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1,000 miles in their shoes
Living out of the pack, some hikers go the distance

Dancing with fire
The art of poi spins into Bellingham

Pursuit of hoppiness
Bellingham brewers don’t mind sharing
EDITOR’S NOTE

Dear reader,

Standing on the front row bleachers at the fairgrounds, I could smell acrid gasoline plummeting from the exhaust pipes of 10 demolition cars about 500 feet away. My older brother aimed his camera at the line of cars, which looked like colorful beetles from where we stood.

“I can’t see anything from here,” he said. “Let’s go.”
We made our way down to the security tent nudged between the audience and the demolition ring. A man in aviators and a bright blue security jacket stood at the entrance with his arms folded.

“You can’t come back here,” he said.

My brother pulled out his laminated photo pass and pushed past the guard.

“John says it’s alright,” he said. “You can ask him.”
Before the guard had a chance to find out John was not a real person, we made a beeline for the backstage entrance, ducking under the “Do Not Enter” tape roping off the outdoor arena. My brother snapped away as cars smashed into one another less than 20 feet from his lens.

A deafening crunch ripped through the night air as two cars collided head-on. A tire tore off the heap of metal, skidding rapidly through the dust an arm’s length from where I stood. One thought played over and over in my head: I shouldn’t be here.

Security boundaries like this protect photographers from getting hurt; but when is a boundary too strict? Physical and psychological boundaries exist in every facet of life. In this issue of Klipsun, we explore the limits of limitations.

You will learn about Bellingham’s place in Cascadia’s imaginary border, and the all-too-real US/Canadian border, how extreme hikers push their bodies to the breaking point and how a group of performers can dance with fire without getting burned.

I was lucky to walk away from the demolition derby intact when I defied the only rule meant to keep me safe. When you read this issue, consider why you adhere to some boundaries, and rebel against others. Where do you draw the line between limitation and limitless indulgence? After all, even rebels need rules.

Marissa Abruzzini
Editor in Chief

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KLIPSUN
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FALL 2012
Dancing With Fire

Story and Photos by Jenny Hoang

ABOVE: Two gas-soaked, fire-resistant tethers of Kevlar hang from chains. The chains are swung around in patterns to create the art of firepoi.

large patterns of fire illuminate the crisp autumn air in front of a gathering of excited spectators. The odor of kerosene lingers on the 1900 block of Lakeway Drive. Western junior Joel Yanagimachi, 20, and friends gather in celebration of the start of the new school year. Their method of jubilation involves whirling flames around their bodies. Fire poi spinning and other forms of object manipulation, like hula hooping, are becoming a popular trend in performance, says Brooke Lee Ross, 27.

When I started hooping, it was hard to find people to hoop with, says Western senior Mario Sheldon, 21. He uses Kevlar because it absorbs fuel but does not burn.

The two main fuels used for fire poi are kerosene and campfire fuel, also known as white gas. Sheldon uses kerosene because it will not catch clothes on fire easily and it burns yellow. Camp fuel burns white at a lower temperature, but is more susceptible to burn clothing.

Alcohol-based fuels, which combine different types of chemicals to create different colored fire are also used, Yanagimachi says. Sheldon and Yanagimachi began spinning poi years ago when friends introduced the art to them.

“Spinning fire is meditative and it also promotes a certain level of discipline because you have to train your body movements and you have to practice patterns. The fire aspect makes it more ceremonial and sacred,” Sheldon says. “The slight amount of danger makes it more exciting.”

Yanagimachi describes it as the transference of energy through material. Poi spinners manipulate energy through the objects and create a unique expression.

Sheldon’s first experience spinning fire occurred during his freshman year in downtown Bellingham at 5 p.m. An experienced friend of his ushered him to spin a pair of Kevlar poi lit in flames. Before that incident, he spun poi made of sock for a year.

“I was surprised to find that the fire poi were actually quite loud and I could hear the motion of the poi spinning around my head and it gave me such a three-dimensional multi-sensory experience,” Sheldon says.

Yanagimachi’s first experience spinning fire was in January 2012. Sheldon was hosting a workshop on poi techniques and showed his fire poi to Yanagimachi. Before that, he had been spinning poi made of LED glow sticks since junior year of high school.

After Sheldon introduced fire poi to Yanagimachi his freshman year, he decided to create his own.

“Being able to manipulate fire is something really unique. It is so powerful and dangerous, but with poi, I can really have some control over fire,” Yanagimachi says.

In 2011, Ross and a friend started weekly gatherings in Bellingham’s Locust Beach for all forms of fire spinning. People started arriving with all forms of fire toys. Since then, they created an entertainment group called the Locust Fire Conclave, and perform at local music festivals like Wizards Conclave, and perform at local music festivals like Wizards of the North Kaskades and the Outdoor Sounds Festival in Bellingham.

Her main concern when playing with fire is safety.

“I definitely have scars from hooping with fire. I’ve seen hair and leggings in flames,” says Ross.

Her main safety guidelines are: always have a safety person with a blanket to put out the flame, always keep hair tied up, always wear 100 percent natural fibers, and crowd control.

“Fire is dangerous and it takes skill to work with,” Ross says.

There is a wide range of fire-object manipulation toys to perform which evolved from the traditional style of the Maori. Sheldon recently started using a double fire staff involving two poles, three-feet long each, with Kevlar weights at the ends of each.

There are also other fire toys, including a fire hoop, fire meteor hammers, fire whips, fire swords, fire fans, and other ways to manipulate fire, says Sheldon.

For Ross, her exciting new creations are fire tassels for her burlesque shows. She aspires to evolve as a performer of fire and arts.

“The magical thing about spinning is that everyone just wants to connect,” Ross says.

For this reason, she recently created a free weekly event Wednesday evenings at the Wild Buffalo for community members to get together and spin.

“I think it is worthwhile to take time out of your schedule to turn off your mind and spin. You lose yourself in the world of hooping,” says Ross.

While these Wednesday night spin jams do not involve fire, it is a precursor to aspiring spinners who wish to learn more. With enough practice and dedication, people who spin object manipulation toys can eventually master the art of fire spinning as Yanagimachi, Ross, and Sheldon have.

ABOVE: Two gas-soaked, fire-resistant tethers of Kevlar hang from chains. The chains are swung around in patterns to create the art of firepoi.

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Turning on his implanted electronic ear for the first time was frightening. “With hearing aids, sound just kind of naturally flows, but with the implant, I was more feeling the sound because of the electrical process,” Western senior Thomas Guidon says. “I was picking up sounds my hearing aids didn’t, and at first I didn’t recognize them. I didn’t recognize my dad’s voice.”

Guidon, 22, decided to get a cochlear implant in August 2010, after therapists at Western’s Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic encouraged him to consider the operation.

He is one of more than 71,000 Americans with a cochlear implant – a device that mechanically transmits sound, sending electrical currents directly to the auditory nerve inside the ear, bypassing the outer ear entirely.

Patients can get an implant in both ears, or in one, as Guidon did. Guidon says it was both a matter of cost (his insurance wouldn’t cover the cost of both) and of permanence – he wanted to leave room for other options if technology advances in his lifetime. He has an implant in his left ear and a hearing aid for his right.

Although many with severe to profound nerve deafness or hearing loss benefit from cochlear implants, they are not right for everyone.

Western junior Christopher Headland has enlarged vestibular aqueduct (EVA) syndrome, where parts of his inner ear are enlarged, which limits his hearing.

For people with EVA, a blow to the head can make the aqueducts swell even more and cause instant hearing loss, Headland says.

