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Brian Corey
Western Washington University

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I’m done, checked out. I graduated. Talk about a pivotal moment.

While I write this it is time for myself and many others receiving their diplomas to step into roles as accountants, engineers, teachers and such, but when this hits stands another group of students will be entering their first year. It’s a simple cycle of coming and going. Each person will create his or her own path through college and into the professional world. Sort of like a choose-your-own-ending book. This story, while individually exciting, is very common. The stories within these pages are a bit more out of the ordinary.

What is the first thing you think about when you hear the word pivot?

Instantly, I think of pivotal moments. But when you think of the word as a whole it can be interpreted in many different ways. The group of writers and editors that worked on this issue put together a piece of literature that is a tell-all, gut-wrenching and entertaining read.

Can you pray the gay away? Reporter Josh Galassi explores the ex-gay movement in an investigative article about organizations that say they can turn the gays straight. Jessica Pain writes about the goals, no pun intended, of different foosball organizations trying to reach Olympic glory. She talks with world-class players and you may even learn a tip or two for that next game at the pub.

Scared of bee stings, are you? Well, you can thank the local bee farmers, and be happy those fuzzy buggers are still around. Marissa Abruzzini takes a peek at how some Whatcom County residents are fighting the possibility of bee extinction.

Losing a loved one to suicide, something we at Western experienced on more than one occasion in the previous academic year, is a horrid and unthinkable event. Jeremy Mohn takes us through the lives of people who have dealt, and continue to deal, with the loss of a loved one to such sad circumstances. This just scratches the surface of the stories we tell. It is hard to combine such serious topics with more light-hearted ones, but I am proud of this magazine and what it contributes to our community.

Read, think and read some more. Enjoy.

Brian Corey, Editor-in-chief

Oh and this autograph, you might want to keep that. It is going to be worth something someday.
Blood, Guts & Girls

Women of all ages and sizes line up their skates, put on their helmets and bite down on their mouth guards. Racing around the roller rink, the women slam their bodies into each other, their shouts echoing through the building. Racing around the roller rink, the women tie up their skates, put on their helmets and put their mouth guards. Racing around the roller rink, the women tie up their skates, put on their helmets and put their mouth guards.

Ivona Brakebones

Melissa “Ivona Brakebones” Berool, 30, straps on her kneepads preparing for the league-wide Bellingham Roller Betties practice. The Roller Betties league is comprised of four teams including FLASH, The Cog Blockers, Tough Love and a traveling all-star team called Blunt Force Trauma. Roller derby is a physical outlet for the women, where being strong and intimidating gets your team points and wins. It’s also been life changing. The women who play for the Bellingham Roller Betties have seen themselves change, both physically and mentally, as they’ve gained newfound confidence and realized what they are capable of.

“I don’t have a fear when it comes to hitting people or getting hit; I’m a strong person physically so that’s never been a problem for me,” Ivona says. “I enjoyed the challenge of pushing my body to the limits — I vomit at every game that I play.”

Ivona has been playing roller derby with the Bellingham Roller Betties for five years and is now playing for FLASH. She started out not knowing anything about roller derby but wanted to be a part of it because it sounded physical. Now, as a pivot player, Ivona holds a strong position among her teammates. A roller derby team is comprised of five players, including four blockers and one jammer. Both teams skate in the same direction on the track and the jammer tries to score as many points as possible by lapping the opposing team. The four blockers do whatever they can to make sure their jammer gets through. The fourth blocker on the team is the pivot player.

“The pivot is the one who controls the pack, they are hopefully the most knowledgeable, the most strategic,” Ivona says. “They’re going to direct the pack when to slow down, speed up, those kinds of things.”

Ivona has been voted “Most Feared” by the league two years in a row.

“Anytime I make a big hit and somebody goes flying really far off the track, those are probably my favorite moments,” Ivona says laughing. Mandy “Indy Nile” Otterstad, 35, showed up at a roller derby practice one day to see what it was all about, was told to put on some skates, and has been playing ever since. Indy plays for The Cog Blockers.

“Roller derby in general is something that I do just for me; it’s not for my kids, it’s not because I have to, it’s not for my work,” Indy says. “It’s the one thing in my life that I really do just for me.”

Ariel “Luna Tick” Antons, 24, a player for The Cog Blockers with bright pink hair, got involved with the Roller Betties after seeing them at the Ski to Sea Parade in Bellingham. Coming from a background in rugby, Luna was excited to get involved in another contact sport.

“I really enjoyed the physical aspect, just the full, sheen-on contact you can have with someone,” Luna says. “And I like that it’s not only physically challenging, but mentally; there’s a lot of strategy that goes into it.”

Luna is recovering from a broken leg she received while doing a pushing drill. Her skates got locked up with another player’s and the result was three separate breaks and a torn ligament.

“I have a plate, 11 screws and some pretty sweet scars,” she says.

Not only is roller derby a physical outlet for the women, but it gives them a strong community and sense of empowerment. “I’m from California and 99 percent of the reason I’m here is for this team and this league,” Ivona says.

Most of her family still lives in California, so Ivona considers the Roller Betties and her team to be her family now. While they may have their differences throughout the league, when it comes down to it they all say they’re there for each other.

“It’s a really good community to be involved with — a strong group of women,” Ivona says. “In the past couple years I’ve done a lot of the training with the younger girls and that’s really rewarding; to see girls who maybe aren’t as athletic or they have some problems in their personal life. They come into this community and they become stronger, more confident, powerful women. And I think that’s a really important thing that roller derby does for people.”

Indy also works at the Childbirth Center at St. Joseph’s Medical Center in Bellingham.

“I never knew I could do this,” Indy says. “I never knew I could play derby; I never knew I could skate this good. I impress myself just personally when I try and succeed at something new. It’s crazy that we can do half the stuff we do on skates and still stay up, or fall and be constantly bruised, and it’s fine.”

Luna has recently become the team captain for The Cog Blockers and is learning how to take on that leadership position.

