March

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magazine
march 1995

25 years

Stretching the truth • Promiscuity • Agony, anguish and acne
Letter from the editor:

Twenty-five years ago, Jimi Hendrix died. Twenty-five years ago, the Beatles sang their last song together.

Twenty-five years ago, the United States increased its involvement in Vietnam by invading Cambodia.

Twenty-five years ago, to reflect the issues faced by the students of Western Washington State College, Klipsun Magazine was born.

Editor Phyllis Atkinson and her staff produced stories that showed insight into the twisted minds of collegiate youth by highlighting the students’ concerns. Liberals lost congressional power in the election of 1970, graduates weren’t finding jobs after leaving Bellingham and the school’s purse strings were tightly cinched.

Subsequent issues contained articles covering drug use, guns, censorship, women’s rights and environmental protection. All of the stories within Klipsun’s pages still represent an attitude — your attitude.

Stress and strain rule our lives. Students jolt their bodies with caffeine to cram more information in their tired brains. This is how we survive our college life. We stress over finding enough time to watch a rerun of Seinfeld, while others stress about taking another breath.

The articles in this issue are focused on people fighting to reclaim the happiness taken away from them by a twist of fate.

Jody Kunz thought he had the flu, but was diagnosed with the disease that causes AIDS. Children crippled in accidents are finding freedom on snow-covered hills. Gretchen Unick had her arms wrapped around her true love while riding shotgun on a motorcycle, when a collision with a car simultaneously ended a life and broke a heart. All of these people refused to give up; they are adapting to the obstacles put before them and are continuing with their lives.

No one knows what the next 25 years hold. No one knows what obstacles will be placed before him or her. But by finding the courage these people have shown, the courage to succeed, survival is assured.

Thanks for reading,

Ryan McMenamin
Inner peace found
Buddhism in Bellingham: Meditating to find tranquility in a mayhem-filled world.
in Eastern religion

Positively true
Dave McNeill has heard it all, and, when you lie, he has the printout to prove it.
accounts of lying

Hitting the slopes
Leaving their disability at the day lodge, people find freedom at Mount Baker.
with hope

The battle begins —
After being diagnosed as HIV-positive, Jody Kunz decided to educate others rather than just give up.
Jody Kunz and HIV

Promiscuity —
People continue to take chances by sleeping around in the age of sexual death.
Rolling the dice

Three chords and a whole lot of screaming
The method behind the music classified as “Seattle sound.”

Volcanoes
Dealing with pus problems and corresponding teenage terror.
on your face

Difficult recoveries
Coping with the loss of others through unforeseen, tragic events.
for the fortunate
Buddhism brings worshipers to their knees

7:06 p.m.
Paul Warwick taps the brass gong three times, pausing after each stroke for the sharp, resonant sound to fade off the bare, white walls. He replaces the padded stick in the cereal-bowl-sized gong and rests his hands, palms down, on his knees. Like the 11 other meditators he faces, his back is straight, his legs crossed and his eyes focused on the wooden floor in front of him. Silence.

Two candles flicker and incense burns on a low shrine, filling the hall with sweet musk. On the shrine, which rests to the left of Warwick, are a vase with wild flowers, a photograph of guru Chogyam Trungpa and a crystal ball. The ball represents the traditional Buddhist image of the human mind—naturally clear and reflective.

A car zooms along a nearby street, breaking the silence momentarily. Then, barely audible breathing floats around the room.

So begins the Buddhist tradition of sitting motionless, practiced by just one of four

Story by Heather Kimbrough — Photo by Ryan Burden
Buddhist groups that occupy the downtown Bellingham Dharma Hall, which was established in 1993 and now has approximately 50 paying members. Many nonpaying members visit the hall as well.

The Tibetan Shambala Center, Bellingham Meditation Society, Mindfulness Meditation and Bellingham Zen Practice Group share the $500-per-month rent. The four groups represent major Buddhist movements in the United States, each of which has its own way of meditating, ranging from walking meditations to chanting, Warwick says.

Tonight, two floors above the Christ­ian bookstore, Quest, 115 Unity St., members of the Shambala Center sit. They breathe and listen. They notice and "label."

"Labeling" is important, Warwick says. When a sound or thought comes into a sitter's mind during meditation, he or she labels it as "thinking" and lets it go. It's important not to push away or hold on to thoughts. Nonjudgmental, aware, down-to-earth — such is the way of Tibetan sitters.

Warwick coordinates the Shambala Center with his wife Jenny. Both have practiced meditation for more than 20 years. While meditating, sitters strive for self-awareness through selflessness. Warwick says his group doesn't strive for an ultimate goal while meditating; it's a continual process of attaining a healthier mind and body.

Michele Long, 25, a Fairhaven student, is sitting two zabutons to the left in the front row. Everyone has his or her own zabuton — a flat and square cushion — with a plush pillow on top of this. She prefers sitting on a 6-inch-high wooden bench, which rests in the middle of her zabuton, because her legs fall asleep on the cushion.