As a goalkeeper for his high school soccer team, Headland thought he could avoid such blows, but accidents are unpredictable. During a game, another player hit him in the head and all the hearing in his right ear instantly dropped to nothing.

Headland has used hearing aids in both ears since elementary school.

He opted not to get an implant, knowing it would be permanent and change the way he hears, and instead chose a steroid injection to reduce the swelling. His doctor injected the steroid through his eardrum into the inner ear.

Although not all patients respond to this treatment, Headland says. “I was picking up sounds my hearing aids didn’t, and at first I didn’t recognize them. I didn’t recognize my dad’s voice.”

- Thomas Guidon

“Sometimes it can be like turning up the volume on a bad speaker,” Watson says. “Sometimes it just makes the distorted sound louder.”

For these patients, cochlear implants can drastically change the amount of sound the inner ear receives, simulating natural hearing. However, the sound transmitted by the implant is very different from sound transmitted through other sports injuries, he recovered from the procedure about five more times.

Each patient must weigh the benefits and downsides of receiving cochlear implants. Some, like Headland, may actually hear better with hearing aids than with the implant. But others, like Guidon, may be able to expand their hearing range and access new sounds.

Associate professor Kimberly Peters, head of the aural rehabilitation clinic in the department of communication sciences and disorders at Western, says many people do not understand why someone would not want to use available technology to treat profound deafness.

“I think it’s good to know this technology is only one option,” Peters says. “Many adults have been profoundly deaf for many years and implants may not be a good choice for them.”

Peters studies cochlear implants and says the optimal time for implantation is before the age of two. Implants can be placed in patients ranging from 12 months old to elderly, but many families feel implants are not for them, Peters says.

Implants do not always make communication easier for deaf adults, especially those who are accustomed to using American Sign Language. Peters says. Guidon was already accustomed to lip-reading, which makes him an unusual case, Peters says.

Since Guidon was not screened for hearing loss at birth, he was not diagnosed with profound hearing loss until he was about 18 months old. His parents took it upon themselves to learn sign language and teach it to their son, sending him to public school where he had a translator from kindergarten through high school. He relies on reading lips when he removes the implant’s outer piece and only uses his hearing aid.

Stacey Watson, an audiologist at Swedish Medical Center in Seattle, says hearing aids, which amplify sound, only help people with severe to profound hearing loss to a certain extent.

“Sometimes it can be like turning up the volume on a bad speaker,” Watson says. “Sometimes it just makes the distorted sound louder.”

For these patients, cochlear implants can drastically change the amount of sound the inner ear receives, simulating natural hearing. However, the sound transmitted by the implant is very different from sound transmitted through

Hearing the world with electronic precision

Story by Samantha Wohlfeil
Photo by Samantha Heim
Illustration by Adam Bussing

This page features a diagram of the human ear and the components of a cochlear implant, including the external ear canal, tympanic membrane, malleus (hammer), incus (anvil), stapes (stirrup), cochlea, auditory nerve, electrodes, receiver/stimulator, microphone, and transmitter.

For more information or to schedule an interview, contact Kimberly Peters, head of the aural rehabilitation clinic, at 360-352-4664 or kpeters@washington.edu.
When he first started using his implant, he had to adapt to sounds he could not hear with hearing aids.

Guidon says he was studying with a friend one day when he heard a ticking sound. His first thought was something had gone wrong and his implant was broken.

“Told my friend and she said, ‘Oh, no, that’s just a clock,’” Guidon says.

Many high frequency sounds, like air conditioning in classrooms or the rattling of a doorknob, took time to get used to, Guidon says.

He talked to himself to get used to the sounds of speech, starting with the alphabet and moving on to words and sentences.

Getting the implant gave Guidon the confidence he needed to decide to become a teacher. He joined Woodring College a year after getting the surgery and is now practicing teaching in Bellingham at Kulshan Middle School.

“I don’t think I would have gone down the teaching path without it,” he says. “I rely on it in my teaching classes and when I’m working with students.”

He says working with students in a classroom can be difficult, and he has to be strict about making kids raise their hands to be called on because it is hard for him to tell the direction sound from the implant is coming from.

During therapy Guidon takes out the hearing aid he wears in his right ear, and tries listening while Peters talks with a hand in front of her mouth. He says this helps him not rely on lip reading.

Although some people use cochlear implants to talk on the phone, Guidon says that would be too difficult for him right now.

“I don’t think I would pick up enough of what people are saying, and asking them to repeat every sentence would be frustrating for them,” he says. Without missing a beat he quickly adds, “Women try calling me but I tell them I can only text. My friends tell me I’m lucky.”

Like Guidon, many are eager to see how cochlear implant technology will advance and what other options may become available in the near future. Peters says the next step may be developing an implant that is completely internal.

the normal hearing process, according to the Food and Drug Administration, which oversees the production of all cochlear implants.

The external part of the device transmits a magnetic signal to a receiver under the skin, which electrically stimulates the cochlea. The cochlea activates the auditory nerve, and sends a message the brain perceives as sound. It can take months of speech and hearing therapy for recipients to learn how to interpret sounds coming from the device. This is especially true for those who get the implant later in life. It took about a month for Guidon to start recognizing sounds and speech.

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### Sound settings on a cochlear implant

1. **General**: Transmits sound from all directions without filtering out frequencies.
2. **Reduce Sound**: If Guidon is at a club with friends and wants to focus on what they’re saying, he can switch off the loud background noise.
3. **Forward Direction**: This setting transmits only sound from directly in front of him, perfect for a conversation.
4. **Music**: Guidon can hook his iPod directly into the implant to listen to music.

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Tyson found that black students who were accused of “acting white” often felt the need to conform to the stereotypes of their race, preventing them from developing their own identities.

Glenn Tsunokai, a professor of sociology at Western whose research largely focuses on racial and ethnic issues, says the phenomena of sticking to friend groups within one’s own race is common.

“We tend to gravitate toward people who we think are most like us,” he says. “We are going to go to the area of least resistance, and we will go to people who are more like us.”

Going to predominantly white schools in Bremerton, Wash., Western student Natasia Brooks, who is of mixed Filipino and black descent, struggled to identify with both of her ethnicities.

“The biggest trouble for me is balancing,” Brooks says. “I think it was easier for her to identify as Filipino than black in the predominantly white culture she grew up in because there were more Filipino people around her. “I think I met one black person at my high school who [wasn’t mixed],” Brooks says. “But then I felt intimidated, like, ‘What if I talk to this person and they don’t think I’m black enough?’”

Growing up in Washington, Brooks was always closer to her mother’s Filipino side of the family, who lives in the area, than she was to her dad’s side, who is in Memphis.

“It’s been tough with my black culture, because there is not really much to go off of,” Brooks says. “You have to actually seek them out to get that culture feeling. It’s easier with Filipino people because they were everywhere in Bremerton.”

Identifying with more than one culture has been a complicated balancing act for Brooks, but she finds comfort in her family.
After scarfing down 100 jalapeño peppers in less than 15 minutes at an eating contest in New Mexico, Erik “The Red” Denmark begins to feel the consequences of his actions — gurgling in his stomach. The volcanic eruption of jalapeño juice makes its way up his airway. In fear of being disqualified, he covers his mouth, but the juices run straight through his nostrils and streamline on the pavement in front of him.

“I ate maybe ten more after I was able to survive that moment,” Denmark says.

