henrichs noticed mixed reactions from the Nepalese regarding modern medicine.

"At the clinic, about half willingly took modern drugs, but the other half politely said, "no,"" he said.

Instead, they sought out the local medicine man or a monk who conducted ceremonies in which old-fashioned Nepal remedies were used.

Some Westerners seem to be following the Nepalese' lead.

A common thread runs through the beliefs of most holistic practitioners and advocates of natural remedies: It is healthier to take the natural route and by all means feel free to experiment, but in cases of serious illness, it is advisable to see a medical doctor.

### Two of the oldest and most effective remedies to common ailments are charcoal and garlic.

- **Colds**
  - Garlic tea; rose hip tea; sage tea; wintergreen tea.
- **Flu**
  - Eder tea; mint tea; wintergreen tea; back rubs.
- **Hangovers**
  - Thyme tea.
- **Headaches**
  - Garlic tea; marjoram tea; thyme tea; valerian tea; soak feet in hot water; apply light fingertip pressure on each side of the neck; rest in a darkened room with an ice pack on the forehead; exercise; avoid foods to which you may be allergic.
- **Hiccups**
  - Catnip tea; foot massage; lay on your left side for 5 to 10 minutes; apply light fingertip pressure on each side of the neck; deep breathing.
- **Insomnia**
  - Marjoram tea; valerian tea; hops; mistletoe.
- **Memory Improvement**
  - Fennel tea; sage tea.
- **Motion Sickness**
  - Ginger root tea.
- **Nausea**
  - Basil tea; mint tea.
- **Pain Killer**
  - Ginseng tea; hops.
- **Sinusitis**
  - Garlic tea; peppermint tea; charcoal tablets; massage the face; avoid cold, damp conditions.
- **Stomach Aches**
  - Anise tea; bay tea; catnip tea; cinnamon tea; garlic tea; mint tea; hops; charcoal tablets; abdomen massage; eat slowly, limit liquid intake during meal as this will dilute digestive juices, and exercise after eating to increase digestion.
- **Stress and Nervousness**
  - Chamomile tea; lemon verbena tea; rosemary tea; valerian tea; mistletoe; cola nut; daily exercise; hot bath; massage.

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**Another pathway to natural health is through massage. Many experts are convinced massage has healing qualities that benefit the circulatory system.**
Ryan Tomich has his head in the clouds and his feet on the ground.

Tomich, 22, a Western junior, is a certified flight instructor and teaches flight "ground" schools for Cascade Flight School at Bellingham International Airport.

Grounded at the airport for yet another day because of lingering dense fog, he paces like a caged animal waiting to be set free, staring into the mist as if he could wish it away.

In Levi's and a leather flight jacket, his young appearance belies his technical knowledge of flying.

"The best thing about flying is it takes a lot of practice and a lot of effort," Tomich said. "That's what makes it a challenge. It's not something everyone can do.

"It's insane to think that people are going to pay me to fly an airplane, so I might as well pursue it..." he said, laughing.

Tomich has not always been set on flying.

He graduated from Issaquah High School in 1985 with no clear career goals, so he decided to postpone college. He passed up two golf scholarships, choosing instead to work as a law firm messenger in Seattle for a year while exploring career options. The decision shocked his mother and some friends, who assumed Tomich would attend college immediately. But his father, a Boeing engineer, did not question his decision.

Ironically, the January 1986 explosion of the space shuttle Challenger prompted Tomich to look into aviation as a career.

"In a very unpleasant way it led me toward (aviation). I will never know why," he said.

He received good reports from professional pilots and airline representatives who said the field is on an upswing. This prompted him to enroll in the aviation program at Big Bend Community College in Moses Lake. At Big Bend, Tomich flew, trained and studied with 100 other student aviators. He earned a Commercial Instrument License (a commercial license with an instrument rating), a private pilot's license, a flight instructor rating and certification to fly multi-engine planes. At the same time, he completed a two-year Associate degree in arts and applied sciences.

"(Aviation) is the only kind of career that interests me at all," Tomich said. "The idea of sitting down behind a desk for eight hours a day; I can't do that. I fall asleep whenever I start studying. I've gotta' be up and around and movin'. A lot of hands-on type of thing. That's why aviation is absolutely perfect for me."

Tomich wants to become a commercial airline pilot someday. To achieve that goal, he must gain more flight experience and complete a four-year degree.

He hopes his degree in speech and broadcasting makes him more marketable to the big airlines.

"My heart's not in (my degree)," he said. "I wish it were."

He would rather be flying.

By attending Western, Tomich sacrificed opportunities to pursue a full-time flight instructor position and rack up flight experience. This has slowed his advance through the ranks of pilots.

"I really don't want to be in school, which is a problem," he said. "It's tough to sit back and see all my friends that are instructors now, back in Moses Lake, out there getting all these hours and getting paid. It's tough to sit back and look at myself who's only instructing part-time and going to school."

He knows there are many challenges and sacrifices encountered on the way to the top.

Tomich said the initial excitement could begin to wear thin in the first few
years, but the high earning potential and benefits make piloting attractive to him. Young pilots are stationed in undesirable and sometimes remote locations for their first five years.

"You're just a little puppet that moves around and just goes wherever they tell you to go," he said, moving his hand like a puppet above the table. "As far as trying to establish a home, a family, anything like that, it's almost impossible. So you just put your life on hold until you get enough experience behind you to where you can say, 'Okay, now I'd like to live here for the rest of my life.'"

Tomich is determined to succeed in the competitive world of aviation. He plans to fly for a commuter airline before moving up to the majors.

Good pilots must believe they can never know enough and keep striving to learn more, he said.

"Like a lot of jobs, it's not just skills though," he explained. "You have to have luck and know the right people."

The weather at the airport has improved; now Sunday afternoon, the weak northwest sun has burned through the clouds, dispersing some of the haze covering the airport.

"I can't wait to get up in the air again," Tomich said, running his fingers through his short, brown hair as he strode over to a small white and orange Cessna 180.

Walking around the two-passenger plane, Tomich methodically conducts a preflight inspection. Bolts, pins, wings, wheels, fuel, oil and controls all get a thorough once-over.

Taxiing down the runway for a southern departure, Tomich goes through his checklist while making sure the two dozen gauges, controls, buttons and readouts on the plane's green dash are operating correctly.

As the plane gains speed on takeoff, the spinning propeller and crackling radio make the cockpit sound like the inside of a food processor.