Long's short, brown hair juts from under her blue knit hat, and her plaid shirt and jeans with holes at the knees shout: Comfort! Long is one of four Western students who sits every Monday with the Shambala Center. She first delved into this Eastern religion over a year ago for several reasons.

"The desire to be more awake to what's around me, and to be able to respond to it in a more compassionate way," she says later of her continuous journey. "In Buddhism, the idea is to be able to let go of your own craziness, so that you can respond to joy, pain with more compassion." If someone approaches her with a problem, she wants to respond without having her personal problems get in the way, says Long, a Fairhaven peer advisor.

"I feel more grounded in my body because I usually do things in my head. I just feel I do things in the day in a more careful way, in a more mindful way ... I feel less distracted."

Who are the others who have deposited their shoes and coats at the door? The shoes leave a clue: leather walking shoes, several running shoes and four pairs of Birkenstocks. The coats look as if they were bought at REI.

The owners face four, long windows with half-rolled-up shades. Everyone is Cau­

casian (Warwick says a few Asians belong to the hall), but this is where the similarity ends. The sitters are in their 20s, 30s, 40s and beyond — students, professors, females, males, long hair, short hair and hints of baldness.

The Bellingham Dharma Center, Warwick says, is open to anyone who's interested, and members pay an optional membership fee; the hall is nonevangelistic and welcomes people to learn and practice Buddhism as they are ready to explore it.

"In Buddhism, the idea is to be able to let go of your own craziness," says Long.

7:14 p.m.

People are talking on the darkened sidewalk below. Their voices carry into the well-lit hall, where a woman enters late and takes a seat on a zabuton. Behind Long sits Scot Moorhead, a Western studio art major.

If you ask Moorhead, an ex-Catholic, why he was drawn to Buddhism, he will say: "It just made sense to me. I was very familiar with Catholicism, the rituals, etcetera. It sort of took away all of the mystery and intrigue. I couldn't see it as something useful in terms of seeing things I was struggling with."

After living in Japan as an exchange student and visiting Buddhist temples, he discovered a new perspective on Buddhism. It intrigued him and was no longer so exotic and foreign. When he returned to the United States, he took Buddhism more seriously.

"I've been interested in some form of meditation since high school. I'd pick up a book here and there and practice (meditation), but it wasn't until a year or two ago that I thought of it as a daily practice."

For Moorhead and Long, the first attempts at meditation proved difficult. Long says, "I couldn't even sit for five minutes. It drove me crazy."

Warwick says this is typical of beginning sitters, most of whom do not continue after preliminary sittings. "My mind still wanders. I lose focus. It's a continual thing," Moorhead says.

And the benefits? "I'm more comfortable. I don't tire as easily. I've become better at just stopping before I get carried away or taken away," Moorhead says. He says he tries to meditate daily, yet sometimes finds himself caught in the daily rush. "It always comes back to it. It's a beautiful practice."

7:24 p.m.

Another car zooms by. Four lights hang from the tall ceiling and illuminate a painting of Buddha above the shrine. The sitters remain motionless.

Near Moorhead sits yet another Western student, Kevin Orzech, a geology graduate student, like Moorhead, traveled in the East. He visited China, where, he says, "It was really hard to find people who did it (Buddhist meditation)." However, he added, "it really seems to be catching on in this country. It seems to have a lot of answers to life."

Orzech says he's been to 10-day sitting sessions where he meditated for 11 hours straight. "It was the most challenging mental, physical, emotional experience in my life," he says. Sometimes someone would burp or fart, and his typical response was either to get mad or laugh. It's not unusual for a spontaneous wave of laughter to roll over a room of meditators, Warwick says.
7:26 p.m.
Jenny Warwick stands up and brings a zabuton and a round cushion with her into the small library to the left. Another woman follows her, and they shut the door for an "interview." Their talking floats through the door every now and then. The remaining sitters are still, except for slight wavering from one man and a woman's earring that moves back and forth at times. Someone else coughs.

An interview, Paul Warwick explains, is a time when an experienced, trained teacher talks with meditators about the meditation process. He recommends meditators talk with a teacher every six weeks for about six months; meditators also usually read and study Buddhist texts. As they progress, the meditators continue to study Buddhism and often study more intensively over the years.

Warwick's deceased teacher, Chogyam Trungpa, is smiling in the photograph. Perhaps he's happy because he taught his students a way of sitting called "meditation in action," a style adapted for the needs of Westerners. He also translated Tibetan verse into English.

Warwick met Trungpa after quitting his job as a philosophy professor at the University of Montana. Warwick now teaches English as a second language at Whatcom Community College. Jenny Warwick is an elementary school teacher.

One of the reasons he likes Tibetan Buddhism is it isn't rooted in a belief of a supernatural being or indoctrination of the bible. "I gave that a try. It's powerful stuff, but I just didn't believe it. So I found Buddhism."

