9-1994

Klipsun Magazine, 1994, Volume 31, Issue 06 - September

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Letter from the Editor,

I want to take a moment to explain some of the rationale for the stories in this issue of our magazine. As you may or may not know, Klipsun is a Lummi word meaning "beautiful sunset," and if you glance over to page 7, you will notice a story dealing with the appropriation of Indian words by environmental groups for non-Indian purposes.

Klipsun Magazine is an example of such appropriation, but it has been the name of this magazine for as long as we can remember. We did not feel it was our place to change the name of the magazine without more student input, as we editors of Klipsun Magazine are such a small representation of the campus community. We felt the story covered an important issue and would like to open and encourage meaningful dialogue. Please read the story and make your own decision, then let us know how you feel about it. (206) 650-3737.

The next story I want to discuss deals with sex and everyone's right to their own individual sexuality. The editorial staff and I talked about the pros and cons of publishing this story and decided that since sex is such a prevalent topic in our lives it was pertinent and thus publishable.

I hope when you read the magazine it makes you stop and think about some of the things going on around you.

Anyway, welcome back to Western! Be it your first year or your last, I hope you will enjoy it. This happens to be my final hurrah and I wish all of those I leave behind good luck in their classes and lives.

Sincerely,

Russ Kasselman
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Farmers Market

Creating a Community One Sta

His rough hands twist and sculpt the colored rubber cylinders full of air until the familiar shape of a poodle is formed.

The little girl stands mesmerized in front of the face-painted man with a big red nose wearing large baggy pants, a bright shirt with a clashing quilted vest and a goofy grin from ear-to-ear. He hands her his creation and she squeals and shrieks running away triumphantly to show off her acquisition.

Boppy the Clown smiles softly now, pocketing crumpled bills, as the black, four-pronged propeller sitting on top of his rainbow-striped cap spins in the slight breeze.

Across from Boppy the Clown, another painted creature, this time wearing a jester's hat, waits patiently as two teenaged girls, both wearing identical jeans shorts and forest green tee-shirts, romp arm-in-arm plopping themselves in front of her. After much giggling and straining to hold still, the girls' faces are transformed into flowers and butterflies. They look at each other and smile.

Young enthusiastic karate students wrapped in white robes awkwardly demonstrate their craft. An older, bearded man with a guitar strapped to his body belts music from his lungs as hoards of people stream by. Everyone is either chatting in groups or poring over the variety of wares as diverse as the people themselves.

Hand-painted clothing, dried flowers, produce, beaded jewelry, fish, house plants and herbs are just a few of the offerings. This could be one of those large annual city fairs, but it's just the Bellingham Farmers Market. It happens every Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., in

Steve Powers, of Happy Valley Produce and Bean Intrigue, looks over his stock.

Story by Cheryl Bishop
Photos by Ric Brewer

September 1994
a magically-transformed Bellingham downtown parking lot
on the corner of Railroad Avenue and Magnolia Street.

The feeling of community at the market is unmistakable. Where else could a teenaged boy armed with a nose ring, dyed black hair, a silver chain traveling from his chest to his pants pocket and combat boots be found chatting with a mother and son wearing perfectly pressed linens? Or large circles of adults and children intensely talking, smiling and laughing on a local street corner?

"I come down here every Saturday with Josh," says Dave Gerhard referring to the energetic, smiling four-year-old hanging from his arm. "He loves the excitement, and I get to see friends, shop and have fun."

Margaret Henson, a retired nurse, also says the market gives her a chance to see friends.

"Every time I come, I see somebody I haven't seen in ages."

Currently in its second year, the market surprised everyone with its tremendous success. According to the Washington State Farmers Markets Association, of the 43 markets in Washington, Bellingham's market can boast the title, Best First-Year Market.

When the market ended its April through October season last year, the Bellingham Farmers Market had $10,000 in the bank. Mike Finger, currently the Market Association's president and an organic farmer, said the market attracts about 2,000 to 3,000 people every Saturday, and vendors average $300 a day in gross receipts.

The market has roots in conversations between Dal Lowery, another local organic farmer, and Finger. They decided to talk to the city regarding funding for a farmers market and started the arduous process of writing and rewriting proposals.

In the end, the city council voted to award a $36,000 grant and use of the city-owned parking lot. The grant was used for stalls, tables, canopies, water hook-up to the site and advertising. After one year, the Market Association had only used $22,000 of the money and is now self-sufficient. It receives all of its money from dues and a percentage of vendors' gross sales.

The city council justified its decision based on the idea that a farmers market could help revitalize Bellingham's deteriorating downtown business district.

But not everyone was happy with the notion of the market using public funds for the venture. Council President, Arne Hanna, was against the idea. Finger says that although there was opposition, the controversy evaporated once the Market became successful.

According to informal surveys done by the Market Association, the market has drawn customers to other downtown merchants. Of the downtown businesses surveyed, 86 percent said they experienced more traffic in their stores on Saturday and 80 percent claimed their sales were up too. According to the 137 market customers surveyed, 76 percent said the market was the main reason they came downtown. Two-thirds said they would also spend money at other downtown businesses.

"We know we aren't going to single-handedly turn downtown around, but in our own small way, we are a part of the process," says Rita Tezak, a Market Association Board Member and vendor.

Tezak says the market also helps small businesses because they can get started at low costs, receive feedback about their products and gain valuable experience.
"We kind of like to think of ourselves as an incubator for small businesses," Finger says.

Bellingham has not always been conducive to farmers markets. Three previous attempts were made in the past but proved unsuccessful. Two never even got off the ground. The last attempt at a market came in 1989. Developer Ken Imus wanted to create a market in the Fairhaven district that ideally would benefit from Bellingham Cruise Terminal traffic. It was never built.

In 1987, the Bellingham Municipal Arts Commission supported a coalition of architects' proposal for a farmers market near the Whatcom Museum of History and Art, but once again nothing happened. From 1979 to 1984, a farmers market did run, albeit inconsistently, but it was plagued with problems of finding a permanent site and committed vendors. It too finally folded.

What makes this market succeed where others failed? Finger says it's a "happy coincidence of a lot of factors," although he has a hard time pinpointing the exact reasons.

One aspect that stands out, he says, is the number of vendors willing to participate. More than 100 vendors paid dues this year to the Market Association, up from 64 last year. Finger says the number is "rather phenomenal." In the first year, more than 3,000 hours of volunteer time were donated by vendors and Market Association board members.

But Finger is also quick to note that without the city's commitment and funds, the market might not have happened.

"They gave us a real boost. If it hadn't been for the city doing that, I don't know what we would have done. I'm not sure we could have gotten started. I just think it was a happy coincidence of several things happening and if any one of those things were missing, it might not have worked."

Tere Moody, the market manager, who was also involved in farmers markets in North Carolina and Pennsylvania, says the market's success stems from "trying to become more than just a marketing place. It's also a community event and social gathering spot."

Terezak also points to the importance of the community feeling at the market.

"It's the intangible things. Giving people in the community a place to meet, building community spirit," she says.

She also notes that it's just plain fun. "It's the best job I've ever had."

Although the current market is successful, Finger says, the city-owned location is not necessarily permanent.

"It's hard to say just what might happen," he says. "I don't think the city's commitment to the market is so great that we're invincible there. I think that things could come about that would jettison the market from that site."

Currently, the market is on a year-to-year lease. The Market Association hopes to secure a permanent site soon, ideally the same one. Finger says this is their first and primary goal, then they can move on to finding permanent storage, possibly purchasing an open-air structure and hopefully opening for more than one day a week.

For now, the market will continue to entertain, feed and provide a wealth of wares to the Bellingham community.

Lettuce and carrots from Joe's Gardens, a local organic farm, fill stalls in the market. These are just a few examples of the many items on display at the Farmers Market.
Michelle George feels as if her most personal beliefs are being torn from her. Fumbling hands are twisting and distorting them into an unrecognizable state while a mainstream America, ravenous for faith, quickly gobbles them up.

She remembers one of the many times she participated with her tribe, the Walker River Paiute, in the Sun Dance. Two white men showed up expecting to participate in the ceremony. After donating food to the camp, they felt they had bought their way into the dance. After the members of the tribe told them they would not be allowed, the men returned at night. They crept through the darkness and into the building where Michelle George and the other dancers slept, perhaps intending to steal their way into the dance without being noticed.

This incident is what George thinks of when she sees environmental activists using her spiritual beliefs. She feels invaded.

George, along with the other members of Western's Native American Student Union (NASU), has taken a firm stand against the appropriation of her beliefs by different groups in the New Age movement, including the men's movement, feminism and environmentalism.

"Appropriation' means to take without asking," George explains. "Consent is a big part of it," agrees Michael Vendiola, a Swinomish member of the NASU. He says people often feel that if they can pay for it, they can have it.

"It's the consumeristic mind-set," he continues. He points out the title of an article in the fall 1994 issue of the Ethnic Student Center newsletter about their concerns. It's called "Attention Shoppers! Spirituality Not For Sale."

The article, by Peter Donaldson, was in response to an incident that caused NASU members to be particularly concerned with the environmental movement. In 1993, an environmental group, Earth First!, advertised a sweat lodge. Because of the ties to Native American spiritual beliefs and the fact that no natives were a part of the ceremony, the NASU told Earth First! they didn't approve.

George and Vendiola say members of the group said they wouldn't continue with the plans for the sweat lodge, but went ahead nonetheless.

Tony VanGessle, of Earth First!, says he cannot speak for the entire group, but Native American religions are not a part of his spirituality.

"I have my own beliefs," he says. He felt the ceremony was not an infringement on anyone else's beliefs.

"It wasn't a sweat lodge in the Native American sense," he says. At the same time, he feels the problem has been resolved and that the environmental group has "learned a big lesson" from the experience. He was unwilling to elaborate in any further detail concerning the
Members of the NASU asked Earth First! to discuss the issue with them after the sweat lodge incident occurred. The two groups set up a time to meet, but only one member of the environmental group attended.