Tomich guides the aircraft over the city and Western's campus, eastward toward Lake Whatcom and then westward toward Lummi Island and the San Juans. The pilot is constantly aware of everything inside and outside the plane, checking meters, altitude and traffic.

Farmlands form an erratic patchwork quilt effect on the land below, while neighborhoods resemble cardboard mini movie sets waiting for Godzilla to stomp on them.

Circling to the north, he gives the airport a wide berth before flying over Interstate-5 to line up for a landing approach. Descending slowly, Tomich skillfully maneuvers the plane to the asphalt where the wheels touch and then grab. He makes it look easy.

Although flying can be dangerous, Tomich is not overly concerned by the potential risks.

"Statistically, I have more chance of being killed on the way to the airport than I do in an airplane," he explained. He has had his share of close calls though, he admitted with a sheepish grin.

During a solo takeoff, Tomich crossed the path of a Boeing 747, smashing into the huge jet's wake turbulence, which slammed his small Beechcraft plane 20 feet up and down in an instant.

Large airplanes create violent turbulence, called the wing-tip vortices. Tomich likened it to a horizontal tornado that comes off the wing on each side.

As his briefcase hit the ceiling and the flight microphone dislodged, Tomich fought to regain control of his plane and avoid a crash.

"It was really scary. It was just a mistake on my part. I was young and naive," he said, rolling his gray-blue eyes.

"I think that if I ever did crash, I could survive, 'cause I really do not want to die now," he said. "I'd have to die at impact 'cause I'd put up a good fight if I did make it."
the propellers of the Cessna-182 whir like a loud blender. The plane rumbles down the runway and the ground slowly is replaced by the sunstreaked, snow-covered Cascades and the majestic beauty of Mount Baker and Mount Rainier as the plane ascends. At 8,200 feet, the hatch opens and a rush of biting cold air gusts through the plane. The skydiver steps onto the step and jumps into the vastness of the sky.

Flying through the crisp air, the skydiver thinks Pandora's box was never opened. Once the chute opens, the sun, making its descent in a splash of blood reds and subtle oranges, adds a perfect backdrop to the solitude of the ride to the ground.

"Almost anyone can skydive," said Al Carroll, an instructor at Snohomish Parachute Center (SPC), the largest parachute drop zone in the Pacific Northwest. "You don't even have to be in great physical shape for this sport. You just have to be a little bit crazy and have a lot of patience waiting for the Northwest gray to burn off."

"When I was going up in the plane, all I thought was 'I'm going to die.' When I had to jump out of the plane and looked at the ground all I could say was 'oh shit' 'oh shit'."

- Tonya Erickson

Bob Stratton, part owner of the Spokane Parachute Club, said, "It's a high, a real high."

Two different programs are available for beginning skydivers: static-line that leads to skydiving and actual skydiving.

The static-line program consists of five hours of classes that prepare the student to jump solo from 3,000 feet while attached to an eight-foot static-line. The line automatically releases the parachute immediately after the jumper has cleared the plane. Talking to the ground crew by radio, the student steers the chute down to the landing mark.

It usually takes 10 static-line jumps before the student can skydive.

Western sophomore Tony Erickson jumped static-line at the Spokane Parachute Club last August.

"When I was going up in the plane, all I thought was, 'I'm going to die.' When I had to jump out of the plane and looked at the ground all I could say was, 'oh shit' 'oh shit'."

"But on the way down it was so relaxing and so beautiful," she said.

Eric Babbitt, a Western senior, described the sensation as "jumping off
a diving board and waiting to hit the water; only it takes a lot longer to hit."

The other program is tandem jumping. A 20-minute course is required to explain the basic techniques of skydiving and then the student jumps with an instructor. This jump entails actual free falling at 120 mph from 8,000 feet, connected to the instructor at the shoulders and hips by harnesses. At 4,000 feet, the instructor pulls the rip cord to release the parachute and it is a five minute ride to the ground. The

"I can't describe what it is like though. It's like trying to describe good sex to a virgin. Along the same lines you can't explain skydiving to a virgin of the sky."

- Al Carroll

video on the VCR, said there is nothing else like it in society. He explained most things are protected entertainment, like going shopping or to a movie. But jumping from an airplane and free falling is a personal challenge.

"I can't describe what it is like though. It's like trying to describe good sex to a virgin. Along the same lines you can't explain skydiving to a virgin of the sky," he said with a grin, as he reclined on the dilapidated couch at SPC.

Skydiving is not a safe sport Carroll said, but all the foreseeable dangers have been minimized to make it as safe as possible.

Potential jumpers are required to sign waivers that spell out the possible consequences of jumping from a plane at 80 mph. These waivers clearly state death is a possibility, even if everything is done as it is taught.

"I couldn't show my parents the

waivers because I thought they wouldn't let me jump," Benson said with a sly smile. "I almost didn't jump after I read them."

But those waivers don't intimidate the 1500 to 2000 first-time jumpers at SPC every year, said SPC owner Jamey Woodland.

They also do not scare away the approximately 70 first-time jumpers in Spokane each year, Stratton said.

The possibility of the main and reserve chute not opening, breaking bones upon landing and landing in

"You usually land in embarrassing places rather than dangerous places. Like in a field where 30 years of cow doo-doo has built up and you land right in it,"

- Al Carroll

A skydiver packs main and reserve parachute.
dangerous places are all hazards of skydiving.

"Injuries are next to non-existent," Stratton remarked.

With the newer square canopy parachutes, the injury rate at SPC and the Spokane Parachute School has fallen dramatically.

The old, round parachutes were simply a drag device, but the new chutes can actually be steered, Carroll said. The old chutes caused at least one broken leg per month on landing at SPC. The new chutes, in use for four years, have resulted in only one broken ankle.

At the Spokane Parachute School, only one student has fractured an ankle in two years of using the newer chutes.

Five skydivers have died at SPC during their 33 years of operation, Woodland said.

Carroll, stroking his razor stubble, said, "Some people think we are Hell's Angels of the sky. We are not crazy enough to deliberately kill ourselves, but we live life on the edge."

Carroll equated the risks of skydiving with the possibility of buying a can of bad mushrooms at the grocery store and dying. The most dangerous part of skydiving is driving home because you are on such a high, he said.

"You usually land in embarrassing places rather than dangerous places. Like in a field where 30 years of cow doo doo has built up and you land right in it," Carroll joked, as his eyes reverted back to the TV screen.

Skydiving school prices include equipment rentals. First jumps can cost from $95 to $159. Chutes must be packed by a Federal Aviation Administration certified rigger. A flightsuit, helmet, goggles and sometimes boots make up the rest of the gear needed to jump.