“Roller derby has definitely helped me grow up,” Luna says. “Back when I started, I was a different me.”

The Bellingham Roller Betties have gained a following in the community and have crowds at every bout they play.

“What else is there that we could do as adult women that is anything even similar to this?” Indy says. “There’s not really anything. You could do martial arts and stuff but you’re not going to have a crowd-following; you’re not going to have everyone at work coming to support you and you’re family being involved. When in adulthood do you get to just run into somebody for no good reason?”

Photos by Colin Diltz
After the prosthetist fixed the microchip knee to the patient’s prosthetic, the patient left with a wide grin on his face. Behind him, the prosthetist watched in shock.

“Then he said, ‘Come back, I haven’t even programmed it yet!’” T.R. Shimon says, recalling his visit to his prosthetist to install an artificial knee in his already-working prosthetic leg.

Shimon, an active 59-year-old artist, received a prosthetic leg in December of 2004. It attaches 4 inches above the knee, after what he calls an incident of medical malpractice. After a minor surgery his doctor sent him home, but Shimon developed a blood clot behind his knee due to a blood disorder. After one of five open heart surgeries over the course of five days, the doctors thought he wouldn’t survive.

Losing a limb is a life-changing event, but modern prosthetics are helping those who receive one maintain their way of life. New appendages vary in use and one must choose between cosmetically-accurate pieces or mechanical ones if they want to be more active. Shimon’s blood disorder, deep vein thrombosis, caused a clot and his leg had to be amputated. Shimon says losing the limb was the least of his problems.

“They thought they’d have a corpse on their hands,” he says. “I should’ve had a stroke, I should’ve been absolutely brain dead, but here I am.”

Now, Shimon’s doctor urges him to walk and avoid traveling in planes. Staying still for too long might cause another clot. He combats this by doing activities such as hiking and white-water rafting.

Even so, Shimon has adjusted his lifestyle to accommodate for his prosthetic. Every night he charges the prosthetic, just like a cell phone, so the memory chip continues to work.

The prosthetic is attached to the severed leg by suction, allowing the limb to pivot into a place that is comfortable for the user. In May of 2012, his prosthetist updated his high-tech knee socket. Built within the knee is a microprocessor, which controls the hydraulic fluid in the knee, allowing better movement uphill, downhill or on a flat surface. The foot is controlled position and pressure sensors operate differently if one is sitting, standing or walking.

The entire piece is made out of carbon fiber, which is durable and lightweight. But the artificial leg is anything but natural looking because image is traded for performance.

But there are levels to a prosthetic and not everyone will get the limb they want. Shimon says. His is a level three out of four. In comparison, a level one does not go past being able to walk, and a level four is fit for an athlete.

To take care of the limb, Shimon makes sure it is cleaned regularly. He is an artist and often finds paint drips spotted on the surface. He relies on his prosthetist, Tom Broselle, for tune ups.

By hooking up the limb to the computer, Broselle can tell how many steps Shimon has taken, a little over half a million to-date.

“If I’m leaning off to the right he’ll adjust me and if it feels too long he’ll shorten it,” Shimon says. “It’s just 15 minutes in his office, and we’re done.”

Broselle has worked in the prosthetic limbs business for 20 years. He decided to pursue the career after seeing a friend in high school become paralyzed.

Broselle says the most common reason for obtaining a prosthetic limb is diabetes, because those affected can get ulcers in their feet due to restricted blood flow. The foot often is unable to heal and becomes infected, which leads to amputation. Over 60 percent of Broselle’s patients need prosthetics because of this.

Other reasons to need a prosthetic limb include cancer, traumatic accidents, deformities or flesh-eating bacteria, he says.

Every stump is unique in size and shape, so every prosthetic limb is custom made to fit, according to Cornerstone, where Broselle is employed.

Broselle says the most common reason for choosing performance over aesthetic is if the person wants to be active in their life; cosmetic prosthetics might get beaten up or torn. They also have a lighter weight, are less round in shape and generally look very mechanical, he says.

On the other hand, patients who choose a cosmetic appearance want their prosthetic to look like a natural human limb. Broselle says they must be careful, as those limbs are more fragile.

Shimon says it took a year and a half of therapy to get used to walking and carrying his weight with the new limb. He says it takes 40 percent more energy than a normal able-bodied person to walk, with a prosthetic limb, but he gets through it by taking afternoon naps and meditating.

But even with the changes Shimon endures, he says...
it was well worth it.

“Spending your life in a wheelchair is just not it,” he says. “You put on 50 pounds in a wheelchair in the first few months. The only thing I don’t do is ride a bike, as it has more problems than it’s worth.

After attaching the prosthetic limb, doctors recommend the patient be trained under a physical therapist, according to the Cerebro site. They help the patient deal with physical barriers, such as stairs and getting in and out of a car.

Phantom limb syndrome can also cause trouble in an amputee’s life. This syndrome causes the amputee to feel a limb where there is none, and it can be painful.

Shimon says he continues to experience this syndrome and treats it with either medication, acupuncture or a glass of Scotch.

“Sometimes I’ll be nodding and I’ll scratch my calf,” he says, “but I don’t have a calf.”

Physical therapist Darryl Michelson has helped new prosthetic users through a series of exercises that emphasize using their own weight against themselves. He has helped patients deal with phantom limb syndrome through a skill he learned while in school in the Netherlands – something he calls massage pantomiming.

Through this technique the patient acknowledges the pain of the phantom limb, and then Michelson massages the limb that is not there. He has done this three times.

“It’s worked all three times immediately,” he says. “The pain goes away completely, or at least there were no other times where they complained about it.”

To re-establish a life that is comfortable for the patient, they must have a positive attitude and be able to practice using the prosthetic, Brousselle says.

“The fact that they don’t have that limb and if they want to walk they have to use the prosthetic; that’s a huge hurdle to get over,” he says.

Shimon says he goes to the gym twice a week in addition to his other activities. He faces life with determination.

“I expected to have a stroke and lay around in a bed,” he says. “I am not going to give in.”