"We felt we couldn't really educate through just one person, but we tried," George says, who was present at the meeting.

The NASU had several problems with the Earth First!'s sweat lodge. First, the ceremony wasn't directed by a Native American. Second, the sweat lodge was advertised on fliers all around campus. Finally, beer was involved.

"No native person, who knew any better, would ever do that (use alcohol in a religious ceremony)," George says. "In our beliefs, that would make people very sick — physically and spiritually."

George says she believes elements of the ceremonies transcend the earthly world and can make it extremely dangerous if misused.

"It's not just a warm fuzzy," she says.

The issue involves more than just Native Americans wanting to have exclusive possession of their spirituality. For many people, it's a matter of cultural life or death. As non-natives use and manipulate Native American beliefs, the life is being squeezed out of the ceremonies and traditions.

"Our culture is being diluted, changed, trivialized," George says. "In the future, we're going to find it hard, when we're elders, to clearly teach about our spirituality."

"It's a kind of cultural genocide," Vendiola says. "The culture is just being eaten up by it."

Both are members of the NASU and feel this issue must be looked at within the context of history. They point out that the destruction of Native Americans, in one way or another, is nothing new.

"It starts back during the times of warfare," George says. "There was massive genocide on my people. In that time, the (U.S.) government overtly made laws to kill off Indians... They took away our language, spread diseases, outlawed our religion."

George and Vendiola say the use of their spiritual beliefs is a continuation of this "colonization" attitude on the part of some whites. Although it may not be as intentional as the government orders to slaughter Native Americans, it is done with the same amount of disregard for the survival of their culture.

"It (our religion) was the only thing that helped our people survive," George says, despite the fact that people were imprisoned and even killed for practicing those religions.

The Sun Dance, in which George participates, was banned during the early 1800s, even though an amendment to the Constitution promises freedom of religion. Tribes were forced to either give up their beliefs or conduct them in secret.

It wasn't until the 1970s that Native Americans were allowed to practice their beliefs more openly. The Freedom of Religion Act, passed by the federal government in 1978, was designed to protect these religions. To this day, though, peyote rituals and other ceremonies are still outlawed.

In the light of this history, many Native Americans feel insulted when non-natives use their religions.

"It's kind of a slap in the face," says Momi Naughton, a lecturer on Native American anthropology at Western, who is part Irish and part East Coast Lenape (Delaware).

"You've been told for 200 years that your spiritual beliefs are evil... and then suddenly everyone wants to do them," Naughton says. "It's insulting because religious freedom is so tentative in this country."

Another problem Naughton sees with the appropriation of Native American beliefs is the lumping together of all the various tribes.

"Native American spirituality is not one big homogeneous thing," she says. "There are a few common elements, including being earth based... which attracts environmentalists."

She says people often take specific elements of the religions out of context to support their goals.

"It's more of the romanticized elements rather than the whole process, which is a life-long process," she says.

Although most environmentalists say they do not use Native American spirituality, a look at some of the literature reveals otherwise.

Wild Earth, a magazine carried by the Greater Ecosystem Alliance, focuses on environmental and conservation issues. In the fall 1993 issue, one author, writing about the ecological importance of mushrooms, brings in the religious beliefs of the Cochiti Pueblo tribe. Another article opens with the description of the Plains Indian's belief in the Six Powers and ends with a myth referred to only as "Native American," which the author says is about how cattails originated.

Moni Naughton, part Irish and part East Coast Lenape, lectures on Native American
The article is about a type of root system, the rhizome, and how it should be respected.

Naughton sees a danger in the appropriation of beliefs because it can become a substitute for political action.

"Some people feel they can pray for the earth, to heal it, rather than join forces with groups like the Lummi," Naughton says. She says cooperation between Native American nations and environmentalists is important and could lead to a sharing of spiritual beliefs.

"Maybe the Lummi would hold a ceremony and invite you to it," she says, continuing the example. "But it's the choice of the Lummi people." It is the invitation extended by Native Americans which distinguishes sharing from taking.

Although religious beliefs are stolen and misused by some individuals in the environmental movement, Naughton says it is important to not make generalizations about everyone involved.

"Environmentalists are sometimes invited by Indians to take part in ceremonies," she says. "I don't feel like I've been given that right to it," says Lillian Ford, office manager for the Greater Ecosystem Alliance.

"The environmental movement is very varied," she says. "It marginalizes Indian nations just like the rest of culture."

"We've taken the mind-set that if we find something, we feel we can take it. We can't come in with that attitude."

Ford says many environmentalists see the Native American nations as a model of how to live on this continent without destroying the ecosystem.

"They've lived here for thousands and thousands of years," she says. "Overall, it's amazing how well they could live here."

"Environmentalists are trying to learn from that," Ford says. "We can look to it, but we can't take it. It's something we should be given."

She says white culture has taken a lot from Native Americans, and that shouldn't include their spirituality.

"Nature is a limited resource; so is the spirit world. We can't go in thinking that we can take what we want," she says.

"It's the difference between a fifth generation and the 500th generation," Ford says. "Biologically, culturally, I'm still a starling compared to a bald eagle." She compares the spiritual realm to the ecosystem in which a non-native species can overrun an area.

She believes it is important that the environmental movement work with Native Americans but not overburden them.

"We can't always expect them to hold our hands through pertinent issues," she says. "It's not that appropriate... They are overworked themselves."

People should do more than rely on Native Americans for guidance. They should support them in their own struggles, Ford says.

"Indian people, fighting to maintain a traditional way of life, are fighting to maintain the land, the environment—even if it is not an issue an environmental group is taking on," she says.

Ford believes non-natives should not take over Native American culture in this attempt to work together. By looking to their own roots for guidance, people can work together towards the common goal of environmental conservation.

"Our culture is diseased, but it wasn't always that way," Ford says. "At one point people lived pretty sustainably, like the Celtic before the Romans came into the area."

This was a point Naughton also felt was important. It not only protects Native American culture but also allows people to discover their own ancestry.

"Don't deny who you are," Naughton says. "If you look far enough back into your own cultural beliefs, you will probably find an earth-based religion."

An individual doesn't have to be Native American to be concerned about the environment, George says.

"I would like to see the destruction of the environment stopped," George says. "That's just from a human standpoint. Anyone can see that."

Derek Martin, editor of Western's environmental magazine, The Planet, says people can also find other connections with the natural world besides through religious practices.

"People that think they can just pretend to be native, just do these things, and get a better connection with the environment are just fooling themselves," Martin says.

He says a connection with nature must be earned through personal experience. Whether it is spending time camping in a remote area or hiking through an old-growth forest, Martin says contact with the environment is what makes a good environmentalist.

"Nature would mean something to us," he says, "if we went to nature."
Jim K. says he knows he's going straight to hell because of his promiscuous sexual habits and proclivity for taking erotic snapshots.

“I know I'll fry,” he says, puffing on his cigarette, its cloudy haze mocking his concern with a smoky halo hanging tentatively above his head. It quickly dissipates with a wave of his hand. “I know I'll fry,” he continues, “but I can't stop.”

Jim, who labels himself a devout Christian, says he teeters on the brink of what American culture calls “sexual deviancy.” His desires for a sexual fix are often at odds with what our society preaches, yet does not always practice.

Eldon Mahoney, a Western sociology professor says Americans exhibit extreme dichotomies in their sexual attitudes.

“We (Americans) are unique in that we are schizophrenic about sex,” Mahoney says. “On one hand, it's the best thing to come along since sliced bread, but on the other it's dirty and evil.”

Other cultures, he says, though perhaps repressed in sexual expression, are much less ambiguous when applying attitudes to real life.

“In Muslim countries sex is very no-no, but you don't see them selling camels with sex. We sell our cars with ‘T and A,’ but we still tell our kids that babies come from storks.”

Mahoney says that this American dichotomy about sexual activity stems from the colonial era when American immigrants were either “Puritans or prostitutes.” Few people filled the sexual middle ground in early U.S. history. The sexually utilitarian Puritans attempted to stop sex outside of marriage through punishing such deviant sexual behavior. This proved futile as sex was rampant among the colonials.

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"If you killed everyone having sex with turkeys during the colonial period, you'd have to kill off everybody," Mahoney says, only half jokingly.

Unlike the hapless Jim K., not everyone is so reticent regarding their "deviation."

Jonathon E is the owner of Video Extreme, a local video store catering to the X-rated videophiles of Whatcom County.

"It wasn't my lifelong dream to be in the smut business," says the sprite, 25-year-old entrepreneur and Fairhaven College alumnus. "It's a hysterical business; it's so much fun."

E (the single-letter-surname he uses for business) enjoys the challenge of finding new erotic titles to satiate his regular customers.

"We've got one video called 'Dungeon Dykes' that is really popular right now," E says. "We get a magazine every month that tells us about the business. You know, gossip like who's new, who's out, who's getting a boob job."

Vivid, full-color display boxes line numerous wooden shelves. Movies such as "Throbbin' Hood" and "Steele Butt" graphically depict the amorous adventures contained within. The plastic-covered boxes provide windows for photographs of a myriad of couples practicing their love any which way it could fit. Row after row of men-on-men, men-on-women, men-on-a-woman, women-on-women film boxes attract customers' darting eyes.

E says he feels that pornographic movies are misrepresented by seedy stores with substandard lighting, assorted marital-enhancement "appliances" and a darkened milieu which promote the idea that people who sell and watch adult movies are either subhuman or depraved fiends.

"We're not going to be that way," says E with animated glee about his business. "We don't have a bunch of sex toys laying all over the place or private (video) booths. I think it's offensive, but only in a business sense," E adds quickly. "What people do is great, but it's not the reason I got into this business."

E invokes the First Amendment when defending his position but not, he claims, as an umbrella to ward off criticism about his vocational choice.