Major League Eating began in 1916 and since then organized eating contests have flourished at county and state fairs across the United States. Food challenges in restaurants have become popular spectacles for customers with a serious appetite to win cash or prizes. Although there is money at stake, Denmark says, this sport is about the fun of it is putting a group of crazy, eclectic and intense people [together] who are willing to push their bodies to extreme lengths and see what they can do.

With an urge to prove himself to his fans and friends, Denmark says his competitive nature and knack for quickly eating large amounts are what keeps his motivation and need to travel to contests, which he finally paid off last year. 

“Whenever you’re going outside of your basic hunger and fullness cues, you’re giving your body a whole ton of mixed messages,” Richey says.

“I’ve always eaten really fast,” Denmark says. “You either have to have a huge capacity [for food] or you have to be able to eat super fast naturally.”

In 2006, Denmark racked up a $5,000 credit card bill due to traveling to contests, which he finally paid off last year. On average, Denmark says he makes $10,000 each year from competitive eating contests and appearances.

Denmark spends weeks working on expanding his stomach with daily capacity training. His regime — which alternates in accordance with his challenges — includes rigorous hours, sometimes weeks, of binging inside his Seattle home. When he is not in “hot dog season,” which is from May to July until Nathan’s on July Fourth, his average dinner is a two to three pound bowl of salad and a gallon of water to wash it down.

Denmark says working out his jaw muscles by chewing gum on a regular basis is another part of the preparation process before a challenge.

“It takes a while to get your jaw muscles to grow,” Denmark says. “They are really lean muscles — you have to work at it day in and day out in order to get them to adjust to the intense mashing, mashing, mashing you’re going to do with them.”

“The biggest thing is that you can’t get into your head. When you start thinking how full you are, you’re done.”

- Jonathan Bayly Peterson

Three months before Denmark’s hot dog eating skills are put to the test in New York, he mimics the contest in his kitchen once or twice a week. He cooks up 30 to 40 hot dogs, times himself and eats them in ten minutes. When May rolls around, that routine triples weekly.

“[It’s] miserable training,” Denmark says. “I’m in a constant state of complete discomfort and then recovery.”

The recovery process leaves Denmark’s body with a feeling of fullness, but he says he craves comfort food even though his hunger cues aren’t telling him he needs to eat.

“It’s at least 24 to 48 hours before I eat something out of necessity,” he says. “It’s uncomfortable and there is a bunch of time spent in the bathroom expunging whatever you put your body through, and that can be painful too.”

Richey says the stress put on the digestive track during these contests — and the training — causes the heart to pump harder, as well as potentially causing a gastric impact. The “impact” is constipation that comes with eating foods that are low in fiber and high in fat, such as hot dogs.

“Whenever you’re going outside of your basic hunger and fullness cues, you’re giving your body a whole ton of mixed messages,” Richey says.

Denmark says the psychological part of it is the hardest to deal with — he tries to zone out mentally during contests and focus on how he’ll eat rather than what he’s eating. Richey says the stomach can expand and contract and is a muscle that can adapt to certain feeding patterns such as Denmark’s.

“‘I see patients with binge eating problems ingesting 5,000 to 10,000 calories a day,’” Richey says. “‘Taking in that volume is a tolerance they build up so they don’t go into extreme cardiac arrest.’

When at competitions, Denmark says fellow eaters are filled with intensity.

“When you’re at the table, it’s a dogfight with barbaric action,” he says. “It’s a combination of pressure and adrenaline [and] I have to get into a zen meditation in the last hour before the contest.”

Outside the contests, he says his competitors are actually some of his closest friends whose talent he admires. “Everyone is certainly bonded by the bizarre crazy thing we consider to be a profession of ours,” he says. “A lot of the fun of it is putting a group of crazy, eclectic and intense people together who are willing to push their bodies to extreme lengths and see what they can do.”

Since becoming a competitive eater, he says he hasn’t dealt with high blood pressure, high cholesterol or obesity from it. If he doesn’t practice for a while, his stomach goes back to its normal size, he says.

“It’s not like it stays stretched out like a popped balloon — your stomach is very strong,” he says. “It’s pretty resilient [and will] stretch out as far as you want to get it. It’s amazing that you can fit 20 pounds of food and liquid [in it] in ten minutes; it doesn’t seem humanly possible.”

AB Crepes in downtown Bellingham offers a food challenge in which two participants are required to eat 26 crepes in one hour. Jonathan Bayly Peterson, one of the owners, holds the individual record of eating 15 crepes. A total of 25 teams attempted the challenge, but no one has succeeded. To ease the gorging process, Peterson rolls the crepes up, dunks them in strawberry syrup and just chews, swallows, chews and swallows. “I had zero thoughts about how I felt or what it tasted like,” Peterson says. “All I wanted to do was chew and swallow. The biggest thing is that you can’t get into your head. When you start thinking how full you are, you’re done.”

Since 2006 Denmark has competed in about 35 contests each year. This summer marks his seventh consecutive year participating in what he refers to as the “Superbowl of competitive eating,” Nathan’s Hot Dog Eating Contest in New York. By eating 38 hot dogs in ten minutes, Denmark placed sixth.

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“They want press, they want people shooting and because of that they typically tend to be a little more lenient.”

Sometimes popular bands have stricter photo policies, allowing photographers to shoot only the first two or three songs of their sets, he says. This can sometimes lead to confusion between security and photographers.

A security guard tapped Schmidt on the shoulder while he was trying to shoot during the middle of a Curtains for You set and told him he couldn’t shoot.

“I don’t see why they even make [photographers] come if they’re not going to let us do our job,” Schmidt says.

His supervisors reviewed the band’s contract and found no restrictions placed on photos. However, The Head and the Heart, the night’s headlining act, did not want videos taken of their set. Once this was communicated to security, Schmidt was promptly let back in and continued clicking away with his camera.

Maia Newell-Large, house manager at Mt. Baker Theatre, says open photo policies are typical of the smaller bands that play at the venue.

Well-known headlining acts are prone to placing restrictions on photographers, even if they have a press pass.

Schmidt, who is also a musician, says the three-song rule is one he can respect from a performers’ perspective.

“As a photographer, I know I can get in someone’s face and I can imagine that could get pretty distracting,” he says.

“It kind of sucks because once we get out of the way the performers will do some crazy thing we didn’t get a shot of.”

Western Alumnus Preston Hall, owner of Bellingham-based Cobalt Multimedia, says bigger bands are typically more resistant to being photographed because music labels don’t like other people making profits off artists they represent.

“The bigger the agency, the more they’re going to have these draconian rules and regulations,” Hall says.

Mt. Baker Theatre’s overall photo policy is no flash photography, regardless of the event; but sometimes they have no choice but to bend the rules. With some of the bigger
Music in downtown Bellingham will ask the photographer case, if someone were to take a photo with flash, it might be usually quiet, in their seats and listening to the music. In that says. “We’re just trying to keep order and keep much we can do [about photography] in that situation,” she says booking agent Austin Santiago. At “the Buff,” as Bellingham locals call it, anyone is allowed to shoot anything they’d like as long depending on the venues, the artists and who is trying to pho- tograph, there’s a citizen photographer with big 70-to-200 millimeter lens shooting from the stands, Schmidt says. Instead of shooting with a telephoto, Schmidt took a chance when he snuck onto the Bumbershoot main stage. Although security didn’t let him stay up front, he was allowed to shoot from the side. The scope of shooting photos or video at a concert ranges depending on the venues, the artists and who is trying to pho- tograph. This is not always ideal for that citizen photographer in the stands with the telephoto lens, but for people like Schmidt, the restrictions can help him do his job and musi- cians can showcase their talents with minimal distractions.