Shimon continues to be active and do the things he likes and has done for years. Painting, hiking and white-water rafting keep him on his toes and his heart racing. All thanks to his prosthetic.

The goal of the USTSF is for foosball to gain recognition as a competitive sport, according to the organization’s website.

Foosball was introduced to Whipple when she was 14 years old. Next to the laundromat her grandfather used was a burger place with a foosball table. Whipple says she plays not only because she loves the game, but also to represent the U.S.

Similar to soccer, the object of foosball is to get the ball in the opponent’s goal. Ball control is a necessary skill when it comes to pivoting the rod to score.

Whipple practices on the foosball table every day.

“I don’t always play for the practice, I play because I love the game,” she says. Whipple; rather it’s a part of her everyday life.

For a select few, foosball is their life, but for others foosball may be a family sport or a childhood memory.

Western senior Emily Fornalski began playing foosball on a wobbly table during lunch breaks at Meridian Middle School in Bellingham.

The table’s miniature players didn’t match up correctly and some were missing feet, but she remembers having the time of her life. She laughs as she recalls the numerous times her and her best friend skipped lunch to finish their game.

“I don’t get the chance to play often,” Fornalski says. “I don’t always play for the practice, I play because I love the game.”

Foosball is more than just a childhood memory for Whipple; rather it’s a part of her everyday life.

For some, foosball is a hobby.

Western senior Emily Fornalski began playing foosball on a wobbly table during lunch breaks at Meridian Middle School in Bellingham.

The game tied and without thinking of her next move, Cissi Whipple performs the shot she’s famous for: the push shot.

Guiding the ball to the left of her midfielder she pivots the rod slightly toward her opponent’s end of the table. She takes a deep breath hoping she shot the ball into the goal. She closes her eyes. When she opens them, she begins to jump in the air.

It is 2009, and she’s won the Texas foosball title. Whipple, a 2011 Foosball World Cup player and team captain, plays in tournaments around the world.

“Someday I hope to see foosball become an Olympic sport,” Whipple says.

In 2011, the United States women’s team placed fourth in the Foosball World Cup, Whipple says. There were 100 men and women ranked in the 2011 Foosball World Cup, according to the United States Table Soccer Federation.

The push shot: Set up the ball to the left side of the midfielder and push the rod toward the opponent’s end of the table. Kick the ball into the goal.
CAREAGA HOPES THAT A STOCK-TRADING CLUB WILL GET STARTED ON CAMPUS FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN TRADING.

Investopedia gained popularity among professors in the department; Earl Benson, faculty advisor of the FMA, regularly competes against students in the stock market challenge.

“Even though I am a professor of finance there are usually two to three students who do better than me at the stock market challenge,” Benson says.

Benson holds mixed emotions about day trading. He says it encourages short-term equity trading, which is similar to gambling with money, as opposed to long-term trading, where decisions and investments are well planned out.

“Equity trading, like what happens on the stock market floor deals with making decisions in a matter of minutes, whereas long-term trading decisions can take weeks or months to decide. They are just two different games,” Benson says.

Advice can be helpful but also harmful in stock trading especially when it comes to making decisions based on emotions. Careaga says.

“Advice can be helpful but also harmful in stock trading especially when it comes to making decisions based on emotions,” Careaga says.

Benson believes that day trading can be successful but only if one is willing to put in the time and effort to learn the basics of the market.

“I think it’s important to understand the basics of the market such as support and resistance levels, pivot points, and how they affect stock prices,” Benson says.

Kevin’s story illustrates how one can deal with grief and loss after losing a loved one to suicide. According to SOS materials, survivors of suicide have difficulty moving forward, according to SOS materials.

“I think it’s important to understand the basics of the market such as support and resistance levels, pivot points, and how they affect stock prices,” Benson says.