"We should all be able to write, or read, or watch whatever we want to without anyone else saying you can't, you shouldn't." As a philosophical note, he says "religion says you shouldn't, but no one should say you can't."

Even for E, some video subjects are taboo. Heavy bondage, "kiddy porn" and other "alternative" (and usually illegal) kinks are beyond his realm of pornographic taste.

"Maybe it's just me being oversensitive," he quips. He adds that romance in videos is the latest trend, with kissing and gentle touching added to the more gymnastic maneuvers notorious to adult videos.
“Red,” the manager of the Love Pantry, a local adult novelty store says, that the women’s movement has granted a sexual openness that was absent in previous generations. But she feels that the movement has created a pedestal-or-prostitute sexual dichotomy in which mixed messages are rampant.

Red says that in her experience, people are more knowledgeable about sex in this generation than in generations past, but people still have a dual belief system about sex.

“A lot of people think that priests, ‘church people’ or whatever don’t have sex. There is always that thought that it is dirty and immoral, that your parents don’t have sex. People think that sex is for the young only.” Red says squinting to accent her speech. “If they found their parents having sex, they would go in the other room and become ungled. ‘It’s disgusting.’ Well it’s not, it is a normal, everyday function that a lot of people enjoy.”

Dirty or not “no matter how much people want to deny it, sex is one of the best entertainments on this earth,” Red says. It always has been.

Every culture through the ages differs in its beliefs about sexual practices. From the beginning of time, hormonal high jinx have permeated all cultures from the Paleolithic prostitutes to Catherine the Great’s infamous equine run-in. The level and creativity of sexual activities performed were only limited by people’s fervid and extremely fertile imaginations.

Homo Erectus was a creative creature.

The amorous horizons of Stone Agers were decidedly restricted by their inter-related tribal groupings. Even among these early people, anthropologists say the cultural absolute against incest was strong. Cave dwellers had sex. A few possibly enjoyed it. Rare cave paintings depicting sexual positions and references attest to that.

The commonly called “Venus figurines,” small clay statues that depict robust females, are either considered the pocket-sized sex symbols of Paleolithic pornographers, fertility goddesses or, according to some medical historians, merely illustrated the unfortunate bloated sufferers of ovarian cysts.

As civilizations flourished around the world, people had increased leisure time to concoct more intricate sexual maneuvers and liaisons — and punishments for them.

Ancient Chinese felt that kissing, the pinnacle of sexual intimacy in the Western world, was just short of cannibalism. Women caught kissing in public were labeled “harlots” and banished from the city.

The Bible is rich with definitions of proper sexual practices as well as punishments for people who overstepped those parameters in Judeo-Christian culture.

“It is a difficult question to answer as to where ‘the church stands’ on sex, but generally it is seen as a gift from God that should not be abused,” says Mark Rambo, a minister at Western’s Shalom Center.

“I don’t know if it is the church’s job to establish what people set for their sexual values, but there are guidelines in the Bible for people to follow.”

Rambo says that these guidelines may seem oppressive to
many people but to others they provide support and reassurance. Some people need more guidance than others, Rambo adds.

"Many need other people to say 'This is it and there is no deviation,'" Rambo says snapping his fingers with a flick of his wrist as he speaks. "For many people, they need that support, something they can cling to firmly."

Rambo says religion should not be an authoritarian about dictating sexual practices but adds that some ideals do exist.

"I think that we have a role in that it is a gift from God, and I think that the church has a role in determining that for people."

However, their role is limited.

"I don't want to think that we are powerless about it, but humanity does what humanity does. It is not just the church that decides that," Rambo says in his rich, baritone voice. He adds parents and schools play a part in determining sexual behaviors as well.

"We all have our strengths and weaknesses. In church terms, it's sin. All of us sin," Rambo says.

With sin comes consequences. One such consequence for interfering with traditional sexual behavior can be found in the Book of Deuteronomy, in which the punishment for a woman who injures a man's testicles was "cutting off her hand."

Likewise for men, if "the fruit of the womb" was injured or aborted because of his mistreatment he was liable to a beating, a month's forced labor or a light fine if the woman was not "well-born."

According to noted humanist writer and psychiatrist Albert Ellis, "unnatural" sex behavior is impossible to define.

"Whatever they do, they do naturally," he writes. "To label people as 'unnatural' or 'subhuman' seems quite inaccurate ... to label them 'deviant' and 'perverse' for these preferences is bigoted and prejudiced."

Ellis also considers pedophilia a natural act, but committed under conditions defined as unethical by our society.

The final judgment regarding personal sexual fulfillment remains, ultimately, between the people involved or as Jim K. says, "It's nobody's business what two," he hesitates "...or three, or four, or five people do in the privacy of their own bedroom. As long as everyone agrees and has a good time."

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**Sexual climaxes throughout the ages**

6000 B.C. — The preferred form of contraception in Egypt was to mold a mixture of oils and crocodile dung to form a plug similar to a diaphragm. The plug would then form to the woman’s shape and block semen.

1100 A.D. — Throughout the Crusades, women were locked into chastity belts preventing them from having sex while their husbands were away at war. These became popular because the husband would lock his wife into the belt and carry the key off with him, thus preventing his wife from having intercourse with anyone — except a good locksmith. They were also a means of preventing rape.

1665 — The word "condom" first appears in print. During the reign of King Charles II of England, Dr. Conton and Colonel Condom served on the kings court. Conton popularized the use of dried, oiled sheep intestines as a male contraceptive, a practice already in use in the Middle East. Although the European version was invented by Conton the name comes from his partner Condom. These "English caps" were purchased by such infamous lovers as Giovanni Casanova.

1777 — The Marquis de Sade, whose name coined "sadist" was arrested in Paris at the request of his mother for his cruel sexual practices. Earlier he had been arrested for poisoning a woman with cantharides, "Spanish fly" and for engaging in sadism and sodomy at various orgies he staged.

1789 — An S.G. Vogel advocated the use of an infibulation, a cage-like device that prevented masturbation.

1864 — Asa Mercer, an early Seattle pioneer and namesake for Mercer Island, arranged to have a group of unmarried young girls sent to the Puget Sound to help relieve the "bachelor element" of their frustrations and benefit from what Mercer considered the "wholesome results" of female contact.

1909 — The legal case of the Commonwealth of Kentucky vs. Poindexter was decided. In the case, two black men were tried for engaging in oral sex with each other. They were found innocent because no law forbade the practice. Anti-oral-sex laws soon blanketed the United States.

1986 — The U.S. Supreme Court defended the constitutionality of a Georgia law which forbade "homosexual acts." Police caught the defendant engaging in oral sex in his bedroom with another man when attempting to contact him regarding an unpaid public drinking fine.
Bill Wyrick is in love; passionately and obsessively in love. Her name is Crystal and she is bright and beautiful.

Crystal is tall and lithe — in excellent condition. She glows under Bill's steadfast attention. One minute she is calming and serene, the next, exciting and bold. She is always ready for an adventure.

Quiet and comforting, she keeps him warm at night as he sleeps ensconced in her ample bosom.

As he speaks of her, a soft half-smile forms on his lips causing the thin lines around his clear, lucid blue eyes to deepen. He reaches out and caresses her, strokes her lovingly. Although the relationship takes a lot of time and effort, Bill says he wouldn't have it any other way. The sacrifices have been worth it.

Bill and Crystal met 10 years ago at Bellingham's Squalicum Harbor, where they now reside. After knowing Crystal four months, Bill realized they were the perfect match. They have been living together ever since.

For as long as he can remember, Bill, 47, dreamed of living on a sailboat. He fulfilled that dream in 1984 with the purchase of his 28-foot sloop-rigged Islander, which he christened Crystal.

"It's been a dream for many years," Bill explains in a voice slightly tinged with a mid-western drawl, reminiscent of his childhood in Kioka, Iowa. "Since I was a kid I always enjoyed boats. I didn't have a lot to do with 'em as a kid 'cuz there was only the river (Mississippi)."

The small interior of the cabin makes Bill's 5-foot 10-inch frame suddenly seem NBA All-Star size. It's difficult to believe this robust man could live comfortably in such a small living space. If Bill were to lie on his living room floor and spread his arms, it seems he would likely touch all four walls at the same time. A narrow hallway gives way to a small sleeping area in the bow of the boat.

When he bought the boat, he gutted the interior and customized it to fit his living needs. Using scrap materials from his job at Uniflight, a now-defunct Bellingham boat building company, Bill set to work creating his dream home.

He customized the galley (kitchen) and living area and converted the shower and bathroom to a clothes closet and storage. The harbor provides facilities such as showers, toilets and laundry, which enables Bill to minimize waste disposal. The harbor provides 85 percent of its 1,800 boat slips or berths, including Bill's, with fresh water and individually metered electrical services. To supplement the electrical heat, Bill added a 12-volt diesel heater.

"It felt kind of strange tearin' apart something brand new, but I wanted to make it as comfortable as possible," he says. "Most boats aren't made for livin'. They don't have much storage or anything like that."

When customizing the boat, he wanted to streamline everything. He wanted to make everything accessible while maximizing precious space. He created special nooks and crannies to house the microwave, radio, VCR, television and Nintendo. He built pillowed benches along the sides of the living space which serve as comfortable couches.

Because of the lack of space, many things have multiple purposes. The kitchen seems nonexistent. A closer look reveals two small knobs...
protruding from the side of a narrow L-shaped counter. When the counter top is lifted, a sink, two electric burners and a broiler appear. To the left is a barely noticeable niche that, when lifted, exposes the contents of a small refrigerator recessed in the depths of the cabinet. On the opposite wall, a panel is unlatched and swivels down along side one couch to serve as a dining table.

"The boat's pretty much my hobby," he says. "As small as it is and as long as I've had it, there's still things I can change or things I haven't got yet. Each year there's a new part, a new addition."