The Buddhism he teaches emphasizes being part of society, as opposed to the traditional monastic practice of isolation. He says monastic practice isn't practical for most people today. "People like family, People like sex. They like ownership."

7:58 p.m.
Warwick taps the gong three times again, signaling the sitters to rise and stretch. They form a semicircle, ready for a talk on emotions, in which members describe how they experience emotions and deal with them. After the hour-long discussion, the group stands up, replaces the cushions in the back of the hall and heads for the cookies and tea near the back table.

Soon they will return to the hurried streets and their busy schedules. This time they enter, as Orzech says, "a little more wholly. A little more aware. It's a way to deal with all of your life."
Looking For the Truth Between the Lines Of a Polygraph Printout

Story by Jaymes Song and Noah Walden
People lie. Parents lie. Your church leaders lie. Your neighborhood grocer just told three lies today. Politicians lie (duh). You lie. Lying is integral to our culture. It's in our blood. For some, it's as natural as blinking, and for others, it's as much a tool of artistry as a brush to a painter.

"I'm the most terrific liar you ever saw in your life," said Holden Caulfield in J.D. Salinger's "The Catcher In The Rye." "If I'm on my way to the store to buy a magazine, even, and somebody asks me where I'm going, I'm liable to say I'm going to the opera."

So, why do people lie? Some, like Caulfield, lie to raise their self-esteem. Others lie to boast, like the so-called "fish stories." Many lies are of the "white-lie" variety: small indiscretions in the truth, which allow a person to move smoothly through situations where the truth is harder to explain.

Every day someone lies to you, but what if you were repeatedly lied to all day long? What if you could visibly see someone's nose grow, Pinocchio-like, as they tried to sling a slew of half-truths and outright lies past you?

Dave McNeill's seen truth stretched so far it could snap back and take an eye out. He has seen the forked tongues of mythomaniacs lick beads of sweat off their upper lip as their minds raced to find a lie that would stick.

As a detective for 22 of his 25 years in the Bellingham Police Department, McNeill's seen it all.

"There's a lot of indicators: voice, things that people say, body language," McNeill said. "I look for sweating as one of them. It's when did the person sweat, when did they not sweat. Certain types of sweating on certain parts of the body is an indicator." McNeill said that several other things point toward a person's possible dishonesty. Dryness of the mouth, eye movement, fidgeting, hand movements and nervousness can all point toward a party's guilt.

McNeill watches subjects' eyes like a hawk circling its prey. He knows that if their eyes move up and to the right when in thought, their brain is going into memory. If the eyes wander up and left, they are in the realm of fantasy.

Today, retired from the force, McNeill spends most of his time in a square office whose main point of interest is a briefcase-sized box next to his desk. The room is decorated sparsely but attractively. Papers are in order, the carpet looks recently vacuumed and a large stack of Diet Coke cans sits in a box in the closet. His desk, too, is tidy. Every item on the crisp Formica surface seems ship-shape, save a metal and black plastic hand strengthenener which seems out of place but is the likely reason behind the large forearms of the man at the desk. On the left wrist of the big forearm, McNeill proudly wears a Bellingham Police Department watch, the kind of watch an officer gets after serving the public for 25 years. He looks, above all, like a cop; or, more appropriately, an ex-cop. The pale brown vest he wears seems quintessentially outdoorsy and is draped over a purple T-shirt proclaiming "Make me wine: Mount Baker Vineyards."

The copper-colored box next to the desk is called The Diplomat I. Mysterious wires and devices connect to the Diplomat I, which in the right hands, can deliver the truth as surely as a fortune teller's crystal ball. McNeill's crystal ball is a polygraph machine.

"Everybody has lied in their life," McNeill said. "If someone comes in and says they've never lied, that's their second lie."

McNeill has worked with the polygraph since 1983. He currently runs McNeill Polygraph & Investigation (MPI), which he founded in July of 1993. He is also the chairman of the board of the Northwest Polygraph Association.

“I believe strongly in the polygraph,” McNeill said. “It’s an extremely worthwhile instrument for law enforcement.” McNeill said the principal uses of the polygraph are in sexual therapy and in criminal and pre-employment testing for law enforcement. He said that more than 80 percent of the time he's found someone lying on a polygraph, he has obtained a confession.

Lt. Rick Sucee of the Bellingham Police Department refers to McNeill as one the best around.

"Dave will get a confession out of anybody," said Sucee. "You'll confess without even knowing. I've never seen somebody so smooth in my life."

“These guys are applied psychologists," said Vincent Ferri, a sociology lecturer at Western. "They spend years interrogating people and they get real good at interpreting all these behaviors."
"This (polygraph machine) is fool-proof," said Sucee. "We use it to eliminate suspects, not to convict somebody."

But liars, don't despair. Opinions on the polygraph differ.