Students who buy their own gear may spend about $2500. Once a jumper has his own gear and is past student status, jumping is relatively inexpensive. At SPC, the cost is $1 for every 1000 feet jumped plus a $3 fee. An experienced skydiver can jump from between 12,500 and 13,000 feet without requiring the use of oxygen, Stratton said.

A jumper's hundredth jump signifies graduation from student status and is usually celebrated with the jumper getting a pie smeared in the face and everyone consuming lots of cold beer.

Body positions are the art of skydiving, explained Kelli Bergman, manifestor at SPC, who helps plan the loads for jumps and handles the monies and the waivers.

The physics of it get complicated, but when a human is falling in a horizontal position at 120 mph and straightens into a vertical position, the rate of speed increases to about 200 mph.

"It is true flight," Bergman said as she modeled her new bright yellow flightsuit for her fellow employees.

Other Northwest skydiving locations include Toledo, near Mount St. Helens, Kapowsin, south of Puyallup, and in Vancouver, B.C., at the Abbotsford Parachute Club.

Carroll does not like the term free falling. He said it is not "free" because skydiving is an expensive sport and it is not "falling" because it is flying.

When the fog has burned off, Carroll is probably teaching a "virgin of the sky" his beloved sport, wearing his favorite T-shirt which reads "Skydivers fly: pilots only drive planes through the sky."
Enthusiasts find beauty, relaxation in frozen snowscape

By Tom Davis

We excitedly piled out of the car and gazed at the scene before us, our breath producing clouds of steam that rose above our heads.

Four inches of fresh powder had fallen overnight and the snow crystals sparkled brightly in the sun. The heavy clouds that had dispensed this precious cargo had passed and left behind a brilliant blue sky. Today promised to be one of those ski trips you dream about on frosty fall mornings that mark the transition of seasons.

Our location was the turnoff to White Salmon Road off the Mount Baker Highway, eight miles east of Shuksan. We had parked our car along the shoulder where the road makes a tight switchback to head up to the Mount Baker Ski Area. Even though no other cars were parked here yet, the few parking spots would fill up quickly in the next few hours.

As we strapped on our skis, adjusted our gaiters, hats and poles, we discussed the attributes of deep powder snow. One euphoric member of our group equated skiing in powder to gliding effortlessly across the top of a cloud. Unable to control his excitement any longer, he blasted onto the trail, rounded a corner and disappeared from sight. The rest of us performed a few quick stretching exercises, slipped on our sunglasses and followed in the tracks of our exuberant leader.

Our thin skis glided smoothly over the soft powder snow and my eyes drank in the image of Mount Shuksan, adorned in a fresh gown of white. The insulated stillness of the snow refreshed my college-wearied senses. My mind was free.

Step, glide. Step, glide. This was the rhythm of our journey as we skied down White Salmon Road.

The tranquility of the early morning would eventually disappear as more skiers arrived, but for now we had the beauty and solitude to ourselves.

Cross country skiing has gained widespread popularity during the last decade as downhill lift ticket prices have soared into the stratosphere. For years, only hardy outdoor- and Scandinavian-types donned the lithe, skinny skis and ventured out into the winter forests of the Northwest.

Now it is common to see entire families, toddlers, parents and grandparents enjoying the sport. The popularity of telemarking (cross country's version...
of downhill skiing and racing have also swelled the enthusiastic ranks of cross country skiers.

Yuppies, too, with their REI cards tucked into their pockets, have discovered the sport. Outfitted in their Woolrich wool knickers and Gortex jackets, they climb into Subaru 4 X 4 station wagons and drive to their favorite ski spots.

Cross country skiing is reputed to be a difficult and strenuous sport. This, I found, is only partly true. While it can be extremely challenging and physically demanding, it can also be as easy as a stroll around the block. The choice is yours. A skier has the flexibility to go as fast as he or she wants on a vast variety of terrain. Some areas are extremely hilly and require a good deal of exertion to complete whereas other trails wander gently around a lake shore.

One truth I have learned venturing out on cross country skis is that the earlier in the day you start out, the better the trip you are likely to have. Since most skiers seem to arrive after 11 a.m., it is best to start by 8 or 9 a.m. Early bird skiers are ready to head back when the other skiers are arriving. Starting early has other advantages.

The skies are often clear in the early morning and begin to cloud up as the day progresses. An early start enables you to soak in a few more hours of sunshine and Vitamin D than the late-comers. Also, snow conditions are better in the early morning when the temperatures are cooler. While it may seem nice to ski in the warmth of the afternoon, stopping to sip wine coolers along the trail side, by that time, the snow is usually mushy and makes for slow forward progress.

I still miss the thrills of downhill skiing over moguls the size of Volkswagen Beetles and screaming down a steep slope blinded by the wind. But I don't miss the crowds, the long lift lines or the high-priced ski lift tickets. In order to enjoy the sport of downhill skiing you must be willing to pay an enormous sum of money. And in the end, all you get is frozen buns. For a five-minute swoop down the slope you must endure a chilling 20-minute ride up the chairlift.

The craziest thing about downhill skiing is people eagerly stand in line for the chance to dangle 50 feet up in the air in a folding chair attached to a wobbly cable. Cross country skiers have their skis planted firmly and inexpensively right on the ground where they're supposed to be. We stay warm by moving ever onward — no silly chairlifts for us. The independently-minded cross country skier believes if you cannot get there under your own power then it is not worth seeing. And those that enjoy the finer points of cross country skiing are free to ski wherever the snow allows.

The term 'free' is worth repeating. There's no lift ticket to buy in order to ski down a tranquil logging road.

In fact, equipment is also less expensive to buy or rent for a day's worth of skiing. Valhalla, located in VU 104, rents skis and boots for just under $4 a day. And for the price of a good pair of downhill ski boots, you can buy everything you will need for cross country skiing: skis, bindings, boots and poles.

A few ski shops in Bellingham handle both rental and sales of cross country equipment. They can also provide information on local places to ski and some shops offer lessons.

As the popularity of the sport has grown, capitalism has crept in. There are now ski areas offering marked, groomed trails for cross country skiing. A groomed trail is a wide, flat path packed down with indents or tracks set into the snow. Skiing in tracks is a great way for beginners to get their snow legs. These trails are often easier to ski than logging roads and help you gain some confidence before tackling a more challenging course. A flat, packed path also makes for faster skiing than trudging through four inches of fresh snow. But it also attracts crowds and relieves your wallet of five to 10 greenbacks.