“I'm not trying to answer questions with a venue [the size of the Wild Buffalo] you’re not going to have any problems with photography,” Santiago says. While this may be the case for a small venue such as the Buff, bigger venues and music festivals sometimes can run into more issues when it comes to photography, Santiago says. Hall, who is also the art and sponsorship director for the festival for the first time this year. One of the festival’s headlining bands started sending security through the crowd to tell people they couldn’t take photos. “They sent out their minions and bouncers to make us put our [cameras] down,” Hall says. Summer Meltdown is a small music festival held in Dar-lington, Wash., and is known for having an open atmosphere. Due to this, people got upset when they were told they couldn’t shoot, Hall says. This attempt from record labels to control every aspect of their bands is somewhat futile, Hall says. With the introd- uction of new technologies such as camera phones, there is only so much they can do to protect that image, he says. “There was a time when absolutely no camera could get inside The Gorge Amphitheatre, no way, no how,” Hall says. “Now, it’s only professional detachable lens cameras that are banned because everything is built into a cell phone so it’s like, ‘what can they do?’ I think that fact alone is breaking the industry rule.” With little control over the abundance of cell phone cam- eras passing through concert gates, most venues and artists turn to banning professional single-lens reflex cameras, which have detachable lenses and have better image quality than point-and-shoot cameras. “It would be frustrating if you work to get your press pass and you get in there and there’s a citizen photographer with their big 70-to-200 millimeter lens shooting from the stands,” Schmidt says. Instead of shooting with a telephoto, Schmidt took a chance when he snuck onto the Bumbershoot main stage. Although security didn’t let him stay up front, he was allowed to shoot from the side. The scope of shooting photos or video at a concert ranges depending on the venues, the artists and who is trying to pho- tograph. This is not always ideal for that citizen photographer in the stands with the telephoto lens, but for people like Schmidt, the restrictions can help him do his job and musi- cians can showcase their talents with minimal distractions.

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“Ninety percent of the times with a venue [the size of the Wild Buffalo] you’re not going to have any problems with photography,” Santiago says. While this may be the case for a small venue such as the Buff, bigger venues and music festivals sometimes can run into more issues when it comes to photography, Santiago says. Hall, who is also the art and sponsorship director for the festival for the first time this year. One of the festival’s headlining bands started sending security through the crowd to tell people they couldn’t take photos. “They sent out their minions and bouncers to make us put our [cameras] down,” Hall says. Summer Meltdown is a small music festival held in Dar-lington, Wash., and is known for having an open atmosphere. Due to this, people got upset when they were told they couldn’t shoot, Hall says. This attempt from record labels to control every aspect of their bands is somewhat futile, Hall says. With the introd- uction of new technologies such as camera phones, there is only so much they can do to protect that image, he says. “There was a time when absolutely no camera could get inside The Gorge Amphitheatre, no way, no how,” Hall says. “Now, it’s only professional detachable lens cameras that are banned because everything is built into a cell phone so it’s like, ‘what can they do?’ I think that fact alone is breaking the industry rule.” With little control over the abundance of cell phone cam- eras passing through concert gates, most venues and artists turn to banning professional single-lens reflex cameras, which have detachable lenses and have better image quality than point-and-shoot cameras. “It would be frustrating if you work to get your press pass and you get in there and there’s a citizen photographer with their big 70-to-200 millimeter lens shooting from the stands,” Schmidt says. Instead of shooting with a telephoto, Schmidt took a chance when he snuck onto the Bumbershoot main stage. Although security didn’t let him stay up front, he was allowed to shoot from the side. The scope of shooting photos or video at a concert ranges depending on the venues, the artists and who is trying to pho- tograph. This is not always ideal for that citizen photographer in the stands with the telephoto lens, but for people like Schmidt, the restrictions can help him do his job and musi- cians can showcase their talents with minimal distractions.

Human pelvic bone inlays, fossilized whale jawbones and insects are what 22-year-old Neill Slack likes to exhibit on his body. Adorned in exquisite gems the size of Ping-pong balls, Slack’s stretched ears dangle and reflect a glint of light. Only two of his 13 facial piercings remain unstretched. He stands behind a glass counter at Evolve Body Jewelry Company and Professional Body Piercing surrounded by a plethora of exotic jewelry as he informs customers about proper piercing care.

Ear stretching was a modification practiced by affluent figures including The Buddha, King Tut and Siddhartha Gautama, Slack says. The material they wore in their earlobes served as a symbol of status, Evolve Manager Paul Tohill says. Today, anyone can have stretched ears as it becomes more common and accepted, he says. Tohill has been stretching his ears for nine years. He says the best way to stretch ears is to be patient because the longer people wait, the easier the next stretch will be. “It’s not a race and you don’t get extra cool points if you stretch your ears the fastest,” Slack says.

Professionals like Tohill and Slack advise to invest in quality jewelry, but Tschida says she couldn’t afford proper earrings and her earlobe shrunk as a result. In the beginning of Tschida’s process, her ears emitted an odor when she developed funky ear cheese, she says.

The ancient practice continues to grow as people stretch their ears for aesthetic pleasure, sometimes without an end result in mind. They express themselves with their personal taste in jewelry, and modify preconceived bodily limits.
Some hikers push these limits and travel thousands of miles transcending geographical frontiers while carrying the most basic supplies to escape a culturally constructed society. Jake Merrill, excursions assistant coordinator for the Associated Students Outdoor Center, knows firsthand what this escape can feel like. Merrill assists the Outdoor Center by leading trips and understands why long-distance backpacking trips draw people in.

“People go out to seek solitude,” Merrill says. “I think that more and more people will seek this out as time goes on and our society becomes more and more crowded.”

In fact, 141.1 million Americans took part in outdoor leisure activities in 2011, according to a study done by the Outdoor Industry Association—the highest recorded number in the U.S. in the last five years.

Levin pushes this to the extreme and is one of 155 people to complete hiking the Triple Crown, which includes the Pacific Crest Trail, Appalachian Trail and the Continental Divide Trail. At 18, Levin began hiking the 2,180-mile Appalachian Trail, which stretches from Georgia to Maine, quickly igniting his growing addiction for long-distance backpacking trips draw people in.

“People go out to seek solitude,” Merrill says. “I think that more and more people will seek this out as time goes on and our society becomes more and more crowded.”

“Somehow I got it in my head that I would just go and do the Appalachian Trail,” he says. “I never saw hiking by myself as a barrier.”

Levin completed the other two portions of the crown with his partner at the time, Heather Anderson. They both received their recognition for completing the Triple Crown at the American Long Distance Hiking Association West gathering in 2007.

Levin started out on the Appalachian Trail with a 63-pound backpack. Levin now works to maintain a base weight, the mass of the non-consumable items in a pack, of eight to 12 pounds. With food and water in stow, he aims for a total weight of 20 to 25 pounds.

Other hikers prefer to bring more necessities with them when they travel far from civilization. For a 10-day backpacking trip, Western junior Meredith Stevenson takes a total weight of 20 to 25 pounds.

Levin is training to hike the Pacific Crest Trail alone in spring 2014, and will hike about 600 miles on the Washington portion of the trail with a friend this summer. Stevenson says she likes solo hiking the best because it gives her relief and solitude to think. While she says society over romanticizes being out in the wild, being alone and defenseless in nature is something that encourages her to travel so far from civilization.