"In social psychology, there's a lot of literature about how easy it is to fool polygraphs and how inaccurate they are," said Ferri. "There are a lot of ways that you can fool the polygraph, get around them. My perspective would be that polygraphs are notoriously inaccurate. Part of the reason it works is because we believe that it works," the patient, young instructor explained. "You don't have to be a Zen master to fool a polygraph."

"The research on polygraph tests ... does not support the tests very well," Max Lewis, professor of clinical psychology at Western, said. "Oh, yeah. There are people who can beat the polygraph."

Wearing blue jeans, a flannel shirt and a black sport coat, Lewis looks like a pop psychologist on TV, but he has a low, steady voice and sympathetic demeanor.

"There are a couple of strategies (for beating the polygraph)," Lewis said. "One that a person might do is learn some relaxation techniques." Another, mentioned by both Ferri and Lewis, is to throw off the initial base-line reading, which is used to determine lies later in the interrogation.

So why do people lie? "We're all survivalists, and to survive we are going to sometimes lie," said the congenial, ruddy-faced McNeill. He has made his living as a professional interrogator and polygraph examiner. He, better than most, knows why people lie.

"It comes down to self-preservation. It's what's in all of us," McNeill said. "It depends on the consequences. I have to lie, or I'm going to prison. If it's a situation of spousal mistrust, I have to lie to save my marriage. I don't want to lose half of everything I've got. I don't want to lose my children. Therefore, I have to lie."

Not all lies have such profound consequences. McNeill describes the kind of lies that are told "around the campfire." Playful fibs are sometimes told in jest to pass the time and make one another laugh. Lies can be entertainment.

Other lies, like the ones that started this

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**FIRSTHAND LIES**

By Jaymes Song

My mind was running a million miles per hour. The room was dark. The only light was coming from a fixture that swayed gently like a pendulum directly toward me. The only thing I could see was the interrogator's rugged mouth and the smoke from his cigarette rising in the beam of light.

I was hooked up to a large file cabinet-sized machine. Millions of wires pierced the skin on my arms to measure blood pressure and breathing.

My legs were restrained to the chair so I wouldn't move when tested. I was wearing a metal helmet on my head that calculated brain waves and perused my every thought.

"Let's cut the bullshit," a menacing voice said sternly. I swear it could have been Darth Vader. "We know you did it, Song."

Beads of sweat started to form as I tried to look emotionless in the chair. Nonchalantly, I licked them from my lip.

"I want to help you," he said. "But, I need to hear the truth. Where were you on the evening of March 10th, 1995?"

"I went to a bar to watch a Sonics' game," I said calmly. "I didn't do it, I'm innocent."

Before I could finish my sentence, sirens started to go off in the room. A sign that read "LIAR" lit up like an applause sign at a game show.

I was shocked with 10,000 watts of electricity. "Bullshit, Song!" he yelled as he pounded his fist on the table, nearly spilling a cup of coffee. "It's gonna be a cold day in hell before you get outta the slammin'!"

Maybe I watched too many Starsky and Hutch episodes and old gangster movies, because this was the scene I was expecting at an interrogation with a lie detector.

This wasn't the scene at all, though. Dave McNeill, one of the best interrogators and polygraph readers around, used a very low-key and friendly approach to his job when giving my polygraph test.

But the sight of the hotseat was very ominous. The black leather arms were unusually long and big for a regular chair. The straps and the wires that constricted me looked a little scary. I sat down uneasily.

"You want to be hooked up?" McNeill asked.

"Yeah, sure." I replied, still skeptical about the accuracy of the machines.

"Yeah, there were always a few things I wondered about Jaymes," Noah commented, while he sat in a chair a few comfortable feet behind me and the polygraph machine.

"It's better me than you," I quietly replied to Noah with a smirk on my face.

McNeill fastened and strapped all the gizmos on my body.

"This isn't gonna hurt, right?" I asked McNeill.

While he assured me that it wouldn't he wrapped a blood pressure strap just like the ones at the nurse's office around my left arm. My hand began to change color rapidly.

He then wrapped two metal beaded strings around my stomach and chest. The beaded strings looked like the necklace your mom buys for you in second grade that has your name, address, phone number and an American flag on the charm just in case you forget your address or what country you're in. The strings around my stomach and chest measured the breathing patterns.

Finally, he placed two clasps on my two fingers between the index and pinky on my right hand. The clasps measure the galvanic skin response, or the conductivity of the skin.

"You immediately perspire when you lie," McNeill said. "That's gonna conduct more electricity and that's what this records. It's out of
story, are boastful lies, the lies of a braggart. Usually indicative of low self-esteem, boastful lies are told to make the liar feel more important. Often lies are told to get attention. This goes back all the way back to childhood. “My dad’s bigger than yours!” “Oh yeah? My dad’s richer than yours!”

“A lot of people lie because once they get into a lie, they have to stay in that lie,” McNeill said. “That is denial. A lie is nothing but denial. Most people who lie about something they have done ... rationalize that it’s OK.”