While on occasion I have paid money to ski along a trail with a set track, and have thoroughly enjoyed myself, I still prefer the solitude of a mountain road. Here you can enjoy the scenery without a lot of company and search for animal tracks appearing in the snow banks along the road.

Just like clockwork the clouds moved in, blocking the sun's warmth. Sunglasses were removed and an extra layer of clothing was added. As we skied back to the car, several multi-aged groups passed us on their way in. We greeted each and answered a few questions about the trail conditions. The stillness of the morning was now replaced with the voices and laughter of fellow skiers.

On the drive back towards Shuksan we took notice of several possible ski routes on lower elevation logging roads. As winter approached and the snow level dropped, these roads would be transformed into ideal ski trails.

I felt both tired and refreshed as we dropped back into Bellingham. The day's skiing had drained my body physically but the crisp clean air had rejuvenated my mind. Last week's cluttered memory was gone and I was ready to plunge into the demands this new week would offer.
Through the eyes of the average Western skier, Mount Baker is probably one of the last areas one would expect to find a core of world-class alpine athletes. Yet they are there: snowboarders, floating over powder fields, bouncing from mogul to mogul in rapid-fire motion, launching breath-taking aerials and laying out high-speed curves on Whatcom County’s own little mountain. They are internationally known. They have won the world’s highest titles.

For the unenlightened, the modern sport of snowboarding is the result of years of experimentation, innovation and dedication. It combines elements of skateboarding and surfing, while remaining an activity unto itself. The surf stance is transferred onto a single wood/composite, plastic bottomed, steel-edged board (the same materials used in ski construction), which is mounted with either a tough plastic buckle binding system to accommodate soft leather boots or metal clip-in bindings for use with ski or hard plastic hiking boots.

Mount Baker’s ability to produce world-class snowboarders is not accidental. Its ultra-intense terrain, open-minded management and reputation in the world of snowboarding has created an atmosphere comparable to surfing’s North Shore in Hawaii.

THE BEST OF THE BEST

World-class snowboarder finds perfection in her own back yard

By Jeff Galbraith

Amy Howat, one of the world’s finest snowboarders, frequently can be found enjoying her sport at Mt. Baker.
Western skiers ascending Mount Baker on chairlifts will notice more of "those weird board-ski-things," as many call snowboards, cruising beneath them on the slopes.

Within Baker's snowboarding clan are several who dominate the competitive world of the sport, including 16-year-old Sehome High School student Amy Howat.

In the past few years, Howat, a Bellingham native, has risen to the top of the women's competitive circuit. Snowboarding's increasing popularity is partly due to the exposure and interest generated by local and world-class competitors.

The contests, to which Howat and hundreds of others travel, consist of events in pole-bashing slalom, high speed giant slalom and blurring downhill races. The riders also perform freestyle maneuvers down mogul courses and participate in two events that are exclusive to the sport: the banked slalom, with its bobsled-like effect, and the freestyle/half-pipe.

The half-pipe is a freestyle course comprised of a semi-cylindrical tube that runs downhill on a medium incline with walls that reach vertical on both sides. The riders glide down this structure to ascend each side and soar off the vertical lip. The snowboarders gracefully perform contorted aerials, handplants and airborne rotations. Upon reaching maximum height, riders position themselves to re-enter the half-pipe while maintaining speed for the next wall. The final result is a unique combination of fluidity, grace and aesthetic appeal.

"I think from the day I started snowboarding, I've been out on skis three times. I've sold my boots, I've sold my skis, I've sold my poles."

- Amy Howat

Howat's desire to master all of these events, rather than being proficient in a single discipline, pushes her to constantly improve her skills through hours of practice.

"I want to be the best, all-around," she said.

This desire is best illustrated by her placings last season. In the inaugural year of snowboarding's World Cup, she managed to place second overall and second in the slalom at the first stop in Zaui, Austria. Her school priorities prohibited her from competing in the second event at Bormio, Italy, but she returned to blaze her way into two fifth places in slalom and downhill at the U.S. Open in Stratton, Vermont.

She capped her successful year by walking away with first place in both the slalom and moguls, a fourth place in the downhill and a third place freestyle performance at the Swatch Watch World Championships in Breckenridge, Colorado, the final stop on the tour.

Starting two-and-a-half years ago on a Sims Superlight board (given to her father by Tom Sims, one of the sport's pioneers), she went for informal lessons with Eric Janko and Carter Turk (both sponsored professionals now) and embarked on a commitment to her lifeblood passion.

"I think from the day I started snowboarding, I've been out on skis three times. I've sold my boots, I've sold my skis. I've sold my poles," she said.

Her involvement with the competitive side of the sport began shortly thereafter.

"My first contest was a local mogul contest at Baker and I had to compete against guys like Fulton," (Jeff Fulton, team rider for Sims Snowboards, world-class professional, and head freestyle judge for the 1989 World Cup Tour) Howat said.

She fared much better in her next contest, the world famous Mount Baker Banked Slalom Race. Placing first in this legendary contest, she received the attention of Tom Sims, who offered to
begin supplying her with equipment. Soon after, not having received a board from Sims, she was approached by Mike Olson of Seattle-based GNU Snowboards, who offered her a sponsorship on the spot. She accepted and has had a very positive relationship with GNU.

"There are lots of hot riders who are hot in their own way. That's one of the things I like best about snowboarding, is that you can really express your own personality."

- Amy Howat

ever since, Howat said.

"I got a board from Sims a few weeks later, but my dad took it away from me," she said.

Her first World Championship contest was at the 1987 Breckenridge event, where she didn't perform as well as she hoped.

"It wasn't really a bad experience, but I got screwed over in the half-pipe because I was a no-name, and back then that was really bad," she said. "If no one knew who you were, even if you were really hot, there was no way you could qualify," she said.

In the slalom, she was in first place, even though she was riding a board mounted with men's bindings which were too large for her feet. Subsequently, she came out and fell midway through her run.

The group responsible for nurturing her rise to the upper echelon of women's snowboarding is an internationally known group of diehards know as the "MBHC," the Mount Baker Hard Cores.

The original members include the aforementioned Turk, Janko and Fulton. Also included are: Craig Kelly, the current Men's Overall World Cup Champion, and Dan Donnelly, a World Cup rider and top men's rider for K2 Snowboards.

"They would always be out in the rain and slush, when all the skiers would be sitting inside the lodge," she said of the West Coast gurus of the sport.