The ups and downs of stock trading

Pivot points are used as predictive indicator of how successful a stock may be, according to Investopedia’s website. They are useful tools for those investing and trading stocks.
to suicide in the last year. While no SOS group exists in Whatcom County, Western’s counseling center is available to all students experiencing grief from a suicide loss. Deena Rathkamp is one of Western’s counselors who met with students affected by the recent tragedies. “I want to know who else in their lives has been impacted, how others have responded to their loss, how and who they have shared the story,” Rathkamp says. “I want a sense of their support system, how they are coping with their emotions and how this loss has impacted their lives and the lives of people close to them.” Rathkamp says once she can get a sense of where they are she can evaluate what kind of support they need. “We work together to find paths to get through the tragedy,” Rathkamp says. “Assessing and attending to the client’s changing ability to be resilient in the face of emotional pain is an ongoing process.” It has been 25 years since Melsness lost her only daughter, Marlene, to suicide. “She was such an actress,” Melsness says as she fidgets with the cross pendant and rosary. “One minute she was laughing, the next she was gone.” Melsness says her daughter was full of life before she decided to end it. Marlene coached a kid’s soccer team and was always singing songs, she says. “She often sang ‘You are my Sunshine’ or ‘When you’re happy and you know it,’” Melsness says. “One day Marlene just forgot to take care of herself.” On February 19, 1987, Melsness came home to find 17-year-old Marlene had asphyxiated herself in her car, parked in the family garage. She stuffed a cloth in the exhaust pipe and died of carbon dioxide poisoning. “I was hysterical,” Melsness says. “I ran into the house and had the body on the bed.” After searching her daughter’s room Melsness was surprised to find notes all over. Some were about how Marlene felt ugly after gaining a single pound. Others were about being depressed about a recent breakup. There was even a picture she had drawn of shooting herself with a gun. For Kevin, his wife’s death was just as shocking. Two years prior to her death Deb had taken a bad fall on her head and lost 50 percent of her short-term memory. “She went from being an intensive care unit nurse to not knowing how to bake a cake,” Kevin says. Kevin says Deb agonized over her loss of memory. He says she would come home and there would be Post-it Note reminders all over the house that Deb would write to herself. They were reminders to turn off the stove or close the lid of a jar. Deb was forced into retirement, and she was losing grip on her memory. Kevin says the doctors told them it would take more than 10 years before she would regain enough neurological capabilities to settle into her new life. “She lived with this for 18 months,” Kevin says. “Eventually we thought she was getting better.” But just three weeks after Christmas, Deb was gone and Kevin found himself hopeless and with lots of questions. Similar to Melsness, Kevin found SOS immediately and has been attending meetings ever since. Melsness chuckles as she remembers her first meeting. As she sat in her chair, Melsness says her knuckles were white from being locked so tightly underneath her seat. As the meeting progressed and she heard stories from other families she began to loosen her grip. “Everybody in that room was telling my story,” Melsness says. “I realized I’m not alone. I’m not the only one going through this.” After Melsness found help she became incredibly active. She says that within a year of joining SOS she was testifying on behalf of suicide prevention programs in the Washington state Legislature. Soon she became part of the leadership team at the Tacoma SOS, and 25 years later she’s still there. “I tell new members they’ve joined the biggest fraternity or sorority,” she says. “They’ve paid their dues and now they belong to one of the largest suicide prevention groups in the country.” Rathkamp says the losses on Western’s campus have left the students wondering how to move on. “From what I can tell, the shock of recent deaths have left the students wondering how to move on. Although he still has days where he is angry with her and angry with God. “God must have been in Tijuana that night because he wasn’t watching over her and he wasn’t watching over me,” Kevin says. Kevin misses his wife, but he doesn’t mourn her every day. For what would have been their 35th wedding anniversary, he took himself on a trip to Whistler where he zip lined, bicycled and even went on a floatplane. Aboard the floatplane were two couples celebrating their anniversaries. He says they all had champagne, and he toasted to the couples and toasted to the heavens. “It was a good day,” Kevin says. “To move on you have to look and see the beauty in the world and you get a little perspective back.” Melsness says she has reached the acceptance phase of her grief process and plans to continue reaching out to help families. “After 25 years at SOS I feel the pressure of getting burnt out, but I plan to keep going,” Melsness says. Recently, Melsness closed a chapter of her life by finally selling the house Marlene grew up in. For a year after Marlene’s death she still said “good morning kiddo” when she woke up. For a few years she still celebrated Marlene’s birthday. She would even wear her daughter’s perfume from time to time. Eventually all of those rituals stopped, but she considers selling the house the hardest milestone. “I was scared I was leaving something behind,” Melsness says. “I kept returning to her Catholic faith and through SOS, Melsness has found happiness in her life. “There will always be pitfalls,” Melsness says. “The reason I do the group is that if you can make someone else who has been through the same experience feel better, you will find ways to laugh again, to love again.”

**SIGNS OF DEPRESSION**

**THAT MAY LEAD TO SUICIDE**

- Persisting feelings of sadness
- Loss of interest in activities
- A change in eating habits
- Sleep problems
- Loss of energy or tiredness
- Inability to sit still
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability
- Complaints of physical problems with no obvious cause
- Changes in appearance (skipping showers, not caring about clothes, cut or burns)
- A drop in performance or grades

Source: Washington State PTA pamphlet

Kevin says his life direction completely changed after losing his wife and all of the plans he had for them became plans just for him. Three years later, he says he has found a certain amount of peace. Although he still has days where he is angry with her and angry with God.
YOUNG MINDS,
OLD BONES

Embracing life with youth arthritis

Tonya Potocki's jaws had locked for two weeks and were so tight she had a hard time opening them and could only eat food such as cereal and apple sauce. She constantly felt exhausted and could not get off the couch. Her knees were so swollen she had to stop running and playing soccer. "I used to have a lot of energy and was able to run and play and was really a tomboy," Potocki, now 23, says.

One summer morning when she was 14 Potocki's fingers and toes were so curled she couldn't get off the couch. Her knees were so swollen she had to stop running and playing soccer. "I used to have a lot of energy and was able to run and play and was really a tomboy," Potocki, now 23, says.

Instead of taking more medicine, she started on a gluten and dairy-free diet. Naturopathy is a system of therapy based on preventive care and the use of physical forces such as heat, water, light, air and massage, according to MedicineNet.com, a nationally-recognized, doctor-produced network.

The gluten and dairy-free diet helps Potocki feel more energetic and she says she is thankful she did not have to take more medication.

Christopher Finch, 25, grew up with diabetes. He was diagnosed with kidney failure a year and a half ago and rheumatoid arthritis four years ago when the joints of his hands, knees and feet swelled up.

"It was frustrating for a long time at first. It took me a long time to find medicine that worked for it," he says. "Just dealing with the pain at that time was just... made me really mad."

Exercise is important in an arthritis patient's life as it keeps the joints flexible and the muscles strong, Mitchell says. Heather Kreizenbeck, a physical therapist at Bellingham Physical Therapy, has seen arthritis patients who could not walk or stretch their knees at all. But after exercising regularly, they are able to walk three miles.

Potocki used to take a Scottish dance class to relieve her sensitive joints. Now she does yoga and goes on long walks to relieve her pain and clear her mind.

To work up the muscles around his joints Finch says he stretches when he wakes up. He also likes to play Frisbee, but recognises he can only do it occasionally so he doesn't aggravate his joints.

Religion has also been a source of support for Finch, it helps him keep a positive attitude. He will start an internship at the Inn Ministries after not working for years due to his health. Although excited, Finch is nervous because it has been a long time since he has made a big change in his life.

"I'm looking forward to it because it's kind of me taking a step forward." Finch says.

His family is a big source of support with his health issues, especially his mother, Finch says. Both Finch and his mom did research on the food he can eat and activities he can do. She even took up yoga and Tai Chi classes to teach him how to keep his joints in motion.

"She was pretty angry about it at first, as well. Being so young and getting diagnosed with arthritis is just frustrating because it's kind of seen as an older person illness," he says. "She was pretty mad for a while but my mom's typical reaction after her anger is find out what to do to help it and she got involved right off the bat."