Bill says living on a boat can be a relatively inexpensive housing alternative. He financed the $34,000 boat over a 15-year period and pays only $300 a month. As a live-aboard, Bill pays $79.20 per month for moorage or $2.64 per foot. Moorage costs vary depending on the size of the berth, which range in size from 24 to 95 feet, U.S. citizenship and lease type. According to the Bellingham Herald's classifieds, the average one-bedroom apartment in Bellingham costs about the same per month.

"I'm real happy with it," Bill says. "There's nothin' really about it that I don't like. It's big enough to handle any of the weather that happens here. It's not so big that I can't handle it myself."

Bill's desire to live aboard a boat seems to be rooted in a deep-seeded love for travel and nature.

"Being close to the weather, it really affects you directly — the wind, the rain, the cold, the extreme of all season," Bill says. "You feel the seasons. ... I like storms, I like winter, I like being out in the weather."

Bill attributes his affinity for small spaces to the time he spent in the Navy. Life on a military ship with only a bunk and a locker for personal possessions set a Spartan tone for much of the remainder of Bill's life.

After the Navy, he lived in a Volkswagen van for two years as he traveled. He spent more than a year backpacking through Europe and working odd jobs. At one point he found work in Portugal where he helped restore an old pirate ship. He eventually left that job and worked his way down through North Africa where he explored Morocco and the Canary Islands.

"I've done so much traveling, I know the value of it," Bill explains. "Every young person ... The first thing they should do is move away from home; move out of their state, even if it's the next state, just get away. Go to another country, even though it might be Mexico. Get into another culture. Try to get out of the United States. Go to Europe, South America, Canada — any place that gets you into learning how other people live."

"What it did for me was ... it makes you appreciate being an American."

Eleven years ago, he made his way to the Northwest "just because I'd never been in that part of the country." He fell in love with the aquatic beauty and has been here ever since; the longest time he has ever willingly lived in one area.

"It's a pretty laid back way of life. It's quiet," Bill says. "I'm happier alone. I'm not an outgoing person. I'm not a conversationalist. I don't let things bother me. I pretty much go day to day."

The harbor provides a serene setting for Bill's home on the water. Although the dock is open to the public, there is not a lot of foot traffic. Occasionally, people do wander down to look at and in the boats.

"You get lookey-loos coming around all the time," Bill laughs. "I've had them come up, and they'll get on the boat and press their nose right up to the window. It's shocking to both. You look in and someone's looking out at you."

Many think Bill's approach to life is somewhat simplistic. He concentrates on "being satisfied with what you're doing, being happy with yourself." For many, this is something not easily accomplished, but with Crystal's help, Bill claims to have staved off loneliness.

Crystal's hold on Bill is strong and tight. Aside from the time he spends working as an installer for TCI Cable, exercising and volunteering at the YMCA, Crystal is the focus of his life. They work together, play together and travel together. She is his perfect partner.

Over the years, Bill has had a few long-term relationships but none could loosen his bond with Crystal. He says he does not regret his bachelorhood and claims he will never marry.

Each morning Bill awakens early to witness the transformation of Squalicum Harbor as the first rays of dawn crack over the horizon. The gray, shadowed marina with its skeletal silhouettes of buildings, sailboat spars resembling dead, limbless trees and deserted docks are suddenly awash with vibrant color.

With his love by his side, a new day begins.
Story by Troy Schauls

Paul Getty, early 20th century oil tycoon, was once asked by a reporter if millionaires believed in astrology.

“No,” Getty replied, “but billionaires do.”

So does Lyn Greenleaf James. James is not only a believer, she is a teller. But she’s not a prophet or a psychic. She is, however, a mathematician, a spiritual adviser and a professor of planetary positioning.

James regards herself as a kind of celestial cartographer — a vehicle through which the tuition of astrology can be learned.

“I always say that I am not the pilot, I am the navigator.”

James is an astrologer of the people. She practices the more tangible, traditional and familiar “horoscopic” astrology, focusing most of her energy on individual birth charts. Most people have read their horoscope in the newspaper at one time or another, and daily horoscopes are derived from birth charts. But, James emphasizes horoscopes often don’t fit the lives of those for which the “guidance” was intended, because one’s sun sign (Cancer, Leo, Virgo, etc.) is only a small part of the overall astrological picture. To obtain an accurate picture, one needs to have their full chart calculated. Exactly how this is done could and does fill volumes of literature.

James tries to stay away from what is paradoxically known as “mundane” astrology — the attempt to accurately predict the timing of significant human and geologic events that do not involve an individual’s choice of action. Think of it, she said, as the astrological study of earthquakes, eruptions and war.

James, 33, is not what many would think of as a “typical” astrologer. She is a tall, slender woman with large, knowing hazel eyes and a professional demeanor. The randomly scattered gray hairs in her light-brown shoulder-length coiffure impart an air of learned wisdom. One could easily think, from a glance at her flowing green and floral print dress and white high-heels, that she is on her way to “the office.”

And her “office” is unusual, too. Cobwebs sag across the foot-square panes of glass that envelop the 12-feet by 6-feet space she uses for consultations, actually the front porch of her Lynden home. A tall maroon vase casually nurturing a purple dried flower arrangement, an unfettered view of Mount Baker, and the lushly carpeted hay fields across the street give this place an ironic sense of country charm.

“After all, Lynden is probably not the first place you’d look for an astrologer,” she laughed.

When some locals find out what she does and where she does it, James says they find it perplexing and occasionally feel the need to let her know it.

“Every once in a while someone will call and say (with a deep, condescending voice) ‘Do you know you’re in Lynden?’”

James doesn’t let it get to her, though. She said she understands that certain, particularly Christian, factions of the community are “programmed” to think a certain way about astrology. She says she knows what she’s doing isn’t evil, so those who would look down their noses at her can think what they want.

James is one of about a half-dozen professional astrologers in Whatcom County, though she believes that perhaps hundreds of people in the county regularly examine their own birth charts, many after having their birth charts examined professionally.

What kind of folk seek her out?
services? James believes she has a "typical" customer.

"My clients are people who experience spirituality for themselves rather than sitting in a pew and getting preached at.

"I have a tendency to attract people who can appreciate my kind of astrology — I'm not one you would call a spiritual astrologer. I come from a school that's very oriented toward the nuts-and-bolts, practical side of astrology."

As she slides her substantial writing portfolio across the unstained, smoothly sanded pine table she employs as a consultation desk, James explains how she began her astrological studies.

"I am a second-generation astrologer. My dad started studying when I was a kid. I don't exactly remember when, but it was probably around 12."

Later, when James was in college, her father saw a woman on TV who claims to have accurately predicted the eruption of Mount St. Helens. When he decided to look the woman up, he found that the woman happened to

Using books, not crystal balls is how most modern astrologers predict the future. For astrologer Greenleaf James it's not a matter of "believing," it's a science.

Graphic by Karen Bolstad
be teaching classes near the university James was attending, and the family decided to enroll.

"In the beginning, I thought this (the class) was fun and interesting and inexpensive, so it was my recreation for that semester. I got a kick out of it so I decided to continue until it wasn’t fun anymore or until I had something better to do."

Her air of wisdom comes not only from her astrological endeavors, but from her traditional education heavily “grounded” in the sciences. While at the University of California, she earned a bachelor of science in zoology. Since then, James has completed graduate work in recumbent DNA. In English, she said, this means “genetic engineering.”

But by the time James was through with her undergraduate studies, she had clocked more credit-hours in astrology than in her major.

“I took that (credit-hour) model and overlaid it on the astrological work that I’ve done. I feel I’ve the same amount of time and hours in astrology that would go into a master’s or, maybe not yet, a doctorate."

How can she explain her apparently dichotomous intellectual training? James said astrology isn’t really mysticism vs. science, the supernatural vs. the empirical.

“It isn’t supernatural; there’s no god involved. People say ‘Oh, do you believe in astrology?’ It isn’t a question of faith, she said, “It works.”

Without question, astrology has stood the test of time.

“If you want to compare it to, say, psychology which is roughly a hundred-years old as a field of study — astrology is older than any recorded history. Astrology is at least six to eight thousand years old. Some of the most ancient written records we have, talk about astrology.”

Back in her porch office, James whirls around on her swivel chair to a gently bowed, waist-high bookshelf and stacks four or five titles on the table as evidence of her assertions. Books with titles such as “Planetary Heredity” by Michel Gauquelin and “The Art of Spiritual Healing” by Keith Sherwood. If one wants to verify with statistics the accuracy of astrology, the book by Gauquelin, she said, will provide the answers.

“But I think statistics are marginal at best,” she said.

The real proof is subjective, she says. It’s in the past, present, and future life experiences of each client.

“Astrology is not prophecy, but some people treat it that way,” she says. “They say ‘I better do this because my astrologer told me to,’ but that’s not the center of astrology. You can know absolutely nothing about the next three weeks, and still have the events of your life match the events that would be predicted for your life based on your chart.”

She made the analogy that natal (birth) charting is like taking a picture from the roof of the hospital where one was born at the exact instant of birth.

It is likely that hundreds were born in that exact second around the world, but probably none in the exact same place. Thus, everyone is astrologically unique. The heavens were smiling down on everyone at their birth time with a slightly different expression.

“Astrology is a tool, a technique and a process,” she says, that she practices about 20 hours each week. During her 12 years of professional charting, nearly all of James’ analyzing has been spent with one-on-one consultations for which she charges $65 an hour. For each hour she spends in consultation, she said she spends at least one hour on calculations and another on preparations. She then produces a computer-generated birth-chart riddled with symbols and numbers.

James then interprets and analyzes each client’s chart while gathering specific information about the client in order to better interpret what she reads.

What can clients expect? The slogan on her business cards and brochures reads in green, Celtic-looking letters “Down To Earth Consulting.” Inside the brochure, the top headline reads, “Can Astrology Predict Your Future?” It continues, “Yes, but why would you let it? Why limit yourself to your average future? Why not take charge of your life and maximize your potentials?”

James is not one to ignore her own advice.