"Those guys are my favorite people to ride with."

For the sport's future, Howat said it will take time for snowboarding to reach the levels in technique of Olympic skiing. She believes snowboarding will reach Olympic caliber in 15 years.

One of the attractive aspects of being involved in competitive snowboarding on the ground level is the potential to create new techniques, Howat said.

"There are lots of hot riders who are hot in their own way," she said. "That's one of the things I like best about snowboarding, is that you can really express your own personality."

For those considering the sport this winter, take the advice of a world competitor; rent a board, use a pair of soft boots with a ski boot liner rather than the stock felt liner. Go off and ride on the beginner slopes when the snow is soft and try to take a lesson. Her advice to women, once they have begun to master the basics, is to ride with men in order to progress faster.

Howat's itinerary for this upcoming season is to hit the World Cup Tour and shoot for the top of the placings chart. She also wants to get involved with snowboarding clothing design and sales and to remain competitive as long as possible.

"I want to use Bellingham as a base and travel out from here," she said. Her desire to attend college will have to be weighed with the direction in which her snowboarding career leads, said the young champion.

For the present, with her sponsorships from GNU Snowboards, Serac clothing and other eyewear and clothing sponsorships underway, she will be concentrating on dominating the field before her. Armed with a new Toyota Tercel purchased with part of the $12,000 in prize money she won last year (another portion went to pay for a family trip to the Bahamas), she will once again be tearing up her home mountain to strive toward her goal, "...to be the best all-around, that's what means the most to me."

While she excels in the slalom course and half-pipe, her real drive comes from the simple ecstasy of driving a clean line through a field of dry Baker powder. Her eyes bug slightly when speaking of waiting for the snow to fall while trying to pay close attention in history class.

Given the choice of winning a world level contest or having an all-time classic session of perfect skies and perfect snow, "I think a really hot day at Baker, with powder and sunshine. I'd rather have that. I mean I love to win, but Baker's simply the best."

"Snowboarding is a growing recreation at Mt. Baker.

Courtesy of Amy Howat"
Surfing usually conjures up images of beautifully tanned bodies, golden sand beaches and sub-tropical temperatures. Members of Washington's little-known surfing subculture more often associate surfing with isolated weekend trips, emerald water, thick kelp beds and lava rock reefs.

"It's not as popular or well-known in the Northwest because our region does not fit the image usually associated with surfing," said Rob Bageter, a Western senior and hardcore surfer.

The lack of attention surfing in Washington has received seems to suit Bageter fine. He claims surfing's popularity has reduced many famed California surf spots to "total zoos."

It is for this reason Bageter refuses to reveal the names or locations of his favorite surf spots along the Washington coast and the Straits of...
Juan de Fuca.

"I mean it's not like everybody in the state is going to rush out and buy a board, wet suit and wax and crowd all the long-time surfers out of the water, but I'd just as soon all the kooks stay out of it. If you really want to surf badly enough, you'll make discoveries for yourself, and that's part of surfing," he said.

Another Western student, sophomore

"To do any surfing in this state you have to be equal parts oceanographer, meteorologist and athlete."

- Rob Bangeter

more Dave Heimer, said, "It is babes and waves that give me the pleasure. A good surf weekend is an almost spiritual event."

Typically these wave-seekers depart for a weekend trip on Friday afternoon after class, their equipment pre-packed in cars plastered with surf stickers. After double-checking all the clothing, camping, and water related equipment, the next stop is usually a convenience store to stock up on the essentials (chips, dip, Cheerios, beer).

Out on the open road, Heimer said conversation is usually restricted to positive pronouncements of how incredible the weekend's surf will be.

The "road trip" is an integral part of the weekend because most of Washington's surf areas are only accessible via several hours of driving on isolated coastal highways.

Heimer describes the arrival at surf camp Friday night as, "...a release to built tension, because you can't see the waves in the dark, you can only hear them, so you sort of assume every time that this is going to be the ultra-classic weekend."

Upon awakening, the comatose surfers anticipate fulfilling the promise of blue-green perfection.

Bangeter said, "After you drag yourself out of a warm sleeping bag into the air of a cold tent, and then outside into the really cold air, and look at the even colder water, you just pray that the waves will be good so you can inspire yourself to put on your wet suit and paddle out."

After a quick morning meal consisting of whatever is available and appealing, the surf is checked. Unless the waves are absolutely flat, the proper attire is donned and the initial plunge undertaken, Bangeter said.

With Washington's typical coastal water hovering around 51 degrees Fahrenheit (depending on the season), a full neoprene wet suit with hood, booties and gloves is essential to maintain body heat.

Chilly waters and unpredictable surf does not discourage many surfing enthusiasts.

Heimer and Bangeter agree if the aquatic deities are benevolent, the physical, emotional and spiritual rush achieved from surfing is incomparable. However, unlike many well-known surf regions, Washington's waves are very dependent on the tidal change for their size and shape.

"I've seen it go from conditions in which the water was so flat it would've been really good water skiing to waves with eight to ten foot faces in the period of an hour," Bangeter said. "To do any surfing in this state you have to be equal parts oceanographer, meteorologist and athlete."
It was 8:40 a.m. Another minute gone, and nearly half of my algebra exam to go.

My classmates must have sensed my desperation, because, all at once, they began fidgeting, coughing quietly here and there. It was as if their underwear suddenly had ridden up on them, noted Pain, the ever-complaining and always-distracted voice in my mind.

Another minute ticked by, and I was seized with exam mind-lock, the kind that strikes after a late-night study spree spent consuming diet Coke, greasy potato chips and chalky No-Doz.

Time dragged on, too fast for me. Pain whined now, tugging imploringly at my brain stem.

"Ouch. Stop that!" I swatted around in my mind for the pesky presence. "When can we go?" it begged.

I tried to ignore the voice as I stared at my half-blank test. With only 10 minutes to go, I had to get brilliant fast.

"Think," nagged another voice, the worrier in my brain. And, while that part of me desperately wanted to vault to new heights of mathematical genius, the whiner kept distracting me.

I stretched my neck. I was smothering from the cloying scents of Poison and Polo, which mingled with the room's soporific warm air and lulled me into a slack-jawed doze. I almost drooled on my test.

"Who put on that damn perfume?" Pain griped. People actually had spent time on their appearance before coming to class?

"Shut up," I snapped inwardly, as I blinked twice to clear my head. Looking down, I noted my own minimal grooming efforts. In my two-day-old clothes and couch-bent hair, I looked and felt as if someone had sprinkled me with catnip and tossed me to a lion.