“For most people, whether they lie or tell the truth is situational,” said Lewis. How a lie is viewed can vary greatly, even from country to country.

“If you take someone from another culture, their responses to lying may be very different,” said Ferri, as he looked off to the wall.

As soon as I was all hooked up, McNeill asked me to write down my favorite number on a blank piece of paper. I wrote down the number 17: Dave Krieg.

Sitting in the chair, I felt like I was in confession at church with McNeill as the priest. The only difference was that this time, the priest could find out everything and anything.

McNeill then told me not to move around and look straight ahead. As Noah tried to get a glimpse of me in my final seconds, McNeill told him to get behind me, away from my vision so I wouldn’t get distracted.

“When you do a polygraph, there’s only two people in the room,” McNeill said.

McNeill then wrote the numbers one, two, four and five with the number 17 in the middle. He told me to answer his questions but lie about writing the number 17.

At this point I truly believed that I could pass this test. I believed that my years of lying experience would pay off in the moment of truth. In nearly 22 years of life, the only time I truly believe I didn’t fib was when I couldn’t speak as an infant. But as soon as I attained the skill of speaking, I was bullshitting right along with the rest of my fellow diaper-wetters.

So, along with most people my age, I believed that I was pretty skilled at this lying game.

“A lot of things will cause a change in the body,” McNeill said, and he suddenly slapped his hands together. “Like a slap of the hands.”

He told me blood rushed to my brain and I perspired without knowing. Then he told me to gently lick my lips.

After a couple of seconds of evaluating the marks on the paper he told me that when I licked my lips, my blood pressure went up because of the lack of air. The muscles around my heart squeezed together, and it took three seconds to allow my heart to relax and function normally again.

“Did you choose number one?” he asked.

“No,” I responded calmly.

“Did you choose number two?”

“No,” I replied — cool, calm and collected.

“Did you choose number four?”

“Nope.”

“Did you choose number five?”

“No.”

“Did you choose number 17?” he asked me once again.

“No.”

McNeill then ripped out the outcome and explained what each squiggle meant.

“The very first question of any test is going to have a reaction because it’s the start of the test,” McNeill said, as he pointed out the lines where he had asked about the number one. “That’s kind of a throw-away.”

“When I asked about 17, bang, right inside of you, your muscles clammed up,” said McNeill. “Beyond your control, the muscles around your heart tightened right up.”

“This is where your blood pumped up,” said McNeill as he pointed to a discrepancy in the wave pattern in my breathing. “It went through your aortic valve and then your valve closed, and then it comes back and hits.”

McNeill pointed out that I would be a very good person to run a polygraph on.

“When you said no to 17, you didn’t breathe for four seconds,” he said. “You could hardly breathe all the way through the next question.”

“Just over some silly question like this, which doesn’t mean anything, your reactions took 27 seconds to recover,” McNeill said jokingly.

He then showed me a previous test in which the subject lied about a serious crime and it only took the subject 22 seconds to recover.

So, basically, if I ever lie about a murder, I would have a heart attack, my head would do a 360 and I’d go into convulsions before the questions were even asked.

I guess I’ll leave the lying to the politicians.
Freedom on the Slopes

Story and photos by Amy Howat

Kevin Kennedy enjoys the fields of snow at Mount Baker Ski Area.
Sliding, gliding, flying down a hill of snow while pine-scented wind blows through the air. The liberating, graceful movements of skiing and snowboarding give people an incredible sense of freedom and control. Sliding on snow has also become a unique way for people with disabilities to discover liberation and freedom of movement.

A small group of volunteers, instructors and students have come together at Mount Baker Ski Area to develop a program for skiers with disabilities.

On the first day of lessons, Jeremy Moore, Doug Mackey and two helpers gather in a cluster below the day lodge. Moisture-laden snow pelts the group and other curious onlookers as Mackey transfers Jeremy from his wheelchair to a biski, an adaptive skiing device with a contoured seat mounted on a short pedestal on two wide skis.

Fifteen-year-old Moore is one of the inaugural students in the first full-season of the SkiAble instructional program for people with disabilities at Mount Baker. He talks with Mackey in a voice slowed and slightly slurred by cerebral palsy. They discuss some adjustments to the bi-ski, add more cushions to the seat, then set off to join the other skiers and snowboarders who dot the slopes.

Mackey shows Moore how to turn the bi-ski by leaning from side to side and using outriggers attached to his arms for balance. By the end of the lesson, Moore is able to glide down the hill with confidence and speed. After the lesson, Moore sums up his first day as an adaptive skier.

"It's hard but fun," he says with a smile. "I like the speed if I'm in control."

The grin on Jeremy's face is one that Mackey has seen many times in his nearly 20 years as an instructor for skiers with disabilities. Mackey himself lost his left leg below the knee in a bobsledding accident when he was 16. A year later, in 1969, Mackey learned how to "three-track" ski with outriggers, which are 14-inch skis mounted to the tip of forearm crutches. His accomplishments on the ski slopes facilitated Mackey's successful adjustment to his new lifestyle.