In 1989, while she was at an astrology conference in San Diego, she met her husband. On one of their first serious “dates,” the two exchanged natal charts. And that was that, she said. After knowing each other only 10 days, they knew it was right.

Call it destiny, say it was written in the stars, because after the conference she moved up to Lynden to join her soul-mate. Two children and five years later, James is still sure she made the right decision.

Others are equally confident in her astrological analyses. Others with big names. Others in high places. James said she is nationally known among astrologers and has consulted with many actors and politicians. Some of whom have big-time celebrity status, some in the highest levels of government.

Pressing her to name names was futile.

“I’m just like a lawyer or a doctor. Confidentiality is very, very important.”

But c’mon, can’t she at least give a hint? Dead silence. BIG SMILE. More silence. Not a chance.
Fairhaven (WA) — Mother forces 10-year-old son to kill over fence line dispute. Lake Padden discoverer, Michael Padden, died at the scene from a large gaping shotgun wound to the chest.

The newspapers of Old Fairhaven in the 1800s document events such as these. The story of Fairhaven’s unruly past is told by in plaques along the sidewalks of the old town — concrete reminders of what once was. Walking through the buildings that now house restaurants and retail shops invokes images of long ago. A time when bar fights turned to cold-blooded murder, posses gathered to track criminals and wealthy land barons ruled new towns.

Fairhaven, one of the original four communities along the bay, was largely established by “Dirty” Dan Harris, who reportedly wore his ragged, pioneer attire with style. He was a sailor, a trader, a notorious rum runner and also the first to build a cabin with his partner John Thomas in the fairly rugged landscape of Fairhaven.

After his partner died of a sickness, Harris secured the claim and began selling plots to the new citizens of Fairhaven. He took the money from these sales and established a hotel a few blocks away from the new docks. His hotel no longer exists, but a restaurant aptly named “Dirty Dan’s” stands in his honor a few blocks from the site the original hotel.

In 1888, Nelson Bennett came along and with great visions for the new city bought the town site from Harris for $70,000. Fairhaven became a bustle of activity shortly afterward with speculators buying up plots of land waiting for the announcement that Fairhaven would be the Great Northern Railroad’s northwest terminus. As fate would have it, Fairhaven lost out to Tacoma, and when the railroad moved south, financial dreams went with it. Another burst of anticipation followed in 1890 with speculation of a possible second transcontinental railroad terminus. However, by 1892 the boom fizzled when news informed speculators otherwise.

Fairhaven’s early history seems rooted in a series of fruitless speculations. However, out these speculations grew a town that has somehow survived.

The most prominent examples of this town’s colorful past are Fairhaven’s historic buildings. Some of the buildings still stand in their original splendor, testaments to the great visions of the period. Curving arches and ornate staircases dominate the interiors of the buildings, while the exteriors are solid masses of sandstone and brick built to withstand generations. Others have long since been torn down and are only remembered through tombstones which denote the year and nature of the business that formerly occupied that space.

Tyrone Tillson, owner and publisher of the Fairhaven Gazette, began placing the tombstones as a community project.

“There’s a heck of a lot of history around,” Tillson said with a grin. “This is one way to do it. Stick it in the tombstones.”

Tillson said he got the idea for the tombstone plaques when he was up in Skagway, Alaska about four or five years ago. He had heard the tale of Frank Reed, a
man who had killed the local crime boss, Soapy Smith. In the grave-
yard a huge tombstone was erected honoring Reed while six feet away, 
just beyond the city limits, was the grave of Smith.

"I was wonderin', I was goin' sheeeesh, there's nothing here (to 
explain)," Tillson said. "There's no plaques or anything. I went, 'duh, 
it's the same in Fairhaven, jerk.' And that's where I got the idea.

"Well for cryin' out loud. What am I doin' up here complainin', 
when I can take care of it at home?' That's how it all started."

At the time, Tillson was a member of a group called 
the Old Fairhaven Association (OFA). Through the 
OFA he got state funding to put up plaques on the 
walls of businesses and tombstones on the side-
walks showcasing the history of Fairhaven to 
all passersby.

He has also published a guide to 
the Tombstone Tour in the gazette 
and is planning more tomb-
stones to further docu-
ment the history of the 
town.

Tillson said he gets 
most of his information 
from the newspapers pub-
lished in the area during 
the years 1890-1910. He 
said he has read virtually 
every paper published in 
Whatcom county during 
that time.

"The addresses are 
published in the old pa-
ers." Tillson said. "See 
what I did is, I go to the 
plat maps for Old 
Fairhaven (for the years) 
1890-1904. It actually 
says right on the plat maps what's there. It's really easy."

Currently, the Tombstone Tour consists of 17 stones marking 
various historical locations throughout Fairhaven. Newspaper clippings 
tell the stories of these long-ago places.

Walking through Fairhaven, the most prominent tombstones are 
those located in today's commercial district. Beginning on the south 
side of Harris at the corner of 10th Street, a plaque is implanted in the 
gravel reading "Unknown Dead Men Displayed Here 1901."

Tillson's description at the corner reads, "The town marshal com-
plained that Fairhaven had more John and Richard Does than any 
town in the west. This proved a real problem not only when trying to 
identify lawbreakers, but the dead as well. The only solution was to 
display a person's remains to public view in hopes that somebody could 
identify the stranger before he was deposited in potter's field."

Across the street the plaque reads, "Capital Saloon 1890." Tillson 
describes this saloon in his guide by saying, "Yesterday another shoot-
ing affair occurred as a result of an altercation between a gambler named 
Harry Chandler, or 'Handsome Harry,' and a bartender by the name of 
Jack Williams.

"Chandler tried to run his face (use smooth talk) several days ago 
at the Tontine Bar for drinks. Williams objected and struck Chandler in 
the face, and the latter vowed vengeance which he endeavored to 
obtain yesterday by shooting at Williams through the street door of 
the Capital Saloon. The bullet grazed the knee of a man named Collins, 
but Williams escaped unhurt, and Chandler was soon at liberty under 
$500 bond. Later the same week, a gent tried to kill himself by jump-
ing out of the second story window of the Capital and landing on 
his head. He survived and a new plank was put into the side-
walk."

A few short steps from the Capital was Judge Sam 
Curry's real estate office and temporary courtroom. The 
plaque there reads "Courtroom and Real Estate Office 
1890." Tillson's description offers some insight into 
the money-grubbing nature of everyone in those 
days.

"Judge Sam Curry set up his court in his 
real estate office and set to supplying 
the city's chain gang with 'volunteers.' 
He warmed to his obligations consid-
erably when it was decided that he 
should get a certain fee for every new 
case he considered.

"He was noted for an enlarged 
sense of fair play — if two men were 
in a gunfight and both were wounded, 
he charged them simple court costs (his 
fee for hearing the case) and if one man 
shot at another but missed and the 
other didn't have a gun, Judge Curry 
would fine him $10 plus court costs. 
Firing off one's 'pop' in town wasn't 
much to ballyhoo about in the judge's 
eyes, but having to deal with a man 
who couldn't pay court costs was 
another matter — he was automatically 
dragged off to the Hotel de McGinty 
(town jail) and made to work the chain gang 10 hours a day for 
nine days or until he could come up with court costs.

"The Judge was later arrested for obtaining money under false 
pretenses."

In front of the real estate office/courthouse was the town pillory 
where a plaque reads, "Location of Town Pillory 1890." Tillson 
explains the pillory in these words.

"This was Judge Curry's answer to those who couldn't pay court 
costs and yet refused to work on the chain gang. The first man as-
signed to this airy post was one James 'Dignified' Donovan. Donovan 
was the first man to 'volunteer' to work the chain gang and thinking 
that he would be laughed at by the boys, he sat down and refused to 
work. Judge Curry saw his point and extended his stay at the McGinty 
to 30 days and directed the town marshal to stake him out each morn-
ing of those 30 days in front of the real estate office/courthouse."

Though these are only a few of the historical gems provided by 
Tillson and the OFA, they set the stage for an extended walk through 
Fairhaven and history.

Tillson has since broken with the OFA for unspecified reasons, 
but has obtained a new grant from the city of Bellingham to continue
installing tombstones throughout Fairhaven.

"There always seems to be funds around, but people just don't seem to know about them," Tillson said.

Bob Quammen, the current president of the OFA, has obtained some of his own funds for his efforts to preserve and beautify Fairhaven.

"We got a grant coming in from the Department of Transportation," Quammen said. "...It looks like we're going to get it, and we're gonna put in a new walkin' tour. It's going to have 18 plaques."

Quammen said he also is planning on putting in an extended walking tour and he would like to coordinate the OFA's efforts with Tillson's.

"That grant money is not really for the OFA or for Ty Tillson. It's for the area," Quammen said. "It's the area getting the grant."

The OFA's extended walking tour will be based on a new style of plaques. More photo-oriented and reader-friendly displays will provide deeper insight into Fairhaven's past.

"The new ones (plaques) out here will be real versatile," he said.

"We'll do some of them on the buildings. We'll put 'em on posts. We'll do whatever we want. These are going to be made out of wood and they're (going to be) sandblasted and easier to maintain. So if somebody is going to scar them up, then we can get 'em fixed real easy."

Theft and damage is nothing new to Tillson or the OFA. Many of the plaques have been stolen or disfigured by roaming bands of juvenile delinquents.

"They (the plaques) were up all over the place but the punks love to steal things," Tillson said. "I just gave up because it's a lot of work. I went down physically, put 'em on boards and put 'em in myself. That was a wasted effort. They lasted until now, 10 years, I guess."

The vandalism that occurs today is nothing compared to the rough and tumble world of Fairhaven in the 1890s, when there was one saloon for every 200 residents.

"They (the railroad barons) brought in construction crews to build the railroads," Tillson said. "They brought in up to 2,000 guys; raw, unmarried individuals who had nothin' to do but drink and fight. They put in 2,000 bachelors in their prime, who had nothin' to do but carry guns and drink.