Potocki's mom, who played a big role in her life, was with her the day she received the news she was going into remission for arthritis.

"We were expecting bad news but it was good news. We just looked at each other and laughed. And in the car we cried," Potocki says.

While remission may not guarantee a full recovery from arthritis it is less likely for her flare to become active again, she says.

Arthritis is a big part of her life and her identity. Potocki says she feels strange about moving into a remission but is excited, too. It has taught her to slow down and appreciate life.

I've learned a lot having arthritis but I'm willing to let it go. It's been a good process," she says.
The sun glows against a blue, cloudless sky on a warm, May afternoon. But in Michael Jaross’ backyard, it looks like it’s snowing.

The tiny, buzzing snowflakes aren’t a weather anomaly brought on by a rogue storm; they are his honeybees. Hundreds of the white, angry insects zigzag between colorful blossoms and tulip petals. A handful of bees, their wings coated in chalky powdered sugar, roll around like balls of clay on the leaves of a rhododendron bush. Their tiny legs flutter as they try to shake off the sticky granules of sugar clinging to their fuzzy bodies.

Jaross, president of the Mount Baker Beekeeper’s Association, covers his bees in powdered sugar the way a baker would dust it on a fresh batch of doughnuts. He does this every time he inspects the beehives to keep the bees from attracting a deadly parasite known as Varroa destructor.

Varroa destructor is a small, crab-like parasite that latches onto honeybees and feeds on their hemolymph, a fluid similar to human blood. The parasite is partially responsible for the massive number of honeybee deaths that have occurred on a global scale in the last decade, Jaross says. Honeybees are dying in record numbers; the total United States honeybee population declined by about 30 percent in 2011, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This abrupt change in population is due to colony collapse disorder; an incident where hundreds, sometimes thousands, of bees disappear from hives, causing the surviving bees to die of starvation.

Once common in the U.S., feral, or wild, honeybees are now extinct. The honeybees people see buzzing around picnic baskets in the spring and summer are not wild; they either belong to a local beekeeper or are the product of an escaped batch of domestic bees, he says.

The powdered sugar works by preventing Varroa destructor from latching onto the bees with its suction cup feet. The frosting also irritates the bees, forcing them to clean off the sugar and any remaining parasites.

While beekeepers like Jaross are working to save their populations, domestic honeybees face the same fate as their extinct peers.

“I compare the drop in bee population to the housing bubble,” Jaross says. “People just throw caution to the wind and think their house is always going to gain in value. We also think that bees are always going to be around but that’s just not the case anymore.”

Honeybees are vital to the environment because they pollinate plants and other crops people rely on for food and money, Jaross says. About one-third of the world’s food supply depends on bees.

Without these insects an enormous portion of the global food supply would disappear, Jaross says.

“If we can’t meet the challenge of keeping honeybees alive, the last resort will be hiring people to basically hand-pollinate the crops, which is difficult work and requires more manpower than we have right now,” he says. Responsible beekeeping is the only way to prevent honeybees from going extinct, but the job isn’t easy, he says.

Karen Henriksen, who owns three beehives with Jaross in their Bellingham home, says simply keeping the bees alive is the most difficult part, especially in winter. She says bees are tricked into thinking it is warm enough to look for food when the sun comes out on a cold, winter day, but this can be a deadly mistake.

“We end up with little bee popsicles in front of the hives every year,” Henriksen says.

Jaross is only in his seventh beekeeping season, but has been fascinated with the complicated lives of bees since he was a child.

“You could say I’m a relative beeginner,” he says.

Beekeeping started with peasants capturing bee colonies from the forest and taking the honey to sell at the market, Jaross says. But this was before bees were big business.

“Really, the reason why people are so interested in bees dying now is because of humankind being in peril,” he says.

Jaross wanted to raise bees so he could collect
honey and beeswax for homemade salves and potions. The money he spends on the bees is usually more than he gets back from them, he says.

Wearing a yellow, mesh beekeeping hat with matching gloves and a white jumpsuit, Jaross slowly turns over a honeycomb. In the sunlight, the golden tray glitters as the light reflects off the delicate, squirming bee wings.

“They’re pretty calm today,” he says. Henriksen swats one of the more ambitious insects from the red bandana wrapped around her head.

“You have to constantly nudge them and figure out what they’re doing, otherwise you’ll lose control,” he says.

His fingers move like probes through the hive as he scrapes off honey or excess wax from the grey boxes holding the honeycombs. Some beekeepers use their bare hands to make sure they’re not killing bees, but Jaross doesn’t go that far. He doesn’t like getting stung.

As he finishes he slowly secures the Styrofoam lid back on the knee-high box, tapping it with an open palm to shake off any remaining bees. He doesn’t like killing them, even by accident, he says.

Now that companies are using bees to pollinate plants, careful techniques like this are becoming rare. Jaross says it’s brutal, but that’s just business.

“It’s big business they sometimes get moshed by tractor tires,” he says. “I move more like a snail, but even then I probably killed at least one or two dozen bees just putting the lid on the hives. In the back of your mind you have to remember they are bugs.”

While global agricultural trade supports maintaining bee populations, Jaross says it is mostly to blame for the huge population change in the last seven years.
Joseph Myers left Bellingham with one goal in mind; to make it 107 miles across the pass and through the snow, all while on one wheel. In May 2010, Myers rode his unicycle to Winthrop, Wash. The trip took two days to complete. Myers also enjoys hill climbs and muni, which is mountain unicycling.

Myers, Western’s Facilities Maintenance Specialist, is often seen riding around the Bellingham area on his 36-inch Schlumf-geared Kris Holm unicycle. The man behind Myers’ unicycle equipment maintenance is machinist, Larry Davis. Davis has been riding unicycles since he was in junior high. Now, at age 61, he looks like he has seen a lot of sun. The laugh lines on his face and eyes are prominent and his hands are calloused and tough, but he has a boyish grin that peaks out when he talks about how unicycling became part of his life. Davis remembers his first day on a unicycle; his friend let him try it and he spent eight hours trying and falling until he could ride around the yard. Mounting the unicycle can be the most challenging part; at first it is easiest to cling to a wall or person for balance.