"When you become disabled or you're still dealing with your disability, sometimes you need to work on your self-image and self-esteem and that whole part of your life before you can make progress in other areas," Mackey says. "For instance, at the age of 16, skiing, canoeing and gymnastics gave me the opportunity to build myself back so that I could assert myself academically and feel good about myself in an interpersonal relationship."

When Mackey attended college in Colorado a few years later, he took ski instruction classes and began his long-time involvement with programs for skiers with disabilities. Mackey entered the scene at a time when adaptive skiing was starting to grow in popularity, although it began decades earlier.

The use of adaptive skiing equipment was pioneered in Switzerland in the 1930s and 1940s. After World War II, Paul Limekuler returned to the United States from Europe with outriggers that allowed people with one leg, or weaknesses in their lower extremities, to ski with added stability. Although some instruction existed for people with disabilities, it was the Vietnam War that created the impetus for the development of programs for skiers with disabilities.

Thousands of men returning from Vietnam with amputated legs began skiing with outriggers. As the demand for equipment and professional instruction rose, programs for people with disabilities were developed around the country, including Mount Hood, Ore., and several mountains on the East Coast and in California. The program at Winter Park, Colo., in particular, has flourished and is considered the model program in the U.S.

Mackey's involvement in teaching adaptive skiing and his own experiences with a disability have taught him much.
about human nature and the basic things that able-bodied people often take for granted. Mackey believes adaptive skiing fulfills two basic needs that are not normally available to people with disabilities.

"Number one — it fulfills the need to move," Mackey says. "Our bodies, when we're born, have an innate need to move in space. They like to explore. And the same thing's true of people with disabilities. They have those same kinds of needs, and we just have to build equipment a little differently to make it possible for them to do it. Number two — we all have a need to enrich our relationship with the planet we live on."

Adaptive skiing gets students with disabilities outdoors and gives them a freedom of movement they rarely experience, particularly in the winter, when cold weather and snow make getting around with wheelchairs and other adaptive equipment very difficult.

During the past 20 years, Mackey has spent a good deal of time in Colorado teaching, racing and learning about programs for skiers with disabilities. When he moved to Bellingham in the early 1980s, he became involved with Team USAble, the Northwest chapter of the National Handicapped Sports and Recreation Association.

Team USAble is a nonprofit organization that offers people with disabilities the opportunity to bicycle, water-ski, kayak, play basketball and participate in many other sports. Now it also offers skiing on its list of activities.

Mackey and U.S. Forest Service employee Kevin Kennedy have been working for five years to get the SkiAble program up and running at Mount Baker. Kennedy, an athletic and outspoken man, is the Region 6 ski area accessibility coordinator for the Forest Service.

Kennedy was paralyzed from the waist down in an automobile accident in 1984. Before his accident, he was an avid skier, climber and sportsman. After his accident, Kennedy searched for a way to feel the freedom of movement he had experienced in sports before he was injured.

"I wanted to do things where I could be independent," Kennedy says. "Lots of sports for disabled people are the kind where you have to be taken care of."

Kennedy had been working with Mount Baker Ski Area employees to make the ski area fully accessible for people with disabilities. Mackey wanted to get back into teaching skiing, so the two began working with volunteers and the ski area's general manager to develop an adaptive skiing program.

Kennedy was, in effect, the guinea pig for the program. The ski area purchased a mono-ski and Kennedy and Mackey went through their inaugural lesson in January of 1994. Kennedy's single run down the beginner hill of Chair 7 took him a tortuous two-and-a-half hours and was a lesson in frustration.

"I was lying awake in bed that night with my arms burning so bad I couldn't get to sleep," Kennedy says. "I didn't want to go again, but I was committed because of my job with the Forest Service... Doug really wanted to teach."

Kennedy persevered through another 14 lessons that season, and began to develop his technique and ability. This year Kennedy switched from the mono-ski to the bi-ski, which is easier to balance and to learn. Now Kennedy is able to free ski with his family and friends.

When he is out on the mountain, Kennedy elicits a positive response from the other skiers and snowboarders. They constantly approach him to watch his technique or ask him questions.

Kennedy, and others involved with the program, say this interaction between skiers with disabilities and other people on the slopes is perhaps the most significant by-product of the program.

"One thing I notice is that I'm a skier, not a person with a disability — just another skier," Kennedy says. "You're not just opening up skiing to people with disabilities, you're opening up society."

Mackey also has witnessed the attitudes toward people with disabilities change as they interact together on the slopes.

"What may be one of the most
frustrating things of working in this environment is watching the public sort of treat people with disabilities as if they were inferior, sort of less of a person and not smart," Mackey says.

"But then you see those times when the general public learns that's not the case. I think it enriches the spirit of the mountain. There's sort of an uplifting feeling that people get when they see someone else who travels in a wheelchair or on crutches and they're skiing."