“The only companion you have if you’re out at night,” Stevenson says. “It’s just this feeling that I can’t go anywhere else, it’s like a joy beyond belief.”

Last summer, Stevenson hiked through the Three Sisters Wilderness in Oregon, another portion of the Pacific Crest Trail. With a map printed off the Internet, Stevenson looked across a snow-finned valley in the Three Sisters Wilderness, trying to make out the trail underneath the snow. She says even with her map-reading skills, staying on path was difficult.

She says being in nature heights her senses. It brings her out of a numbness that eats at her day by day and allows her to appreciate normal pieces of her life, like drinking a cup of coffee.

“Everything is just so wonderful out there,” Stevenson says.

This is not always the case, and sometimes traces of civilization find their way onto the trail. With each step toward the 4,200-foot summit of Mount Washington in the Presidential Range of the Appalachian Trail, Levin’s feet shuffled past shattered beer bottles trapped between blades of alpine meadow grass and a wrinkled candy wrapper caught in the wind. As he looked up through the fog, he could not make out the view of the summit, which was bursting with more than 100 tourists that took the road up and were leisurely strolling through the gift shop.

“I’ve hiked 2,000 miles to get here and you drive up here in flip-flops and a Hawaiian shirt,” Levin says. “It’s like tourist America in all its glory.”

Levin says he did indulge in buffets whenever he got the opportunity while passing through a town. He says he would eat seven to 10 plates of food, and then two hours later he would be hungry again. The physical exhaustion of backpacking would catch up to him occasionally and a buffet was perfect because he could get a lot of food and he didn’t have to cook it himself on a measly camp stove, he says.

Going into town can also mean reentering the social
norms, which Levin says he always enjoyed breaking. “When you’re out on the trail, you’re just backpacking so everyone is dirty, everyone is sweaty, everyone is tired,” Levin says. “When you’re in town, now you’re the unusual person.”

Levin says in towns he was often mistaken for a homeless person. He has even had people offer him leftover take-out boxes and direct him to shelters and free meals. While he appreciates the gestures, he says he finds the exchange humorous because, in a way, homeless people are also outside the confines of society, Levin says.

“I was dirty, smelly, [had a] big beard, [and was] fairly skinny,” Levin says. “[I looked like] a homeless person with really expensive equipment.”

Back out on the trail, Levin was less concerned with his appearance, and more focused on long-distance backpacking, making sure to maintain a steady pace and get through any obstacles such as the Kings River crossing and many others. On the other side of the strong current, Levin had just leaped through the freezing waters of river. He exchanged his cold, nearly-frozen clothes for all the dry clothing he had in his pack and sat, wrapped in his sleeping bag in a warm beam of sunshine. He shivered in the sunlight for nearly 45 minutes until his body got warm enough to keep hiking.

While some may be turned off by strong icy currents or unmarked snow covered trails, Levin and others find themselves drawn to it. This fascination fueled Levin’s 7,900 mile journey, one he says had a bittersweet ending. He says as his feet met the end of the Continental Divide Trail in 2006, which completed his journey on the Triple Crown, he grew sad because there were no more paths to walk; it was done. Being off the trail would force him to enter back into society, but only until finances and time allow him to immerse himself in nature once again.

Above: Levin is one of only 155 people to complete hiking the 7,900 mile Triple Crown. He was awarded a plaque commemorating his achievement at the 2007 American Long Distance Hiking Association West gathering.

Below: Levin celebrates on the summit of Mount Katahdin, the last peak on the Appalachian Trail.

Left: Nacho Vaz, Remy Levin and Shawn “Pepper” Forry, hitchhike out of Salmon, Idaho.

Right: Levin has collected multiple pairs of New Balance tennis shoes from his hikes. He prefers tennis shoes over traditional hiking boots.

Photo by Heather Anderson

Photo by Ian Couch

Photo courtesy of Remy Levin

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Cascadia. For many, the word evokes images of cool, rainy forests and mountains topped with snow and evergreen trees, all within sight of the Pacific Ocean. For others, the term is much more meaningful, and represents an ideal future where they are no longer Americans, but rather, Cascadians.

Cascadia is a bioregion, an area with a common ecosystem and distinct flora and fauna, according to the activist group Cascadia Matters. The group’s website describes Cascadia as extending along the West Coast. It is most commonly thought of as synonymous with the Pacific Northwest, although it extends a bit beyond that, as far north as Alaska and as far east as Montana.

“I think that if Cascadia really were a place, not only would we probably be one of the most progressive countries, but we’d also be one of the greenest countries,” says Kelton Sears, a Seattle University student who identifies as a Cascadian. “Our economy would be great, and I think people would just generally be happier.”

Sears says that he, like many other Cascadians, does not expect a secession to happen anytime soon. While there are some radicals, he says, most Cascadians do not seek to force a separation between Cascadia and the rest of North America. Instead, Sears believes that sometime in the near future, the US as we know it will cease to function and will be naturally divided into smaller nations.

“I don’t think Cascadia is ever going to become a country unless something pretty drastic happens to the nation,” Sears says. He adds that something drastic would not be historically unprecedented. “Our country is honestly due for a restructuring.”

The idea of Cascadian autonomy is not new. The dream is older than the states it spans. According to the Cascadian Independence Project, President Thomas Jefferson envisioned the land he sent Lewis and Clark to explore as the “Republic of the Pacific,” a potentially independent nation. While his letter to Lewis and Clark is a bit fuzzy on the details, the region’s potential for independence has stuck around.

This potential, coupled with concerns regarding the environment, that drove members of Cascadia Matters to create the documentary Occupied Cascadia. The film, starring members of environmental activist groups, representatives from the Native American community, scholars and even an astrologist, emphasizes the natural beauty of the region, and urges viewers to alter their way of life to be more sustainable.

Although it captures the political ideologies of the movement, the film focuses mainly on the environment and how humans are impacting it. This reflects what Sears describes as the average Cascadian mindset.

Casey Corcoran, the executive producer of Occupied Cascadia and a member of Cascadia Matters, says living off the land and gently using natural resources in Cascadia is the best option for people who are trying to make a difference.

“We find that there is an economy that predated the Western economy, and that economy was based on what the land provided,” Corcoran said after the film was shown at Western.

“This is one of the most abundant places in the world where we remove the suppression and the domestication from it,” Corcoran says.

Most people learn about Cascadia through beer or soccer, Sears says. But underneath it all is a value system, one that operates within the boundaries of the region. Maybe one day those boundaries will become political, marking a new nation. For now, most Cascadians are content with identifying with their bioregion, trading tips on the best regional brews and trying to live sustainably.
A Border Without A Fence
A new approach to border security in a post 9/11 world

Story by Mindon Win | Photo by Jenny Hoang

The unmarked red Chevy Tahoe drives along East Boundary Road into a small patch of sunshine. While Border Patrol Agents Jeffrey Jones and Colin Burgin get out of the car to switch seats, a marked Border Patrol car pulls up and Burgin goes to confer with the driver. Along the edge of the road is a ditch about three feet across and two feet deep.

“Ditch is all that separates the U.S. from Canada,” Jones says.

Burgin returns to the red Tahoe and both agents reenter the vehicle and continue driving along the largest shared border the U.S. has.

The U.S. Border Patrol operates with several other agencies under the Department of Homeland Security to secure the nation’s borders. In the year following 9/11 the focus of these agencies, and the Department of Homeland Security, was on preventing terrorists from entering the U.S. and that remains one of their highest priorities today.