Davis has been unicycling ever since he first learned to ride, and has been teaching people in his life the freedom of one-wheeled fun.

Now, 45 years since his first ride, Davis has a bigger obstacle in his life than learning how to mount and ride a unicycle. He is going through his second round of colon cancer. Davis was diagnosed a few years ago but was told he beat it after using homeopathic remedies. Recently, Davis got the news that it was back. He decided to use chemotherapy to beat the cancer this time instead of the more natural remedies he used the first time.

“Chemo drags me through the sand, but I try to stay active on my unicycle because it is my source of exercise and entertainment,” Davis says.

Chemotherapy kills rapidly growing and dividing cells. These include blood cells that fight infection, cause the blood to clot and carry oxygen to all parts of the body. Davis goes through chemotherapy every other Monday. The chemotherapy doesn’t come off until Wednesday. Davis says he doesn’t feel human again until Friday.

When Davis does feel back to normal, his busy life as a machinist resumes and so does his unicycling. He plans to attempt the 24.5-mile Mount Baker Hill Climb, a ride up to Mount Baker Ski Resort, on his unicycle.

“Joe is well known in this town for his Mount Baker Hill Climb, I was going to do the climb with him but I wasn’t doing that great at the time,” Davis says.

Davis has two unicycles and a bicycle. One of his unicycles he made himself by welding together a stainless steel frame. He bought special tires for it that he can use on mountain terrain or the beach. Davis could use his bike for transportation but he says his unicycle is much more fun. To make unicycling even more fun for him and those who see him around town, Davis wants to find someone to make him a Sonic the Hedgehog costume to wear while cycling.

“I have every Sonic the Hedgehog video and love the character, I think the kiddies would love it if they saw Sonic unicycling around town,” Davis says.

Although he is fighting through his second round of cancer, his eyes light up when he talks about how much fun he has on his unicycle. Davis hopes to be able to go on rides with Myers’ through Whatcom Falls and Boulevard Park again. After he beats colon cancer one more time.
has seen many fender benders but never any marine traffic accidents, he says.

Marie Phillips, a 20-year-old Seattle resident, crosses Seattle’s Fremont Bridge four to six times per day. “It’s really annoying because it goes up so frequently,” Phillips says.

Fremont Bridge is one of the most frequently used drawbridges in the country, she says.

The bridge opens up 400 times per month during the summer season, Ditch says. “I would have to leave half an hour earlier than I would otherwise because traffic was really bad,” Phillips says.

The Montlake Drawbridge opens and closes for marine traffic in three and a half minutes, although it probably seems like 10 minutes to car passengers, Dickinson says.

Within that time, Dickinson stops traffic, lowers the gate, releases the locks, raises the gate, closes the gate and then does the whole thing again in reverse.

After the gate opens, Dickinson sometimes hears a honk from a car.

“I’m sure it’s not a thank you honk,” Dickinson says.

In the main office, Ditch receives complaints from irritated car passengers and has to explain to them marine traffic has the right of way, Ditch says.

Dickinson advises car passengers to be patient. “If you don’t want to get caught in a bridge...

TOWERING HIGH

Story by Elyse Tan

Photos by Lillian Furlong

Fumbling with the stereo, texting or just sitting, car passengers find ways to pass the time as the rush hour of marine traffic hits. At a complete halt, they watch waterway traffic pass by at the expense of their own time while a bridge tender operates a drawbridge to accommodate road and water traffic.

Drawbridges are a daily obstacle for commuters, especially those who drive across them during the summer when they are most in use.

The Washington State Department of Transportation operates 17 moveable bridges on state routes. Federal law gives marine traffic the right-of-way over vehicular traffic.

On counterbalance pivots each bridge works differently, Seattle bridge supervisor Tim Ditch says. Ditch, 52, has been supervising Seattle’s First Avenue South Bridge, Montlake Bridge and 520 Bridge for 10 years, he says.

While the First Avenue South Bridge takes 11 minutes on average to open, the Fremont Bridge takes approximately 4 minutes, Ditch says.

As a supervisor, Ditch spends most of his time working in an office filling out paperwork, but bridge tender’s duties include opening and closing various drawbridges.

In an octagonal tower surrounded by windows, 65-year-old William Dickinson oversees traffic and operates the Montlake Bridge from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sixteen years ago the job opportunity presented itself and Dickinson has been a bridge tender ever since. Dickinson sits at a desk with a control panel and enough space to comfortably fit three more people, he says.

The Montlake Bridge, built in Seattle in 1925, is a bascule bridge, which is French for see-saw, Dickinson says.

When the bridge deck goes up, the counterweight goes down, he says in a monotone voice.

During the spring season, when the Montlake Bridge is only opened two to three times per day, Dickinson spends his time reading a novel per week. It’s not the most exciting of jobs, but Dickinson says he likes the solitude.

“Not a whole lot goes on here,” Dickinson says. “You have to enjoy working alone.”

Dickinson says he loves his scenic job; he overlooks the water and witnesses the occasional unusual event. The most exciting incident was watching a driver of a stolen vehicle crash into the guardrail and fall into the water, he says.

During his 16 years as a bridge tender, Dickinson has seen many fender benders but never any marine traffic accidents, he says.

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ABOVE: The Montlake Bridge links the University District to the Montlake and Capitol Hill neighborhoods in Seattle, Wash. The bridge is 344 feet long. It is where Opening Day of boating season is celebrated every May.

RIGHT: The Montlake Bridge opens to let a boat through on Monday, May 28, in Seattle, Wash. The bridge opens about 400 times a month during the summer season.
Taylor says places such as Living Waters damage people’s lives by conveying the message they cannot be accepted and should feel ashamed for being gay.

"While the terms ‘this will make you straight’ never came out at Living Waters," Taylor says, "that was the implication behind everything that was done.”