Sighing, I returned to the test.
cheek, striking an appropriately thoughtful pose. "Very nice," murmured the voice.

Ever so casually, I glanced around. Some classmates looked a trifle too smug as they answered the math problems. Smiling and nodding to themselves, they triumphantly dashed off yet another correct answer.


I continued to peruse the class. Some members appeared deep in thought, but a few blear-eyed classmates scrawled dejectedly, hopelessly.

"My kind of group," Pain observed. I raised one eyebrow sardonically, gave a little snort and thought how ludicrous this was. I was taking a college math exam. Me.

I've always been a sentence crafter: a word seeker, rhythm maker and portrait painter. The ebb and flow of syllables and language is my medium. Paper is the canvas upon which I dash colors and moods and successes and failures.

Sure, I've written my share of corny, vomit-raising drivel, but every so often a splash of life spills from my pen and I let out a low whistle.

Not so with math. I stink at math. I can't even measure my laundry soap. I still count with my fingers and my lips move when I read story problems.

I never can get past the glaring idiocy of hypothetical people who attempt to fill their swimming pools with the bottom drains open.

I don't even want to know how many hours it will take to fill the pool; anyone who can't muster the cerebral endurance to contemplate shutting the drain doesn't deserve my help.

The other story-problem people who really bother me are the ones who try to buy $12 worth of lemon bismarks with dimes, nickles and pennies. How hungry are they? How much change do they carry?

If they can't simply buy a donut, get them the hell out of my life.

Now, show me how a college student can pay for tuition, rent, heat and groceries—all with only $100, and I will display an unparalleled interest in story problem math. Otherwise, I am just not interested.

Another problem is that I don't pay attention in class. Usually I am lost anyway, but it is difficult to listen to something so uninteresting. If I were, say, taking dull flying lessons, Pain would get me flunked right out of flight school: "Uh, what's that you said about the landing gear again?"

Two years ago, while struggling to stay awake in a chemistry lecture, I found myself plumbing new depths of shallowness: I was speculating on where the professor shopped for clothes, or rather, used to shop for clothes. Back in the days when he still followed his bangs down his forehead to the finer side of forward-combing, and followed his bangs down his forehead to his shoes. They were big, brown, professor shoes. I let out a low whistle and slouched lower in my seat.

"I want to go home." It was Pain.

Recently, my roommate told me her geometry professor, Jerry Johnson, was compiling his collection of "math humor" into a book. I was intrigued by the term's oxymoronic ring and immediately called him for an interview.

Johnson said he uses humor to relieve tension and develop a camaraderie with students.

"I put jokes on tests, write humorous story problems, that kind of thing," he said.

But jokes, (such as the one that goes: "Why is six afraid of seven?"

Because seven ate nine) don't always loosen up some of his anxious students.

"I had one student who broke out in a rash because she was so worried about a (math) class," he said.

Johnson said "academic math" often fails to excite students because it is a university requirement. Most students just wade around in its murky basics for a quarter then ditch it forever, he said.

"It's the same with English. I never saw the beauty in 'Beowulf' that others see," Johnson said, referring to the lengthy Old English epic poem.

"And if that were the only poem I ever saw, I wouldn't want to read another poem in my life.

I hate mornings, especially if I am required to awaken during them. I drag myself out of bed with about as much sparkle as a gutshot bear.

"But if you can get past that first stuff, there's an aesthetics in mathematics that is fantastic. You can describe the world in mathematics. You can discover how it all works," he said, leaning his lanky frame forward and speaking with an animation I thought uncharacteristic of math nerds.

I came away with new respect for the poetry of math. Sure, I can write and dream about the delicately scalloped edges of the Milky Way, but I can't prove them.

Not that I would want to. But somebody has to. And it won't be me because I'm a word nerd to the end.

I stink at math. I can't even measure my laundry soap. I still count with my fingers and my lips move when I read story problems.
ARTIFICIAL OPTIC ILLUSIONS
Nothing can warm up a conversation or bring people together like a good cockroach story.

It seems no matter where you are — work, home, or at a fancy cocktail party with Biff and Muffy or at a college kegger with guys named Bubba — everyone has a favorite cockroach story to tell, and they usually will as soon as the subject comes up.

Sometimes I think I’ve heard them all, except the one where the roach has to walk five miles in the snow, uphill, both ways, to get to school.

I began developing my theory about cockroach stories this past summer when I noticed, quite by accident, whenever the subject was brought up, everyone stopped what they were doing and rushed forward to share the often-unasked-for details. Even people who had never seen a cockroach had their friends’ stories to relate. I noted they never seemed to get the same enjoyment from sharing arachnid stories or snake tales.

The common cockroach, Periplaneta americana, is disgusting enough on sight without delving into its eating habits, which include any organic material, including book bindings and human nails. The females lay their eggs in a reddish-brown disk-like mound, consisting of 300-400 eggs, which hatch in 70 days. No wonder there are so many stories to tell.

Cockroach stories come in several varieties, such as: “It was so big,” “It was so gross,” “This cockroach fell into...” etc. But the possibilities are endless.

One of my favorites, in terms of sheer terror, concerns an incident in a friend’s kitchen. He would flip on the light switch after dark and the roaches would make like the Flying Karamazov Brothers and disappear into the Twilight Zone.

Every time except once, when he glanced in the bedroom mirror and saw three one-inch-long cockroaches riding piggyback on the bedspread he had draped over himself.

His screams of terror were rated “9.5,” “9.95” and “10” by his roommates. Another friend had a cockroach story to share when he took his waterbed apart to move it. He discovered hundreds of large black roaches gathering for warmth under the heated liner.

He promptly bought a Sealy Posturepedic.

One friend’s mother had “roach mummies” in her sewing machine, in the compartment just below the bobbin, all the way from Guam.

“They’re travelin’ bugs,” she said.

“Roaches who wanted to see the world. But they died on the voyage to the mainland. That sewing machine was a predecessor to the roach motel, because the cockroaches checked in, but they didn’t check out.”

They’re still in the machine after 20 years.

“I’m not digging ‘em out,” she said.

One of the grossest stories comes from my current roommate. She was frying french fries at a fast-food restaurant in Australia and no had fallen off the fryer, turned and crisped up.

“It was this big,” she said, holding her thumb and forefinger about two inches apart. “My man-ager came over and calmly fished it out and said, ‘Okay, serve ‘em up, Luv.’”