But with only 2,000 agents covering approximately 5,500 miles of border from Maine to Alaska, securing a border that in some places is denoted by a ditch and in others by nothing, has become a reality with the introduction of new resources, technologies and relationships.

Historically the focus of U.S. Border Patrol has been on cross-border incidents by criminal organizations and related criminal activity, Western Professor Donald Alper says. Alper is also the Director for the Border Policy Research Institute (BPRI) and Center for Canadian-American Studies at Western.

Alper says that U.S. border enforcement’s primary mission is to protect the U.S. and its citizens from foreign threats and criminal activity. He says although in the last 15 to 20 years the focus has been on terrorism, that the majority of their operations still involve working to stop cross-border criminal activity, especially concerning illegal drugs, such as marijuana, MDMA and cocaine.

Jones says the purpose of the Border Patrol is two-fold: to facilitate legitimate trade and travel between the U.S. and its neighbors and to protect the nation’s borders. This means protecting everyone from intellectual property rights, Burgin says. Burgin described a recent seizure where Customs and Border Protection agents had stopped a shipment of Halloween costumes with dangerous levels of lead in the buttons.

Both Burgin and Jones are assigned to the Blaine sector, which includes Washington, Oregon and Alaska. They are two of the approximately 330 Border Patrol agents currently assigned to the sector, which has 812,998 square miles under its jurisdiction.

One relatively new technological advancement that is helping the Border Patrol in its ability to rapidly respond to cross-border activity in the is a system of 32 surveillance cameras deployed along the 40 miles of border starting at the Peace Arch and heading east to the North Cascade foothills. Each camera is mounted on a 60-foot tower and is controlled by operators back at the command post.

Jones says the use of the cameras along their stretch of border can be considered a force multiplier, meaning they can more efficiently use resources and agents along the border with the information they gather from the camera systems. By utilizing the right technology in the right areas, Jones says that the Border Patrol can be at its most effective.

“It’s about finding the balance between infrastructure, technology and manpower,” Jones says.

Jones and Burgin walk into the camera control room after making sure that any classified material is tucked away or turned off. 40 TV screens are along a way and several control consoles manned by camera operators face them, eyes perusing the big screen for a few seconds to see if anything out of the ordinary catches their eye.

After the intelligence has been gathered with the cameras, it can be used to prevent crime on both sides of the border, allowing law enforcement to transcend the national boundaries that have prevented such action in the past, says Associate Director of BPRI David Davidson.

Burgin, who spent eight years on the southern border, says that the level of international cooperation on the northern border is significantly more organized than in the southern border. U.S. law enforcement agencies work with their Royal Canadian Mounted Police counterparts to share information that has been gather, which in turn can prevent future cross border activity.

Although it is clear when someone illegally crosses the border or breaks the law, Davidson says the Border Patrol is limited in what they can do from their side of the border.

“A person can tromp around up to the border within the U.S. perfectly legally, but the second they step across [the border] they violate Canadian law,” Davidson says.

To counter this issue along the U.S. – Canada border, both countries are using Border-Enforcement Teams, or IBET, Alper says.

The IBET teams are staffed by both U.S. and Canadian personnel and focus on sharing intelligence to prevent and predict cross-border criminal activity, Alper says. The Blaine sector was not the first to utilize such international cooperation. Burgin says, but they were the first to formalize the arrangement that is now common along the entire northern border.

The IBET teams and similar programs being developed are helping to curb what he calls “trans-boundary activity,” or when people are illegally crossing between the United States and Canada, Davidson says.

Cross-border pursuits on land are made more difficult for both Border Patrol and RCMP given the terrain, but Davidson says that the IBET teams and training can allow for border enforcement from both countries to more effectively pursue criminals without having to worry about violating national sovereignty.

John Strauch, patrol agent of the Sumas station, says he can remember one case in particular where cooperation between RCMP, Border Patrol and other U.S. law enforcement agencies was fully utilized. In this particular case Canada Border Services, RCMP and U.S. Border Patrol had shared intelligence on what they believed was a smuggler tunnel going from the Canadian side under the border to the U.S. side, and at the time there was no law against tunneling under the border, Strauch says.

Ultimately Canada Border Services, RCMP and Border Patrol were able to gather the information they needed and the smugglers were arrested, Strauch says.

The use of international and interagency cooperation allows for system of interdependence in border security, Strauch says.

“Those kinds of relationships help the communities more than any one agency,” Strauch says.

Burgin and Jones stand under the Peace Arch as cars line up to enter the U.S. from Canada. A family is walking along the road as their children run between the towering white arch, going from the U.S. to Canada and back again. The border the children cross-west stretches for several thousand miles to the east. If they were a few hundred feet inland, they would have caught the attention of the nearest Border Patrol agent or surveillance tower, but for now they enjoy themselves in a park that defies the boundary that runs through it.
Leo Cohen dives to catch a ball on Western’s turf field.

Standing on the goal line, Western goalkeeper Leo Cohen is responsible for making sure the ball does not pass at all costs. But sometimes, even when he does prevent it from going in, the referee calls a goal.

“Those are moments when you just say, ‘Man that sucks,’” Cohen says. “But if the ref calls it, so what? You just have to look to the next game. There’s no point arguing about it.”

Throughout the history of soccer, many “ghost goals” have been scored. In all levels of soccer, the ball must cross the line entirely for the goal to count. It can be difficult for the referee to judge if the ball went in or not.

The clock does not stop in soccer and there are no timeouts or breaks during the game, so the referee cannot stop the game to change a call.

FIFA, the international federation that governs soccer, responded by adding a “fifth” official behind each goal, allowing the match to continue to be judged by people, keeping the game pure in the eyes of some. However, there have still been instances when the fifth official has missed it.

One idea to solve this problem is adopting goal-line technology.

Only two technology companies passed the first round of testing and are now vying to be chosen, according to the FIFA website.

Hawk-Eye Innovations Ltd. created a system using cameras to judge the position of the ball. The company is already used in tennis and cricket. Another company, GoalRef, uses magnetic strips in the ball to determine if it crosses the line.

Cohen doesn’t think goal-line technology will improve soccer.

“One of the greatest part of sports is the unpredictability of the game,” Cohen says. “It could also add more controversy. When a ref messes up you can almost forgive them because they are human. If a computer messes up, there’s going to be even more drama.”

Lance Calloway, executive director of the Whatcom Sports Commission and executive director of Whatcom County Youth Soccer, doesn’t like the idea of adding technology.

“You are playing the game with people and so it should be judged by people.”

-Lance Calloway

“Part of the game is having to deal with [the refs] and their calls,” Calloway says. “It’s more objective.”

FIFA has approved the use of goal-line technology in a few tournaments to test it in the 2014 World Cup.

“You are playing the game with people and so it should be judged by people,” Calloway says.

Darren Sawatzky, director of youth development for the Seattle Sounders FC and general manager and coach of the Sounders U23 team, (a team comprised of players all younger than 23 years old), thinks goal-line technology will improve the game.

“At the highest level of the game, things are decided by special moments from special players, even all the way back to the ’66 World Cup.” Sawatzky says. “It’s a game that can be decided by one goal and to have it come down to whether or not a ref saw it from 20 yards away — it just makes sense to have goal-line technology.”

Sawatzky played professionally in Major League Soccer and also played for the Sounders when they were part of the United Soccer League.

When he played, he remembers being frustrated with not getting a call. “It makes sense to have something help the referee when one team believes something happened while the other team believes the opposite,” Sawatzky says.