"Everybody was very polite back then. You put yourself in a room with 200 guys and everyone has a gun on their hip. If you piss someone else off, guess what he's gonna do?"

The police force at the time was not sufficient to adequately control the lawlessness of lower Fairhaven. So in 1889, concerned citizens formed the "Committee of 25." This vigilante group was unofficially encouraged to take matters in their own hands, literally.

"If anything happened, they all came in with bandanas, and they took the guy and beat him to hell," Tillson said. "There was still a vigilante (committee) until about five years ago.

"Yeah, we're just talkin' about the bad guys. The guys that raped people, literally. The bad ones. One of them raped a lady and made the mistake of comin' back. The boys got him. And the biggest guy took him out and beat the hell out of him, put him in the dumpster and closed the lid. They found him the next day. He was alive, but he didn't come back. He never raped anybody in Fairhaven anymore."

Fairhaven residents have long since taken care of themselves and sometimes feel as if they should be considered their own separate entity. In the past, attempts have been made to separate themselves from their neighbors to the north, Bellingham.

"We kinda take care of ourselves over here," Quammen said.

Tillson also feels Fairhaven would be better off on its own. He said some Fairhaven residents feel they aren't getting their fair share.

"The other side of town — there's a lot of politics," Tillson said. "Even now we feel it on the south side. The mayor is not our favorite buddy on the south side."

Politics and red tape aside, Fairhaven contains that unique small-town romanticism where the most exciting action on a Saturday afternoon is found at the local coffee shop. The OFA is working hard at actively preserving Fairhaven's much valued historical flavor. Through fund raising and petitions, the OFA has placed itself in a position to have some say in Fairhaven's future.

"It's not that we're opposed to change. We just wanna have a little say about it," Quammen said. "We just wanna have a little input in what's going on around you. You will probably never see a McDonald's sign down here."
Imagine a safari adventure — sitting down in a newly-carved canoe, traversing the dark, murky waters in the deepest Asian jungle. Staring in amazement at the monkeys swinging from branch to branch near the shore or gazing at a nearby iguana camouflaged within the deep undergrowth.

Suddenly, attention is seized by an enormous cigar-shaped manifestation dangling from the trees. A closer look reveals thick, glossy scales on its copper and black-striped frame while it slithers ever-so-slowly to the jungle floor with its forked tongue quivering in and out of its mouth. A python basks in the torrid, afternoon sun.

Now imagine waking up in a room, flipping on the light-switch, rolling over and staring at the same creature face-to-face! Ronald, "Ron" Brunton, a 22-year-old Western student, experiences this every morning. Like many students, Ron is a pet owner. However, his pet is a little different. He doesn't have to walk it, feed it everyday or even take it outside. Ron is the proud owner of a 14-foot reticulated python named "Ebore." The term reticulated refers to the unusual pattern of overlapping rectangles found on the back of the python.

Ron says Ebore doesn't have to eat very often. Ron travels to a pet store which specializes in food for Ebore. The store keeps a special litter of rodents on hand that customers haven't purchased. Ron spends $16 a month on food.

"Most people that have a domesticated snake overfeed them by feeding it once a week," Ron says. "You can get away with feeding..."
them one full-grown guinea pig or rabbit once every two weeks. A hamster or mouse would only be an appetizer. In fact, Ebore probably wouldn't even see it because they're so small."

Ron's room is decked out in an atmosphere very similar to one that would be found in the jungle. He keeps a straw basket on the floor which contains a 16-inch by 16-inch heating pad for Ebore to slither into when she's cold. Ron leaves the temperature of the pad at 80-85 degrees Fahrenheit and cov­ers it with a towel.

"I don't have a cage for her because she's too big," Ron says. "I have these heating pipes located right along the ceiling. She hangs from it all the time as if it was a really warm tree."

Ron says it's very easy to take care of Ebore. The hardest part is cleaning up after her, but even that isn't much of a problem because she will "do her duty" in the corners of the room instead of high traffic areas.

E bore sheds her skin once every two months, which can be messy because the thick, transparent skin doesn't shed in one long piece. It basically flakes off.

"What I usually do is take it (E bore) in the shower with me and let the hot water dissolve the loose skin," Ron says.

It's critical for Ron to keep his room warm year round for Ebore. He recalls a time when his father's python got sick and started sneez­ing violently.

"A sneezing python makes a very scary sound. It makes a very high-pitched scream that can wake the dead," Ron says.

"E bore makes very strange noises when she is about to shed her skin. She will crawl onto the heating pad and make noises you wouldn't expect to come from a snake. It's a very vulnerable time for her."

Ron is originally from Trinidad, a small island in the Caribbean off the coast of Venezuela. His brother, Russ, gave him the python because he was going back to Trinidad. Ron proceeded to name his pet snake "E bore," after his father's python.

Ron's interest in snakes goes back a long way. When he was 16 years old, his father owned two pythons. Ron couldn't take his eyes off them when his father took care of them. His fascination grew immensely until one day he vowed to have a reticulated python of his own.

Reticulated pythons belong to the Pythonidae family, a group of nonvenomous snakes, and are known for wrapping their massive coils around their victims and squeezing the life out of them before feeding.

Ron, however, is quick to defend Ebore by saying there are only two times you don't want to get in her way — when she's cold or hungry.

"I went to Arizona for three weeks during Christmas break," Ron says. "I kept Ebore in my room with the door closed and gave her extra food. When I got back, I knew she was angry because she wasn't warm enough, so I turned up the heating pad and left the room," Ron said.

Ron recalls a time when he went into the living room to watch television after feeding Ebore. He wasn't aware of the fact that his friend was in his room trying to pull the snake out from under his bed.

"The next thing I heard was my friend screaming 'RON!' Ebore had coiled around his wrist and sunk her fangs in his forearm. After washing away the blood from a few minor cuts with cold water, he was fine," Ron says.

The longest reticulated python is approximately 30 feet long. Ron expects Ebore to grow 20-25 feet long because she doesn't have to eat very often. Snakes are a popular delicacy in some countries. Omar Castaneda, a professor in the English department and master chef of specialty items, has offered to buy Ebore.

Ron says he is not in a big hurry to depart from Ebore. However, there are times when he visualizes a big feast with several of his friends.

"Sometimes I stay up all night thinking of recipes," Ron says. "There are so many ways to cook it. I could barbecue it, freeze it, curry it, deep-fry it. Just thinking about it makes me salivate."

Even though Ron takes good care of Ebore, when it comes right down to it, he'll try just about anything.

"I love Ebore, but after all, she is a snake," Ron says.

"I never tried eating cooked snake before, and I can't imagine how many pairs of boots I could make. The temptation is definitely there."
What's more euphoric than getting high? Elevation is exhilarating. In most gravity-challenging sports — bungee jumping, helicopter skiing, skydiving — the goal is reaching the ground safely. Rock climbers, in comparison, revel in the thrill of ascension.

Spider-like rock enthusiasts scale jagged, intricately carved rock faces, planning each movement with intense concentration. One moment they can be resting on a wide, stable shelf, and the next they may be supported by only a sliver of granite underfoot and a tenuous finger-grip in a slim crack on the wall's surface.

Sound frightening? Fearlessness, fortunately, isn't a prerequisite for beginners. Today's experienced climbers were once petrified amateurs. Rookies without fear are rare, or virtually nonexistent.

Brian Wheeler has been climbing for six years. He's quick to recall his frightening introduction to the sport. "We went on a little climbing trip when I was at summer camp," he recalls, smirking. "I was totally terrified. I hated it. I vowed I'd never do it again."

One year later, curiosity and pride overrode his fear. He gave climbing a second chance.

"Everyone else was doing it, and it made me mad that I was so scared," he says, narrowing his eyes. "I couldn't deal with it, so I just tried again and eventually got over the fear," he adds with satisfaction.

Lang Nelson, Wheeler's long-time friend and roommate, began climbing a little more than a year ago. His experience was similar to Wheeler's. Friends dragged him to a popular beginners' spot in Eastern Washington to initiate him.

"It was small climbs, but it just scared the ... you know," he says, giggling sheepishly. "They took me out someplace that was really no big deal for them, but I hated it."

"That first time, I dropped my rappelling device, which is how you get down," he says. His facial muscles tense as he remembers the nausea in the pit of his stomach, the thickening in his throat and the increasing wetness of his palms as he watched his life insurance tumble to the ground. The intensity of the memory passes. He shakes his limbs to relax, and lets out a breathy chuckle.

"It was no big deal, but as soon as I did it, I thought I was so screwed. I thought I was going to be sitting on that rock for a long, long time."

Nelson's fear soon abated, and now he's the first to suggest a day of climbing when the sun peers through the window of his dorm room. He fidgets with excitement as he and Wheeler discuss the progression of their climbing addiction.

"There's like, thousands of climbs in Washington," Wheeler says, his eyes glowing like an eight-year-old child's upon finding an abandoned truck loaded with unopened gifts.

"There are tons of places to go and everything's different," he continues. "The climbing's different, the scenery's different. You never get the same thing twice. It's always fun. It's always challenging and interesting."

Photographs of Nelson, Wheeler and their friends color the walls of the two's sunlit room. Last summer, they embarked on a gluttonous five-day climbing extravaganza to California's Joshua Tree National Monument. The pictures around the room chronicle the trip. In one, tall, tanned and lanky, Nelson is poised on a rock face in full climbing gear: helmet, harness with dangling silver gadgets, chalk bag, ropes that disappear into the corner of the photo and small, tight rock shoes. He's craning his neck, scowling goofily into the camera as if cursing the photographer for interrupting his concentration.

When they're hanging on a rock, Wheeler and Nelson say they usually have one focus — technique.

"I used to climb and be terrified the whole time," Wheeler says. "I'd think, 'I'm gonna die' every second. But the more comfortable you get with climbing, instead of thinking 'I'm gonna die', you focus on what you're supposed to be doing. You think about what's coming
up — what’s your next move.”