After the test period with Kennedy last year, the SkiAble program was ready to roll in the 1994-95 ski season.

Beside Mackey, the program has two other certified instructors plus three noncertified, but experienced, instructors. Volunteers work as ski buddies, helping to tether the students so they are in control at all times and blocking so other skiers don't ski into the students.

Participants sign up for a four-week session. For $130, they get four lessons, the use of adaptive equipment and lift tickets.

Thirteen people, ranging in age from 8 to 40, have already enrolled in the program and Mackey expects more to sign up this year.

The people involved are excited about the progress and the experiences students and their families have gotten out of it.

Gwyn Grummel, marketing director for Mount Baker Ski Area, has received many positive comments from employees, customers and participants in the program.

"We try to promote diversity in the way that people enjoy the mountain," Grummel says. "Whether it's appreciating someone using adaptive equipment, an awesome snowboarder or graceful telemarker, people appreciate anyone who's willing to give it a try and enjoy being in the mountains."

On the second weekend of SkiAble, 8-year-old Lindsey McGrady trades her forearm crutches for a bi-ski and heads out to take the mountain by storm.

Jagged mountains frame the bright blue sky, and Lindsey's face reflects the bright sunshine as she waits for her turn on the chairlift.

An eager look gleams in her eye as she listens to Mackey and her ski buddy, Dan Wolfe, give her instructions and goals for the day.

At the top of the chair, she watches as Kevin Kennedy demonstrates the technique of turning the bi-ski. He swoops gracefully down the hill, leaning smoothly from side to side.

Lindsey follows in his track with the eager, uncertain movements of a beginner. Her inexperience is evident, but her enthusiasm and love for speed make her a quick learner.

By the end of her lesson, she has taken four trips down Chair 7 and looks graceful as she speeds down the last hill with a look of intense concentration on her face.

Cheeks red with cold and eyes shining with excitement, she talks about the intricate operation of the bi-ski, the flying sensation of riding the chairlift and the thrill of speed.

"It was sort of easy, but you have to believe in yourself because there are some edges where you can fall," Lindsey says. "You have to believe in yourself that you can turn, not say 'I can't, I can't' — you've got to say 'I can' in your mind, and then you do it. So it's not very hard."

The smile on Lindsey's face and the looks of amazement and respect on other skiers' faces as she goes by tell that the program is succeeding.

After a little practice, Lindsey McGrady and Dan Wolfe glide down Mount Baker with ease.
Staring
HIV in the
Face

Story by Dana Goodwin
Photos by Ryan Burden
Twenty-three-year-old Jody Kunz wasn't the least bit worried about the results of his HIV test. Jody, a Western student, had visited two doctors because of flu-like symptoms and a rash on his chest. Both doctors said an HIV test was unnecessary because, although Jody is gay, his sexual history didn't put him in a high-risk group.

“There was only one time when I could have possibly been exposed to the virus, and even then it was protected intercourse,” Jody said.

A third doctor recommended the test just to eliminate the possibility.

“I was not worried at all. Not one, teeny-tiny bit of me was worried,” he said with a shrug. The doctor that Jody went to had a mandatory policy that patients come to the office to get the test results back. They couldn't get them over the phone, even if the results were negative. Jody was so confident about the outcome of the test that he had planned to go to his second day of work at a new job after he got his results.

“I was going to the doctor's to get my test, find out it was negative and go to work,” Jody said, counting the steps on his fingers.

But Jody didn't get the results he expected. The test was positive.
"The only thing that went through my mind was 'oh, fuck,'" he said, "but you probably can't print that."

The doctor gave Jody some brochures and books and made an appointment for the following week.

"He also gave me the 'it's not the end of the world' speech," he said.

That was in November of 1992. As Jody leaned back, the large office chair he sat in made his small-framed body look even smaller. He gazed at nothing, trying to take himself back to that day two years ago.

"It was like I left my body and I was operating it, but I was operating it from up here," he said and gestured vaguely to a spot somewhere above his head.

He began to speak slowly, in contrast to his usual brisk cadence. "It was very cloudy, very third person for me. It's like, I wasn't going through this, this was not me, this was someone else."

From the doctor's office, Jody went immediately to the home of a close friend.

"They were sad and upset, but they just tried to make me feel better," he said.

His mother, who lives in Seattle, knew that he had been tested and called later to find out about the results. Jody told her over the phone.

"She was very upset, what you would expect from a mother, but at the same time she said that this is a reality that I need to deal with, and that I shouldn't let it ruin my life," Jody explained. His mother then told his stepfather and older brother.

He went home the next day and spent much of his time talking to friends and letting them know about the results.

"I was building a support system for myself," Jody said.

His blue eyes shifted to something only he could see. Jody explained that he tried not to focus too much on the terrible news.

"I was concentrating on taking the next step, not on everything at once. Even at that time I was ...," he paused for a moment as if searching for the right words, "working on trying to find a way to deal with this in a healthy fashion."