“As long as it doesn’t slow the game down or involve replays being reviewable, I am for it,” Sawatzky says. “It has to be black and white; it can’t have a gray area. It can’t affect the flow of the game.”

Those opposed to the technology think it could taint the purity of the game.

“Where do you draw the line?” Calloway says. “What’s the next thing to go? You might as well get rid of the person in the middle entirely and just have people using cameras to make all the calls.”

Goal-line technology is one of many ways soccer organizers are trying to make the game fairer.

“There have been changes that have really helped the game like the pass back rules and offsides rule changes,” Sawatzky says. “It’s people who don’t like change that are against it.”

With the aid of technology, soccer has a chance to improve the game and eliminate ghost goals for good.

Story by Kyle Elliott

Photo illustration by Samantha Heim

“Standing on the goal line, Western goalkeeper Leo Cohen is responsible for making sure the ball does not pass at all costs. But sometimes, even when he does prevent it from going in, the referee calls a goal.”

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A five classifications are whole medical systems, mind-body medicine is organized in five classifications, depending on what resources are used and how they are used. These strategically placed needles would help to ease her anxiety and cure a cold.

“Every little bug attacks me and my immune system can’t handle it,” Kirk says. “I initially went because of my anxiety, but now I am continuously going just so I can get healthy,” Kirk says. “I initially went because of my anxiety, but now I am continuously going just so I can be normal.”

After several reoccurring illnesses and hopeless visits to the doctor, Kirk’s mother suggested she try something new. “I initially went because of my anxiety, but now I am continuously going just so I can get healthy,” Kirk says. “I initially went because of my anxiety, but now I am continuously going just so I can be normal.”

Kelleher is now a health coach in Bellingham who teaches about alternative medicine and homeopathy. Many of her clients come to her as a last resort, frustrated with a lack of results from doctors, she says.

Kirk found herself in a similar situation. After visiting with a naturopath, she discovered several new allergies and was then referred to an acupuncturist.

“‘That wouldn’t be my first instinct like, ‘Oh you’re sick, you need to go to the acupuncturist.’ No, you go to the doctor, you get your cough medicine, you do this and that,’” Kirk says. “‘But I’ve been putting all this bad stuff in my body that it can’t handle. It’s all connected.’"

She now goes to the acupuncturist at least once a week. When she visits, her acupuncturist takes her pulse, checks her tongue and asks how she is feeling during each session. In addition to checking her physical health, she checks her general well-being by asking how life is going.

“Even though it’s only been two months, I can already feel a difference in my body and my openness,” Kirk says. “I feel more in control of my emotions and of my surroundings and my environment.”

Originating in ancient China, acupuncture is one of the many alternative treatments offered in today’s culture for many alternative treatments offered in today’s culture for those willing to look past scientific studies that claim there is little to no proven health impact.

“If you do acupuncture, there’s energy that’s getting stuck so health cannot be achieved,” Kelleher says. “They place needles at certain specific meridians in the body where energy is getting stuck or there’s not enough energy to flow through.”

Many clients who visit the acupuncturist first see a doctor, and if they have physical pain they are often referred to a chiropractor. Chiropractic healing uses manual therapy with the manipulation of the spine, other joints and soft tissues. It is also considered a form of alternative medicine. Alternative medicine also offers less invasive options that do not involve bones or needling.

Mind-body medicine gives a holistic approach to health that explores the interconnectedness in which mental, spiritual and behavioral factors can directly affect health. “The memory of a physical trauma sometimes gets locked up in the body,” Zhang says. “There’s a memory not only in the physical body but in your energy body. This will continue to cause problems like chronic pain.”

The most controversial classification of alternative medicine is Energy medicine, which uses the influence of energy fields that surround the body with alternating currents or pulsed fields. Reiki healing is the most well-known therapy in this classification.

It is a spiritual practice developed in 1922 by a Japanese Buddhist, and uses a technique called palm healing. It is believed to transfer universal energy through the palms, allowing for self-healing and a state of equilibrium.

“As a practitioner, I’m clearing away all the mental and emotional blockages so that the life force in everyone can operate as it should function normally,” Zhang says.

Despite arguments from the scientific community that alternative medicine is ineffective, many clients continue to stand by these less-invasive remedies.

“I definitely believe in Western medicine because all this money would not be pumped into something if it didn’t work,” Kirk says. “But if some things don’t work for people, it doesn’t hurt to try alternative methods.”

Finding the connection between mind, body and spirit is a common theme throughout alternative medicine, and mentally breaching the boundaries that are created by modern-day beliefs is part of the system.

“Our job is to wake up to what we’re supposed to be doing,” Kelleher says. “But it’s very hard to wake up when you’re sick, because most of your energy is going toward trying to get better. So when you start to get better, then you can start using your energy to focus on why you’re here and do your work. And that’s what I think is really beautiful - supporting people to be able to wake up to their journey.”

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**Photos by Rachel Lee**

**Story by Rachel Lee**

**Photos by Ian Couch**

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**CHANNELING ENERGY**

**EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE MEDICAL TECHNIQUES**

As soft Chinese chimes resonated through the dimly lit room, Western sophomore Stephanie Kirk relaxed comfortably on a cushioned table as 10 needles were inserted into her legs. These strategically placed needles would help to ease her anxiety and cure a cold.

“Every little bug attacks me and my immune system can’t handle it,” Kirk says. “I initially went because of my anxiety, but now I am continuously going just so I can get healthy,” Kirk says. “I initially went because of my anxiety, but now I am continuously going just so I can be normal.”

After several reoccurring illnesses and hopeless visits to the doctor, Kirk’s mother suggested she try something new. “I initially went because of my anxiety, but now I am continuously going just so I can get healthy,” Kirk says. “I initially went because of my anxiety, but now I am continuously going just so I can be normal.”

Kelleher is now a health coach in Bellingham who teaches about alternative medicine and homeopathy. Many of her clients come to her as a last resort, frustrated with a lack of results from doctors, she says.

Kirk found herself in a similar situation. After visiting with a naturopath, she discovered several new allergies and was then referred to an acupuncturist.

“‘That wouldn’t be my first instinct like, ‘Oh you’re sick, you need to go to the acupuncturist.’ No, you go to the doctor, you get your cough medicine, you do this and that,’” Kirk says. “‘But I’ve been putting all this bad stuff in my body that it can’t handle. It’s all connected.’"

She now goes to the acupuncturist at least once a week. When she visits, her acupuncturist takes her pulse, checks her tongue and asks how she is feeling during each session. In addition to checking her physical health, she checks her general well-being by asking how life is going.

“Even though it’s only been two months, I can already feel a difference in my body and my openness,” Kirk says. “I feel more in control of my emotions and of my surroundings and my environment.”

Originating in ancient China, acupuncture is one of the many alternative treatments offered in today’s culture for those willing to look past scientific studies that claim there is little to no proven health impact.

“If you do acupuncture, there’s energy that’s getting stuck so health cannot be achieved,” Kelleher says. “They place needles at certain specific meridians in the body where energy is getting stuck or there’s not enough energy to flow through.”

Many clients who visit the acupuncturist first see a doctor, and if they have physical pain they are often referred to a chiropractor. Chiropractic healing uses manual therapy with the manipulation of the spine, other joints and soft tissues. It is also considered a form of alternative medicine. Alternative medicine also offers less invasive options that do not involve bones or needling.