My fear and loathing of these bugs started early in life when I lived in Southern California, the breeding ground for cucarachas. Everyone has a favorite cockroach story. When friends shriek and jump on chairs at the sight of a mouse or throw shoes and yell, “Kill it! Kill it!” at spiders, I come to the rescue.

But no one is there for me with the roaches. I am rendered catatonic at the mere thought of their existence.

Not even insecticide kills them. Sometimes, when I came home late and turned on the light suddenly, I would see one (usually about two inches long and real black) motionless on the kitchen floor, trying to become one with the linoleum. I’d grab the RAID and empty the can until a good head of foam had appeared on the creature. Nothing even remotely like death would happen to the roach, but I would nearly asphyxiate myself.

(I swear I am not making this up, but I am absolutely certain that one cocky little bastard turned around to face me, threw his head back, laughed heartily, then proceeded to shower in the RAID.)

Somewhere along the line, probably while textbook reading at night, I read that cockroaches may be the sole survivors of a nuclear holocaust. That’s a story I would rather not have heard.

By Lezlie Olson

Eight Million Stories In A Cockroach City

The common cockroach, Periplaneta americana, is disgusting enough on sight without delving into its eating habits, which include any organic material, including book bindings and human nails. The females lay their eggs in a reddish-brown disk-like mound, consisting of 300-400 eggs, which hatch in 70 days. No wonder there are so many stories to tell.

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The scope on this soap reviewer

By Michael J. Lehnert

A typical soap character may get shot, lapse into a coma, get divorced (while in the coma), be slain by his greedy ex-wife (he forgot to change his will), come back as his evil-twin seeking revenge, bring her to justice with the aid of a nun, who converts him to the side of goodness — all in the course of one month.

Fifty million Americans watch daytime dramas to see the turbulent romance of Cord and Tina on One Life to Live, the many loves of Erica Kane on All My Children and the wheeling and dealing of Edward Quartermaine on General Hospital.

In the Pacific Northwest, the best way to learn the latest in the world of daytime dramas is by watching Cindi Rinehart. Each week day, more than 80,000 viewers tune in Rinehart's Scope on the Soaps segment of Northwest Afternoon.

For more than four years, Rinehart has kept her viewers current with trials and tribulations plaguing the characters of Pine Valley, Salem, Llanview, Port Charles and other mythical soap towns.

"There is a lot less blood and guts on daytime TV (as opposed to prime time). There is more mystery, intrigue, romance, love, and dealing with social (and moral) issues," Rinehart said.

"I think there used to be a typical (soap) viewer," Rinehart said. "It used to be that there were only women watching soaps, but I think it has absolutely changed now. I think it is becoming more and more universal every day."

People watch soaps for a variety of reasons, including entertainment, comedy and escape, Rinehart said. Some viewers identify with characters they admire. Audiences are growing because viewers do not have to watch soaps every day to keep up with the action. There are still a lot of closet soap watchers though, she added.

Many viewers perceive Rinehart as a bubbly, out-going and aggressive person.

"I'm all bubbly on-camera, because I love what I do. I truly do," Rinehart said. "Off-camera I'm just the same except that there are more serious times, of course, because I have to, as they say, T.C.B. (take care of business)."

Rinehart did not watch soaps until she stumbled upon the job of soap reviewer several years ago in Columbus, Ohio.

"Being the aggressive person I am, I was knocking on doors, trying to get a job. I knocked on the door of QUBE television in Columbus, Ohio. They hired me and said, 'We're going to find you a

Cindi Rinehart talks about soaps on the set of Northwest Afternoon.
show.' A week later they told me I was going to talk about soap operas. I said, 'What's a soap opera?'

At the time, there were 15 soap operas on the air, seven to eight storylines (continuing subplots) per show and large casts of constantly changing performers.

“"There is a lot less blood and guts on daytime TV (as opposed to prime time). There is more mystery, intrigue, romance, love, and dealing with social (and moral) issues.""  
- Cindi Rinehart

“They (the station) told me I’d have my work cut out for me, and I did,” she said.

Rinehart hosted an hour-long program called Soap Scope until the station closed in 1983.

Rinehart was out of work for almost a year before being hired by KOMO in Seattle. She had gotten out of shape in that time, she said, and was stunned the first time she saw herself on camera.

She has since lost weight, and become physically fit by exercising, running and lifting weights. Her make-up did, however, include a little cosmetic surgery. Rinehart readily admits to having liposuction on her neck.

"Both sides of my family have big-old double chins," Rinehart said. "I knew I was going to get it (a double-chin), so I said, ‘Wait a minute, let’s stop this before it starts.’"

On live television, anything can and does go wrong, Rinehart said. The teleprompter breaks down, the phone goes out, a light blows up and interviews "go south."

A lot of people are great off-camera, Rinehart said, but freeze on live television.

"You do what you can do," she said. "When you’ve got a live TV show and you ask somebody a question and they don’t answer you, just keep plugging away until they answer you.

“You don’t look bad...a bad interview doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re a bad interviewer. A bad interview can mean it just went bad because the guy wouldn’t talk to you, he forgot the stories he was going to tell or he decided he didn’t like you at the last minute. There are just so many variables,” she explained.

Rinehart believes it is important not to tell the viewers too much of what she sees and hears on her visits to the soap sets, especially details of performers' private lives.

"I ask them (the producers and actors), ‘How much can I tell?’ and they tell me. That’s why they respect me, because I’m not a ‘gossip monger.’"

"If they tell me, ‘It’s off the record,’ it’s off the record. If they say, ‘Oh, I don’t care,’ then I do (tell). I respect their privacy. I think that’s why they tell me more than most people,” she said.

Soap Scope in Columbus wasn’t Rinehart’s first broadcasting experience. She worked at radio and television stations in Florida, Washington D.C. and Columbus as a host and also behind the scenes as a producer, writer, creative director and studio manager.

Rinehart said she got her broadcast training on the street, starting as a gofer at a radio station and working her way up the ladder.

"I went to the school of hard knocks. I learned everything I could learn, learning about anything I could get my hands on," she explained.

"When people ask me how to get started in the business, I tell them to go to a small town and get a job at a radio station, sweep their floors and learn from the ground-up. I’m serious about that."

When QUBE’s owners closed the station, Rinehart suddenly found herself jobless. Attempts to syndicate Soap Scope proved unsuccessful. Unsure of what to do, she called Pat Arthur, a friend and former producer of Soap Scope who worked for KOMO in Seattle producing Week Night! with Dick Foley and Dana Middleton.

Arthur told Rinehart she should move to Seattle.