When he’s up high, Nelson often takes a minute to enjoy his envious vantage point.

“There are times when you’ve got a good handhold and you relax and look around,” he says intently. “You realize how cool it is that you’re out there. The scenery’s beautiful.”

Dangers do exist in rock climbing. Nelson and Wheeler admit grudgingly, but they add most can be eliminated or minimized by recognizing individual limits and taking safety precautions.

“It’s not really dangerous stuff, because you try to be as safe as possible,” Nelson says.

“I don’t think you’re ever really in a life-threatening situation because you’re always roped in and you’re always safe, but it’s scary,” Wheeler agrees.

“Usually, I think the fear’s pretty irrational,” he says confidently. “I mean, if you’re smart and you know what you’re doing, you’re not going to die,” he says with a laugh.

“Yeah,” Nelson adds, “and if you do fall, it’s going to be a five-foot fall or something like that, even though you’re thinking that if you fall, you’re going to kill yourself. You only climb stuff that you know you can climb.

“And I check my knots like, ten times before I start. I yell at somebody else to check them for me, too.”

Wheeler insists for the most part, climbing isn’t a death-defying sport.

“As long as everyone’s safe,” he pauses and smiles, thinking, “uh, barring some unforeseen event like a huge boulder flying through the air. That happened to someone when we were climbing,” he says, nodding his head as if expecting to be disbelieved.

“Someone yelled ‘Rock!’ and they looked up, and a boulder like that flew two feet past their head.” Wheeler widens his arms until they are completely outstretched to illustrate the immensity of the hurtling rock.

Wheeler’s eyes shift to the helmet resting on his desk. Next to it lies a big, dirt-soiled purple backpack. He pulls the pack to the floor in front of him, tugs the top open and brings out piece after piece of climbing equipment, excusing the sour, sweaty odor that filters into the room.

Nelson laughs and pinches his nostrils closed as Wheeler holds up a small pair of band-uniform blue and daffodil-yellow shoes with rubber bottoms and pointy toes. They’re special rock shoes, he says.

“The rubber on them is really sticky,” Wheeler says. “It sticks well to rock, and they fit really tight. Your feet are just crammed into them so you can stand on a ledge that big.” This time, he squints and moves his thumb and forefinger about an inch apart.

Nelson groans and wiggles his stockinged feet.

“You feel like they’re 10 sizes too small,” he says.

Next Wheeler describes the various doo-dads scattered across the rug, employing rock climbers’ lingo that’s virtually impossible for a non-climber to comprehend. A harness, of course, is worn by the climber. From it dangles a number of clinking silver things that attach to other metal things that attach to ropes that attach to silver things on rocks which hold the climbers and keep them from plunging from a rock face to a painful death.

Also, a small bag hangs from the climber’s waist, holding powdered chalk.

“(It’s) for when you get scared and your hands are all sweaty,” Nelson explains.

Physically, climbing strengthens muscles and increases flexibility. Muscles strengthened by climbing are long and lean, not bulky.

“The best climbers are usually slender and real wiry,” Wheeler says.

Nelson emphasizes the mental benefits of climbing. Challenging yourself, tackling fear and accomplishing a seemingly insurmountable goal can improve a mind’s fitness as well as a body’s.

“Whenever I climb, I’ll be watching someone climb before me, and I don’t want to do it,” he says. “I think, ‘I couldn’t climb this,’ then they say, ‘It’s your turn to go up it.’ When you get done, you feel so good that you’ve accomplished it.”

Wheeler reinforces Nelson’s comments: he values the mental positives of climbing above the physical ones.

“It does more for me mentally than anything, just because it scared me so much,” he says. “It pushes you mentally because once you’re climbing, you can’t come down, and whether you want to be there or not, you’re there and you have to go to the top. You have to just block everything out and say ‘Alright, I’m going to do this.’

“And when you get to the top, no matter what happened on the way up, no matter how scary it was, you’re at the top. It’s the best feeling in the world.”

Jon Heldcy a 21-year-old Whatcom Community College student, ascends a rock face near Larabee State Park.
A new war cry is screaming throughout the streets and alleys of Bellingham. It can be heard on the playgrounds of elementary schools and near the seediest of taverns. Young boys with long dreadlocks and 21-year-old women with shaved heads sing this anthem with pride and spend endless hours each day putting the fierce war cry into practice.

"SKATE OR DIE!"

Skateboarding, contrary to popular belief, is more than a sport or idle pastime. It is a way of life. Many individuals spend hours each day practicing their techniques. Often times, skaters join up and stay together like a pack of wolves, stalking their territory and hunting for the ultimate skating area.

"Seventh grade — that’s when I got my first board," Greg Ferguson, a 21-year-old Western student said. "I slowed down a lot since then ... once I got my car, I stopped skating for a while."

Although many people who began skating during the Reagan era stopped their alternative activity for a brief time, the popularity of skating is increasing and youths can be seen rolling on boards from the majestic plains of Montana to the hard, paved streets of New York.

"I think a lot of people who were really into it didn’t stop skating. It was kinda popular, MTV popular, but when I got older, less and less people thought it was cool," Ferguson said. "I’d feel kinda corny saying it’s making a comeback."

Despite the “corny” connotations, skating is making a comeback. This is evident anytime someone walks the streets of Bellingham and witnesses the aerial stunts or hears the thundering sound of wheels rolling on hard concrete.

The skaters’ pants, however, are one of the major factors which sets them apart from their mainstream counterparts. Their huge pants, which make their legs appear as if they were covered in denim barrels, flap in the wind like flags or sails. If one did not hear the sound of their wheels rolling down the street, they would definitely hear the vibrant flapping of cloth as the skater speeds along the street.

"There are 'Old School' skaters who don’t like the 'New School' skaters and their big pants and who ride little dinky boards," Ferguson said.

Unlike many of the big pants-wearing, New School skaters who have skated for only a few years, Ferguson does not wear the baggy leg coverings. He dresses in pants or shorts which cover his legs instead of the entire state of New Jersey.

Ferguson, whose short, carrot-orange hair makes him look like a candidate for the marine corps instead of the skating brigade, refers to himself as an Old School skater, or skater who began many years ago. Despite the similarity between the two schools’ activities, many differences exist between the two.

"There are a lot of little kids skating, and they are all really good," Ferguson said about the New Schoolers. "The tricks now are more free-style tricks — they are more geared toward really nimble, coordinated skaters.

"It favors little kids because they don’t have to be strong anymore. All they have to be is flexible, light and quick."

In addition to the different styles of skating, New School skaters use smaller boards with smaller wheels.

"There used to be bigger boards, bigger wheels, bigger everything!" Ferguson said. "Now it’s all small boards. They can’t do much (tricks)
at Our School

except on curbs and that's probably the most popular thing to skate now. It used to be industrial areas and swimming pools, but I wouldn't say the quality of riding has gone down."

Since a large number of students are now partaking in the skating phenomenon, the inevitable question "Why do you skate?" is being asked by many individuals.

"When I was in Olympia, in middle school, my best friend, also the first guy I smoked pot with, ... started skating and wanted me to start with him. We did everything together," Ferguson said.

"It's more of a social thing too. All my friends used to skate and we'd just hang out after school and skate."

Despite its popularity, Ferguson said skating is not really a sub-culture or sweeping revolution of young people. Rather, it is like a clique or group of people who hang out.

"You got your friends just like jocks hang out, skaters hang out," Ferguson said. "It's more like a clique than a sub-culture."

Ferguson and many other skaters, however, have met with considerable opposition from Western's administration and the University police for their alternative activity.

Enter the ominous Chapter 516-15 WAC, a policy in Western's Student Rights and Responsibility Code, which is intended to "Protect and control pedestrian traffic and traffic of persons using skateboards," and "To protect from physical damage and more than ordinary wear the wooden and concrete benches, brick and paved walkways, stairs, steps, loading ramps, plazas, and ramps for the disabled, caused by the use of skateboarders on such areas."

"There is a hazard (with skateboarding), and if we fail to do anything about it, the University could end up suffering a greater liability," said Doug Gill, Chief of Western Washington University Police. "That mode of transportation (skateboarding), is much faster than walking, consequently, it's going to be more dangerous."

Gill said the huge upsurge in foot traffic has made skateboarding, as well as biking and in-line skating, as dangerous as "riding a bicycle through Bellis Fair on a Christmas holiday," which makes skateboarding, biking and in-line skating prohibited during between-class transitions, when student traffic is at its highest.

However, while both biking and in-line skating are permitted on campus when student traffic is low, skateboarding remains a crime, punishable by arrest for trespassing.

"You (a skater) live on campus. You're enrolled at Western. You ride a skateboard, contrary to the law, and we stop you and tell you, 'don't do that anymore.'" Gill said, explaining a skating scenario. "Next time we see you, you're doing it again, and we say 'We told you not to do that anymore. If you're stopped or contacted again, you're going to be trespassed from campus.'"

"Here comes the rub — now the third time we walk out there and see you skateboarding; now when I trespass you, that means you're under arrest for criminal trespass. That means you have to leave campus. I'm not only throwing you out of the school (grounds), I'm also evicting you from your residence, because that's part of campus," Gill said.

"It's a little unrealistic," Gill said, who added the University Police have never evicted someone from their residence for a skateboarding violation.

Since the city of Bellingham has prohibited skateboards in the "downtown core," it has taken away a lot of smooth concrete from the skateboarders, who are forced to find other areas for their recreation.

"It's (campus) an inviting area (for skateboarders) because Bellingham doesn't really have any place for skateboarding," Gill said.

"They love sidewalks and even stairs," Gill said, as if he was referring to a species of animal. "And they love to jump up and ride around the ring at Fisher Fountain. The other day, we had a report they were doing flips off the stairs at Wilson Library."

Although Gill states Western's campus is a prime spot for skateboarding, many skaters disagree.