Mind-body medicine gives a holistic approach to health that explores the interconnectedness in which mental, spiritual and behavioral factors can directly affect health. “The memory of a physical trauma sometimes gets locked up in the body,” Zhang says. “There’s a memory not only in the physical body but in your energy body. This will continue to cause problems like chronic pain.”

The most controversial classification of alternative medicine is Energy medicine, which uses the influence of energy fields that surround the body with alternating currents or pulsed fields. Reiki healing is the most well-known therapy in this classification.

It is a spiritual practice developed in 1922 by a Japanese Buddhist, and uses a technique called palm healing. It is believed to transfer universal energy through the palms, allowing for self-healing and a state of equilibrium.

“As a practitioner, I’m clearing away all the mental and emotional blockages so that the life force in everyone can operate as it should function normally,” Zhang says.

Despite arguments from the scientific community that alternative medicine is ineffective, many clients continue to stand by these less-invasive remedies.

“I definitely believe in Western medicine because all this money would not be pumped into something if it didn’t work,” Kirk says. “But if some things don’t work for people, it doesn’t hurt to try alternative methods.”

Finding the connection between mind, body and spirit is a common theme throughout alternative medicine, and mentally breaching the boundaries that are created by modern-day beliefs is part of the system.

“Our job is to wake up to what we’re supposed to be doing,” Kelleher says. “But it’s very hard to wake up when you’re sick, because most of your energy is going toward trying to get better. So when you start to get better, then you can start using your energy to focus on why you’re here and do your work. And that’s what I think is really beautiful - supporting people to be able to wake up to their journey.”

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**“Even though it’s only been two months, I can already feel a difference in my body and my openness.”**

- Stephanie Kirk

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Western sophomore Stephanie Kirk goes in for acupuncture treatment once a week. She turned to acupuncture after becoming frustrated with traditional medicine.
Bellingham’s brewing community doesn’t mind sharing

Story by Maddy Mixter | Photos by Samantha Heim

A wall of smell — a yeasty, hoppy and slightly musty smell of beer — hits visitors straight in the chest as the doors open to the brew house at Chuckanut Brewery.

Looming silver tanks 10 feet tall line one wall, while stacks of kegs labeled “Chuckanut Brewery” line the other.

Small white labels with the name of the beer hang from the tank’s levers. The sound of machinery hums from an unseen location while employees move about the room.

Chuckanut Brewery is one of three craft breweries in the city of Bellingham. These three breweries, Kulshan Brewery, Boundary Bay Brewery and Chuckanut Brewery, have different styles of beer, but the overlapping boundaries are not strictly drawn.

Craft breweries are, as defined by the Brewers Association, small, independent and traditional. To be called a craft brewery, one has to produce less than six million barrels of beer—12 million kegs—and majority of the ownership must be held by the craft brewer. While the definition includes tradition, craft brewers are also encouraged to be original. Craft brewers use traditional ingredients, such as malted barley, but also use original ingredients to add unique twists, according to the Brewers Association.

Will Kemper, owner and head brewer at Chuckanut Brewery, says his business’ mindset is to be intentionally different than other breweries in town.

“Our approach is very technically oriented,” Kemper says. “We do very light, very subtle beers.”

Kemper, who received his degree in chemical engineering and graduate work from University of California Davis, has put his knowledge toward his beer. Chuckanut mixes techniques from England and Germany to find a happy medium to produce their beer. These practices came from talking to other brewers from around the world about their techniques, Kemper says.

Chuckanut focuses on making beer in the style of the European Lager, which involves the extreme cooling of the beer during fermentation, to freezing, Kemper says. This is a technique that Kemper says is rarely used in Washington state and is difficult to perform without the technology that Chuckanut uses.

This technical process is run by a computer; something that Kemper says greatly helps with the preciseness of the brewing. The computer system controls the temperature in each tank. During fermentation Kemper uses the system to drop the beer temperature to below freezing, although the beer itself does not freeze because of its alcoholic properties.

Due to the technical process and cooling technique that
ChucKanT prides itself in, it takes longer to produce its beer. The extra time it takes is worth it for the quality of product, Kemper says.

Boundary Bay Brewery, the longest running brewery in town, produces the most beer: more than 6,000 barrels, says head brewer Austin Jacob Smith. Boundary Bay produces mostly American-styled beer, but Smith says they were one of the first breweries to increase the alcohol and hops in beer. This makes the beer more full-bodied, he says. Since Boundary Bay’s brewing techniques do not require the precise chemistry knowledge and technology like ChucKanT does, more people try mimicking it. This includes home-brewers as well as larger breweries.

Smith says he often answers questions from those who brew their own beer at home. He says he is not allowed to disclose the exact recipe, but even if he did, it would not taste the same as Boundary Bay’s.

“I could take the recipe and hand it to you and you could make a five-gallon version,” Smith says. “But it would not taste the same even if it was made the same way, just because of the volume amount.”

Volume is important to the taste of the beer and the ratio of the ingredients must be proportional to the volume, Smith says. This is often why beer, even with the right ingredients, tastes different at a brewery versus someone’s homemade batch.

Additionally, the routine of the brewing is important, Smith says. A few larger breweries have done a generally good job copying Boundary Bay’s IPA, but nothing tastes quite like the original Smith says.

Dave Vitt, founder and general manager at Kulshan Brewery, says he got his first job in the beer industry because he brought his home-brewed beer to Fish Tale Ales in Olympia, Wash. He says if someone copied his beer, he would see it as a compliment.

“Oh I think that’d be great,” Vitt says. “I think that when people mimic your beer, it’s a form of flattery.”

Vitt says he enjoys talking to customers about his beer; he says it is one of the elements of his brewery he enjoys. With long picnic tables inside, a food cart and large views of the brew room at Kulshan Brewery, Vitt tries to create a “living room feel.”

Kulshan Brewery, the youngest Bellingham brewery, has open six months. Kulshan’s focus is specifically on Northwest beers, but still has a unique taste from other beers, Vitt says. Kulshan’s beers are slightly less hoppy, but still have the full body taste.

Boundary Bay is much the same way, Smith says. He began as a home brewer, and worked his way up in Boundary Bay’s company from a keg and tank washer.

Western senior Noah Katz has been brewing his own beer for about two years. During this time he has learned to replicate beers from some of his favorite breweries, including Rogue Brewery in Portland, Ore., Deschutes from Bend, Ore., and Bellinger’s own Boundary Bay Brewery. The beer Katz brews is not for sale, so he does not see any legal issue, he says.

While Katz has never spoken to any brewers from Boundary Bay, he says he knows many people in town who have adapted recipes from the beer’s descriptions. Additional help with recipes can be found online. Mimicking beer is a common thing in Bellingham, and Katz says he doesn’t see a problem with it.

“I really don’t think it’s an issue,” Katz says. “A lot of people encourage it.”

Despite the intimidation of giant silver tanks and thousands of kegs being sold, a good beer can start in just a five-gallon home-brewing station. While copying other’s beers may be a faux pas in some areas of the world, in Bellingham it is encouraged to cross that boundary.

On a technical dive at 180 feet, using only air, Akeson felt the effects of narcosis and wasn’t able to understand the depth, time and temperature displayed on his diving computer.

Akeson says he spent at least half of his dive looking at his computer. Deep-sea diving is not always mind-altering and scary.

“Deep-sea diving is not always mind-altering and scary,” Akeson says. “It’s the closest thing we can get to being weightless on Earth. There’s just no way to describe it.”

—Ron Akeson
KLIPSUN
Is a Chinuk Wawa word meaning sunset.

Western Washington University

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