"I said, ‘Right, Arthur, drop everything and drive 3,000 miles to say hello. Have you got a job for me?’ She said, ‘no’ and I said, ‘You’re nuts.’"

After sending out 40 resumes to television stations, Rinehart laughingly said she received 45 rejections. Finally, she decided to pack up, drive to Seattle and start interviewing.

"KOMO, with their indeed great foresight, hired me," Rinehart said.

She appeared on KOMO’s Live at 4 as a guest soap opera expert four years ago. When Northwest Afternoon premiered in September 1984, Rinehart was chosen to host a six-minute segment called Scope on the Soaps. As the ratings grew, so did the time allotted her segment. It now dominates the first half of the hour-long show, which Rinehart co-hosts with Foley and Middleton.

Besides reviewing soaps and interviewing celebrities, Rinehart’s Scope on the Soaps features Where Are They Now, which follows the careers of former soap-stars, Ax-Em, when the audience decides who should be “axed,” Soap Opera Mailbag, sharing viewers’ letters and Question of the Week, a call-in viewer poll.

When she’s not watching the three TVs in her office, Rinehart spends time personally answering the many letters she receives from viewers.

“Folks write to me because they want an answer. I better be prepared to answer them. That’s only fair,” she said.

Northwest Afternoon, the top-rated show in its time-slot since May 1985, is competing against The Oprah Winfrey Show (a ratings blockbuster in most cities) and winning.

For those not able to watch the show, Rinehart has a weekly soap column in Saturday’s The (Everett) Herald.
J.D. Taylor finds his niche at Western

By Michael Wagar

The player soared into the air, cupping the basketball close to his body with one hand. He incorporated a "rap" move by crossing his arms, the ball still cupped in one hand, and rhythmically throwing his hands and fingers away from each other, before slamming the ball home.

He also did an "around-the-world" dunk, spinning completely around in mid-air before thundering the ball through the hoop.

J.D. Taylor, 23, performed the dunks at Midnight Madness, a pre-season exhibition that gave people the chance to meet Western's basketball team.

Taylor, a speech communications major, transferred to Western last spring after taking a year off from the University of Washington, where he was a three-year letterman. He is a starter for this, his last season and plays both guard and forward.

"J.D. creates excitement. He does bring a name. He has great credentials and people are excited," said Head Coach Brad Jackson. "This is positive for our program, since we want (Western basketball) to be an event."

At 6 feet 4 inches tall and 200 pounds, Taylor has the physical tools to be a great athlete. Taylor's physical ability makes a professional career a possibility, said Jackson.

Taylor graduated in 1984 from Juanita High in Kirkland. He led the basketball team to the AAA State Championship that year and was named Most Valuable Player of the state tournament. Taylor also was named the Washington Prep Player of the Year for 1984.

He gives the credit for his high school success to his teammates, coaches and fans.

"They put faith in me and gave me confidence to play," he said. "There were a number of people on that team who could have been picked for the honors I received."

Taylor is also an excellent track and field athlete. In high school, he captured the state championship in the triple jump his senior year, and was the state high jump runner-up three times. At UW, he came in third in the high jump at the 1985 Pacific-10 Championships with a leap of more than 7 feet.

Taylor commands respect from his teammates because of his abilities and his on-court awareness, Jackson said.

"He has a good attitude. He fits right into our team."

- Coach Brad Jackson
J.D. Taylor, a starter for the Vikings, is a former U.W. Husky Standout.
under Harshman, but Harshman retired and the UW hired Andy Russo.

"I had planned to be a team leader — a contributor. I had to prove myself to Russo. It never worked out," Taylor said.

Russo pushed for a strictly controlled form of basketball, Taylor said.

"He wanted me to get the ball inside instead of taking a shot, even if I was open and it would help the team. I wasn't going to let him take me out of my game," Taylor said.

"I'm not going to stay around if there are problems with the coach."

"Guys on the team know I didn't come here to be a superstar, it's not my style. I'm a team player. The guys know it, and the coaches know it."

- J.D. Taylor

Normally things don't work out in favor of the player," he said.

It got worse for Taylor. In the middle of his second season with the Huskies, he was rushed to the hospital for an appendectomy.

Doctors discovered his appendix was fine, but removed it to insure against future problems. Taylor simply had a stomach virus.

He did not return until UW's final playoff game of the National Collegiate Athletics Association.

The following summer Taylor worked hard studying the game and improving his defense. He also trained to gain weight and cultivated a positive attitude, he said.

He only had two seasons of eligibility left.

"The wind was taken out of my sails the first day, but I never gave up," he said. "I always tried to do what Coach Russo wanted me to do, and I believe I did."

Taylor was not used to his potential because he did not fit into Russo's system, he said. He decided to attend another university where he could play and contribute more.

Because Taylor's two older brothers played at Central Washington University, most people assumed he would follow them.

Taylor can play more for the Vikings. He explained the talent at Central is so deep, starting positions are at a premium.

After Taylor's problems with Russo, the relationship between player and coach was crucial.

"J.D. and I hit it off pretty well. We developed a mutual respect," Jackson said.

Western's championship victory last season also attracted Taylor.

An equally important factor to the move is Taylor's role as a family man.

He and his wife, Stacee, whom he met in high school, decided together on Western. Their families live nearby and help with 15-month-old daughter, Lashana.

Leaving the UW and making some sacrifices was tough for Taylor, Jackson said. "His wife is very supportive, and I think it has been a positive change."

It can be tough to raise a family, go to school and play basketball, but it can be done, Taylor said.

"It has worked out. We're not hurting. But you can't be rich and go to college at the same time, especially if you have a kid," he said.

His daughter is a big part of his life.

"I'm nuts over her. If I need encouragement, I just look at my kid."

Taylor said he plays at a higher level when his family is watching. His wife, daughter and mother sit behind the bench during games.

"When we come to the bench Lashana says, 'Dada.' I always smile back."

He calls himself a kick-back guy, who takes life in stride. "I like everybody until they give me a reason not to."

Taylor is not certain how far he will go.

"It is not that tough to become a pro. All you need is exposure," Taylor said. Pro scouts watch the NAIA National Championships, Taylor said, and are drafting more players out of the NAIA than ever before. Taylor believes the pros like NAIA players because many possess strong basic skills and "moldability."

"I cannot say yes about a pro or overseas basketball career. It is back there in my mind," he said. "What I can do is play my last year as hard as I can. If it works out, that's great. If not, I have a family to feed and people who love me. Life goes on."