Taylor left Living Waters after two years of trying to change his sexual orientation. It was a pivotal moment when he decided to leave, he says.

"It was like a light switch moment," Taylor says. "This truth was all the suddenly embedded in my heart that this was so wrong and not right for anybody.

In the program, Taylor was required to read the guidebook, “Living Waters: Pursuing Sexual & Relational Wholeness in Christ.” The book, more than 400 pages, is a vital part of the therapy process and is used by all the patients in the program, Taylor says.

When entering Living Waters, Taylor was required to sign a contract saying he would not distribute the book. “Homosexual attraction is disordered, its expression is sinful, in forsaking the truth of humanity as male and female,” according to the guidebook.

It goes on to state, “growth out of homosexuality seems to occur stage by stage.”

In another chapter, the book asks patients. "How do you feel about your own potential for heterosexuality? Have you resigned your life to celibacy, or are you expecting something new? Consider the reality that your true humanity requires reconciliation to the opposite sex.”

Dean Greer, national coordinator of Living Waters, says Living Waters isn’t about changing sexual orientation but about healing sexual brokenness. “Living Waters is not reparative therapy in the least. It is a program of reconciliation to the opposite sex.”

Taylor concludes that Living Waters did not change his sexual orientation. It was a pivotal moment when he decided to leave, he says.

"While the terms 'this will make you straight' never came out at Living Waters," Taylor says, "that was the implication behind everything that was done.”

"I knew early on that being gay wasn’t really something I could do anything about,” he says. “It didn’t torture me that I was gay, it tortured me that everyone, including my parents, thought I was evil and that God hated me.”

Kendall stopped going to reparative therapy at the age of 16, but the issues with his parents still persisted. After therapy, Kendall says his parents emotionally and verbally abused him.

He legally emancipated from his parents at the age of 16, but still struggled with the negative messages he received from therapy for many years. Kendall got into drugs, clubbing and experienced bouts of homelessness, he says.

It was not until 2010 that Kendall saw his life take a pivotal turn when he served as a witness in the federal trial of Proposition 8, a bill that sought to eliminate the right for same-sex couples to marry in California.

During his testimony, Kendall shared his experiences in reparative therapy. “My mother would tell me that she hated me,” he said during his testimony, “that I was disgusting. Once she told me that she wished she had had an abortion instead of a gay son, that she wished I had beenborn with Downs Syndrome or had been mentally retarded.”

Kendall says the Prop 8 trial saved his life.

"To testify in such a landmark civil rights case, I pretty much owe my life to that experience," Kendall says. “It’s because of [Prop 8] that I found confidence in myself and got my life and happiness back.”

Today, Taylor, now 31, identifies as a gay Christian, but says the church’s unwelcoming view of homosexuality sometimes makes it hard for him to attend services.

"I like to think I am a tough guy and that no one’s going to chase me away from Jesus," Taylor says. “But the reality is that the church does good job of making sure gay people know they aren’t accepted.”

Kendall is cautious of those considering reparative therapy, he says.

“Now they don’t talk about making gay people straight,” Kendall says. “They talk about suppressing sexual attraction, but it’s all the same shtick. Suppressing who you are because society doesn’t want you to be that person, it’s damaging. There is nothing wrong with people being who they are.”
The king and queen are neatly placed next to each other. Classical artists such as Mozart and Chopin are blaring in room 226 of the Communication Facility where the Western Chess Club congregates every Tuesday. The board is set and the game begins.

Chess is a two-player board game that is believed to have originated in sixth-century India. The objective of the game is to “checkmate” your opponent’s king, which comes from a Persian word meaning “the king is defeated,” says Marc Loos, sales and marketing director of luxurychess.com.

Munching on potato chips, blonde-haired, blue-eyed Andy Geilfuss makes his first move. Geilfuss, a sophomore and co-founder of the Chess Club, quickly moves his pawn up two squares toward the center of the board in his game against sophomore Connor Darlington. Geilfuss explains the middle of the board is the best place to be because it is where a player can seize the most positions.

“An inexperienced player may make their first move toward the outside of the board,” Geilfuss says. “But not me.”

As Darlington and Geilfuss ponder what their next moves should be, another game is taking place. Western senior and club co-founder Nicolas Pushckor is taking on sophomore Lex Burgin, who has been playing chess since he was five and says he has trophies lining his mantle at home from countless chess tournaments won.

“There are more moves in chess than there are electrons in the universe,” Darlington says. Burgin quickly chimes in.

“I like to say there are more moves in chess than there are stars in the sky,” he says. “It sounds more romantic.”

Two of the most pivotal moves in chess are taking away the opponent’s queen — the piece that has the most points — and when a player “ups the exchange.” Upping the exchange is when a player loses a minor piece, but in turn captures a one worth more, say the members of the chess club.

The game between Darlington and Geilfuss has not progressed much. But as it does, each small movement becomes more important.

Geilfuss has a “lowly pawn” sitting on the edge of the battlefield and moves it forward to attack Darlington’s pawn, leaving him trapped.

Darlington moves his knight and asks Geilfuss if he plans on attacking the piece on the next move.

“Maybe,” Geilfuss says. “But not me.”

Geilfuss looks down at the board then knocks out Darlington’s queen with force. Darlington has lost one of the most important pieces of the game.

“Checkmate,” he says.
University, Mitchell says.

“Chris is a great center, but he’s not the guy that’s going to score on the block for you all day long,” says Woodworth. “He steps out and shoots very well, and that’s what gives him an advantage. Not a lot of big guys can do that.”

At 6 feet 2 inches Britt Harris, the center for Western’s women’s team, started playing post late in her basketball career thanks to a growth spurt.

“I grew like 6 inches in a really short period of time,” Harris says.

However, Harris says height is not the only thing that makes a solid post player. She has encountered opposing centers who don’t stand as tall as she does.