"They don't really have too much of a following with skateboarders riding through campus. ... It's not that nice of a place (to skate)," said Mike McGuire, a Western student and skater.

McGuire, a political activist of sorts, joined forces with Western students Lucas Martin and Travis Wittwer to combat the skating ban which looms over Western's campus.

"We're not asking for anything special. We're just asking for transportation rights with some consistency with the bike laws and Rollerblading laws," McGuire said.

After being hunted
down by campus police and greencoats for skateboarding on campus, McGuire and Martin began to involve themselves with making skateboarding on campus legal for transportation purposes.

"We don't want to skate and do tricks on campus, we just want to get to and from class and home," McGuire said, while sitting in the VU Main Lounge.

McGuire and Martin told of many incidents when police and greencoats would follow them off campus and would often stop them for skateboarding while on their way home.

"I was hassled at one in the morning, when no one was out," Martin said, who added he could not have hurt anyone at that late hour on his skateboard. "I just don't want to feel like a criminal every time I want to go home."

To prove their sincerity, McGuire, Martin and Wittwer drafted a proposal which would "wipe out" Chapter 516-15 WAC, making skateboarding legal on campus.

McGuire and Martin said their policy just added skateboards to many of the current bike policies.

"We asked for the 10 minute rule, where you're supposed to walk your bike, which no one follows anyway, and said we'd follow that. And we'd follow the dismount zones, from the library to Arntzen Hall," McGuire said, who also pointed out that bikes, in-line skates and two-ton cars moving through campus cause more damage than skateboards.

McGuire said bikes cause damage to the benches with their sprockets while in-line skates and cars driving over the bricks ravage Red Square.

"This (Chapter 516-15 WAC) stuff must have been off the top of their heads — granted, it's legal, but the percentage of people who are actually going to ride a skateboard to campus is so small that it's not even going to matter. What you see here is probably 25 percent of the skaters," McGuire said, motioning to himself and Martin.

"They're also worried about noise control, but the fountain causes noise and they're mowing lawns during class and blowing leaves," McGuire said.

Martin, who began the move to legalize skating on campus by involving himself on the AS Body's agenda, said they are considering their proposal and sent it to the board of trustees and other such factions on campus. Ultimately, their proposal will need to go through more than 10 people to become approved.

"It (the policy) should get recognized because very rarely do they ignore something sent by the AS Body," McGuire said. "If we keep following up on it as we have been, I see a positive outlook."

With the skating ban in downtown Bellingham and on Western's campus, skaters may soon become an extinct species.

Despite the oppression many skaters face in Bellingham and on Western's campus, skateboarders will continue to ride and fight for their rights. With the concentrated efforts of McGuire and Martin the fight for skateboarding rights is coming to a head.

The battle will continue until Western gives skaters, 'New and Old School,' a fair share of the bricks in Red Square.

Mike McGuire spends the same amount of time battling anti-skateboarding policies as he does the pavement.
Many dream about soaring high above the ground through the baby blue sky, swooping weightlessly with the eagles. Others have the recurring nightmare of stumbling off a cliff and plummeting for eternity; then are rudely awakened inches before splattering on the ground.

Hang gliding combines these two sensations and allows the passenger to fulfill dreams of flying. Bellingham native James Fieser helps people fulfill their dream.

Fieser, founder of Whatcom Wings, is one of about 500 certified tandem hang gliding instructors in the nation. Fieser, 27, has been flying for seven years and has taken tandem passengers for over two years, totaling over 500 tandem flights.

Whatcom County is blessed with some of the best hang gliding launch sites in the United States, claims Fieser. Blanchard Hill, just off I-5's Alger exit south of Bellingham, features three different launches which stand 1,250 feet above sea level.

"This is the best site in the Pacific Northwest," Fieser says. The Blanchard launch site is one of the most serene places one can ever visit. Peaceful is one of the first things to roll off the tongues of first-time hang gliders once they are on the ground.

"It was so quiet and peaceful up there," says Karl Unterschuetz, a sophomore at Western.

Unterschuetz went tandem gliding with Fieser last spring for his first hang gliding experience.

"It was so relaxing I didn't realize I was so high up. The only
With the Chuckanut Valley 1200 feet below, Zdenka Hruza prepares to take-off.

drawback was that it seemed like we were only up for a couple of minutes."

Unterschuetz echoes the thoughts of many first-time hang gliders.

The average ride on a tandem hang-gliding trip is about 10 minutes. The duration usually depends on the wind. Although short, these rides are usually enough to get people hooked on hang gliding.

"The best way to find out if you want to learn to fly is to take a tandem flight," Fieser says. "If after the tandem flight you find yourself unreasonably driven to fly, obviously you need to learn to fly a hang glider. Some people decide they can't do it alone."

A tandem flight with Whatcom Wings costs $60. A three-hour training session and a tandem flight is $90.

A new hang gliding outfit, including helmet, glider and wheels, can cost upwards of $4,000. The gliders don't depreciate very quickly.

"I really don't make a lot of money doing this," Fieser says. "I guess I sacrifice the money for the quality of life I live."

Anyone is eligible to take a tandem flight, but there is no insurance if something goes wrong. Once you sign a waiver and fill out a license, you are automatically a member of the U.S. Hang Gliding Association with a student rating. Passengers and instructors are required to have the license with them while flying.

The passenger can't hold Fieser liable if there is an accident. Much like bungee-jumping and parachuting, signing the waiver is like taking one's life in one's own hands. Or in this case, in the hands of the pilot.

"In the beginning, people were building gliders out of bamboo and jumping off mountains. They didn't know any better. They just wanted to fly."

—James Fieser

"Hang gliders are stronger than regular aircrafts," Fieser said. "It is the safest form of flying. This is much safer than riding a motorcycle."

The sport is only as safe as the equipment. Old gliders don't meet modern-day safety standards.

"You have to have an instructor to be able to find equipment. If you find a hang glider in someone's garage, don't get involved with it. Chances are it's a leftover from the 1970s, when gliders had divergence and terminal dive problems," Fieser says.

"That's why hang gliding got a really bad name. In the beginning, people were building gliders out of bamboo and jumping off mountains. They didn't know any better. They just wanted to fly."

Modern hang gliders, called "flex-wings," are much safer. If a pilot lets go of the glider, it will fly straight. The only way to turn the wing is to shift your weight to one side. If the pilot pulls the bar toward himself, it will increase the speed. This makes learning to fly much easier with less chance of making a fatal mistake.

One of the luxuries about flying tandem is the equipment is already provided. All a student needs is enough guts to jump off a cliff the height of two Space Needles.

Once Fieser reaches the launch site at Blanchard, it takes about 15 minutes to assemble the glider. The passenger and the pilot are attached to the glider with straps fastened to their jump suits. Teamwork is essential to a successful flight.

The passenger has two things to remember: once you start running toward the launch there's no turning back, and never touch the glider. The passenger is instructed to keep a firm grasp on Fieser.

"You have to run efficiently together to launch on a tandem flight," Fieser said. "I had a 170 pound guy give up the launch run after one step and I had to drag him the full length of the launch ramp. We got off just fine, but we have a much better launch if you run."

The launch ramp, a small board, is the most intimidating part of the entire experience for first-time hang gliders. The ramp consists of a dirt area leading down to an eight-foot-long piece of plywood attached to the edge of the cliff. Any attempt to abort a launch, once the momentum begins, will result in a slide down the ramp and a tumble downhill.

One of the most nerve-racking parts is staring down the ramp waiting for the perfect gusts to come.

Fieser concentrates on the cloth strips tied to the nearby trees to tell him which way the winds are blowing. He then licks his finger and feels for the breeze.

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Then the moment of truth comes. Like a fisherman ready to grasp his fishing pole at the slightest tug, Fieser stares patiently out at the sky.

"Are you ready?" Fieser asks.

At the sound of your answer, whether it’s yes or no, you both run off the cliff into the blue skies.

After the launch, a surreal silence fills the air as both passenger and pilot soar above the trees and wildlife of Whatcom County.

Soaring through the air, a feeling of awe overwhelms your body. You look over water and islands like Superman over Metropolis.

Then gently floating back down, over Chuckanut Drive, you land.

I noticed we were flying. It was so sudden, so easy, so nice.

"Are you ready?" he asked. I nodded.
"THEN LET’S GO!" He yelled as we ran off the cliff.

Then I noticed we were flying. It was so sudden, so easy, so nice. It was Fieser, the driver of this dream, and I was the dreamer.

More than 1000 feet in the air, there was nothing below my feet. Just me, Fieser and a giant kite.

"Look back!" Fieser said about 10 seconds into the flight. I didn’t know how far we had travelled; it seemed as though we were about 30 feet from the launch site, but we were approximately 400 feet away when I looked back and saw Tom on the hill watching us fly.

This was it! I was flying! Not in a machine, but like a bird. For centuries, humans risked their lives to sample a taste of what it feels like to fly. And I was doing and feeling what not many humans experience in their lifetime.

We glided over Puget Sound. I could see for miles. It was as relaxing as a cigarette after sex. It was as beautiful as a picnic in a tall, grassy field on a summer’s day. It was peaceful like listening to the church choir on Christmas morning. I felt no pressures at all; no stress about money tests, parents, papers, work or girlfriends. I was on a journey celebrating life and happiness.

Fieser then demonstrated how to guide the aircraft. He leaned left, and we glided left. He leaned right and we gently turned right. He pulled the bar and we accelerated. Then he let up on the bar, and we slowed down so much that it felt like we softly stopped like an angel resting on a cloud.

Then we started to decline back toward the land. I saw the waves brushing onto the beaches, like no one has ever seen them.

People the size of lady bugs watched us soar above them.

We flew over Chuckanut Drive as Fieser gave me landing instructions. He wrapped his left leg over my legs as I climbed further up his back.

Then we approached the grassy farm fields, where we would land. Finally, we carefully landed on our feet and into reality as I finally awoke from my dream.