“Some of the best posts I’ve gone against aren’t necessarily the tallest, but they really know how to use their body well and play their strengths up,” Harris says. “Whether they’re really quick, so they can draw you out [from the block] and go around you, or they’re extremely strong, they just completely body you up in the post. You don’t have to be tall to be a post, it helps, but it’s not necessary.”

As a pivot player, it is not so much one’s size that gives them the advantage; it is size combined with ability to protect the ball that makes them successful, Harris says.

Mitchell says he plays the position differently. He manipulates defenders by venturing out to the three-point line to set screens and shoot threes. By doing so, he brings the bigger, slower pivot players out from their comfort zone and forces them to play defense, he says.

“Most of the people that match up against me are used to guarding mainly centers that play on the inside,” Mitchell says. “I set a lot of screens on the perimeter and set ‘pick and rolls’ or ‘pick and pops.’”

While on offense, the center focuses on posting up and utilizing his or her opportunities to score from the inside, Mitchell says. The best centers who have played the game master a series of steps, called post moves, that make centers some of the most entertaining basketball players to watch score. Different combinations of ball fakes, foot jabs, dribble drives and hesitations make the players in the post lethal. Mitchell’s favorite post move is the jump hook.

The jump hook resembles the “sky hook,” a famous shot old-school NBA basketball stars such as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Earvin “Magic” Johnson used to dominate games. It is halfway between a jump shot and a full hook shot, Mitchell says.

In contrast, the main responsibility of a center is defense, Mitchell says. While defending a center who’s trying to post up, it’s important to use the strength and stability in your legs and hips to drive the offensive player up or out of the key, he says.

Once the center has the ball, defenders should give their opponents some space and make them take time to read the situation, he explains. Soon after, the defensive center should crowd the offense, keeping a hand up in the player’s face and an arm defending the passing lane, all while being as physical as possible.

Post moves and intense defensive match ups aside, center players also find negatives that come with their positions on the court. The opportunities to get the ball do not come around as often as they do for other positions.

“You rely on the guards to get you the ball and get you good looks to the basket to score points,” Mitchell says. “It’s not really up to the center to create offense as much as it is [for] guards and wings. You just feed off of them and take your opportunities when you get them.”

For Harris, mutual trust between herself and her teammates is required to win games.

As a center, being as physical as possible is key. With rebounding and scoring inside being primary responsibilities of the position, it all comes down to how aggressive and physical the center is willing to get during every minute they are on the court.

“Going into a game [as a center you basically need to have the mindset that you’re going to out-work your opponent,” Mitchell says.
The revealing slits in her bright orange flowing skirt show her toned legs. Her jeweled purple bra-like top snugly fits her upper body. The matching sparkling beaded sash around her hips moves with her body. Lining the walls of the stage the barefoot audience claps along with the beat of the music, cheering and yelping as belly dance instructor Alyssa Springs moves gracefully around the room with her long, brown hair brushing her lower back.

Utilizing the pivot bump or hip bump, a signature belly dance move, Springs performs during World Belly Dance Day in Ferndale, Wash. on May 12. As she moves her hips and arms in circular motions, keeping encouragement, Elm smiles and laughs as she walks off the stage grabbing a drink of water. Thirty-one-year-old Springs has been belly dancing for almost nine years after taking it up in college. With no dance experience at all, Springs says she was nervous and begged her roommate to go with her to a belly dancing class. She says she thought everyone was going to be excellent belly dancers with beautiful bodies and she wouldn’t fit in.

“I couldn’t have been more wrong,” Springs says. “Everyone in the class was normal with normal abilities.” People are often nervous about going to fitness dance classes such as Zumba, Hot Hula Fitness and belly dance because they are self conscious about looking stupid and not knowing the dances, Springs says.

When people tell Springs they can’t belly dance because they can’t make their bodies move like experienced dancers can, she tells them to come to her class and she will teach them. She says there was a time she couldn’t belly dance either, but now she is an instructor and a performer. Everyone can belly dance and have fun. It’s all about promoting and improving your own self image, Springs says.

“We all have stomachs and we all have fat rolls. We all have the fat roll that hangs out under the bra strap,” Springs says. “It doesn’t matter.”

The more someone sticks with dance classes the more they are accepting of their own body. Springs says. No matter what gender, size or age people are, they can belly dance, Springs says. The youngest student Springs has taught was 4 years old, and the oldest was 76, she says. She has students in her classes who are petite and some who are larger. She encourages everyone to try belly dancing and says it takes approximately six to 12 classes to catch on, so beginners shouldn’t get discouraged.

Kahley Blankenship, one of Springs’ students, has been belly dancing for a few months and says people of all sizes, from curvy to skinny, can do it. Her first time belly dancing was not easy. She says she was so frustrated she almost cried because she thought she would be able to do it right away. Blankenship says belly dancing takes time to learn, so it is important to practice, laugh at yourself, let go and have fun. She says belly dancing has helped with her confidence.

“It gave me an excuse to move my body in those different ways without feeling self conscious,” she says.

Senja Hinz, owner of La Vida Dance Studio in Bellingham, is 39 years old and has been dancing for 15 years. The signature belly dancing moves such as figure eights and hip and rib circles develop core muscles because they require a lot of muscle control, Hinz says. “Dance in general is a really good fat-burning exercise because you tend to use a lot of variation,” Hinz says.

Belly dancing is also good for women’s health and is particularly effective to promote fertility, because it uses a lot of the same muscles used during pregnancy, Hinz says. The abdominal muscles used while dancing create mobility in the pelvic area, which is good for childbirth, she says.

“[Belly dancing] has a sexual connection in our society, and it shouldn’t,” Blankenship says. “It is just a type of dance and exercise.”

Belly dancing is often falsely portrayed in America as an ancient, exotic dance form done by sexy girls with snakes wrapped around their necks and pots balancing on their heads. Springs says. While a costume can be revealing, its detail and intricate design is a part of the history and culture of belly dancing. The bright colors, jewels, beads and coins on the costume help with the entertainment aspect of belly dancing, Springs says.
KLIPSUN

is a Chinuk Wawa word meaning sunset.

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