Since then, Jody has tried hard to maintain a healthy, positive attitude.

"I really, truly believe that I will not die from this disease," said Jody. "There's still too much we don't know about this disease for me to be convinced that I'll die."

Although Jody was dating someone when he tested positive, it was not that person who had infected him. Their relationship lasted for several months after the diagnosis.

"When I told him, his exact words were, 'Well, I don't see how that affects us,'" said Jody. "He showed me that life was still normal even though I was in a place where I didn't think it was."

Jody did contact the person who had infected him, but prefers not to talk about it.

"For someone who's not (HIV) positive that's really a quandary — how do you go on with everyday life? Well, you have to," he asked, leaning forward in the chair with a sense of urgency.

"I could have locked myself in my house and spent the next three months crying, but gee, my credit cards were still due, and I did have to go back to work." Jody leaned back and paused for a moment.

"I couldn't let the rest of my life get screwed up. Even if I was just putting in appearances at school, that was still important."

Now, two years after he was diagnosed, Jody is in good health. He is thin, but certainly not emaciated, and he exudes a brisk sort of energy. Jody is not on any prescription medication, but he does take multi-vitamins, amino acids and blue-green algae to boost his immune system.

Two doctors have recommended that he start taking AZT, a chemical that is sometimes partially effective in reducing clinical symptoms and controlling viral replication, but Jody refused.

"I don't think it's a good medication to take for people who are not symptomatic," he said, then added, "If I found out tomorrow that I have 60 T-cells left and have full-blown AIDS, I would probably take it."

His emotional health is good as well. Jody...
feels the key to surviving emotionally is to not obsess about being HIV-positive.

“I think about it every day, and I think that I think about it a lot every day, but there is a difference between thinking about it and obsessing over it,” he said. “You know that you have this disease, you know that you could possibly die very young, so you enjoy what you have.”

Jody admits, though, that he has his bad days.

“I get freaked out and I get panicked, but I try to figure out what I’m panicked about,” he explained. “Am I panicked about dying or am I panicked about dying without accomplishing anything?”

He paused for a bit, then leaned forward and opened his arms in a wide shrug. “And then I think, isn’t this dumb to be panicked about dying now, when I’m healthy?”

Jody’s healthy attitude may have to do with the fact that he devotes much of his time to making sure that students at Western are fully aware that they are at risk for this disease.

Jody volunteers to speak to classes that are studying HIV issues. He said that he wants to “put a face on this disease.”

When asked to describe the level of HIV/AIDS awareness on campus, Jody laughed and said, “Desolate?”

He feels there’s not only a lack of awareness, but an insensitivity as well. He recalls seeing a sign put up by one of the Christian groups on campus.

“This sign said something to the effect of, ‘Get real. Would you sleep with someone who had HIV or AIDS?’” Jody recounted, with a trace of bitterness in his voice. “It was very callous and cold. They were assuming that no one who reads that will be HIV-positive or have AIDS.” He shook his head. “It serves to make people feel inhuman.”

Remarkably, Jody has received all positive feedback from groups he has talked to. However, he realizes there must be people who have bad feelings and just don’t say anything.

“I try to encourage people to say what they feel and then it’s out in the open, and I won’t get mad at them,” he said, then added with a laugh, “I’ll try not to.”

Stacey Kettman and Katie Williams, both sophomores, were in one of the classes that Jody spoke to last quarter. Both were impressed and touched by Jody’s willingness to speak so openly about his experiences.

“I really admire how open he was,” Kettman said. “If I was in the same situation, I don’t know if I could do that.”

Williams agreed, saying, “It put everything in perspective … it can happen to anyone at any time.”

One aspect of Jody’s life with HIV that many people have trouble understanding is that, until recently, he was involved and living with someone who is not positive.

“Our society’s view of sex is so limited and constrained that we can only think of maybe three things that we could possibly do in the bedroom,” he said. “We (he and his ex-partner) didn’t do the things that would put someone at risk.”

Jody and his ex-partner dated for six months; they broke up because of HIV.

“He decided that he couldn’t deal with my being HIV-positive and that it is conceivable that I could die earlier than most people,” Jody said.

Since their breakup, Jody has decided that he won’t date anyone who is not HIV-positive.

While Jody doesn’t think it’s impossible for it to work, he thinks that for him to become involved with someone who is not HIV-positive is an emotional risk he is no longer willing to take,” he said. “It’s hard enough to be HIV-positive, but to lose people because of it, that I care about, is unacceptable.”

He paused and added quietly, “And I don’t want to do that again.”

Before he was diagnosed, Jody said that HIV/AIDS was an issue but not a very personal one for him.

“It was an issue, but more like being concerned about racism; I’m not black, but I’m concerned about racism.” He picked up a pen and started doodling on a pad of paper. “It was more of an altruistic concern, rather than concern for self.”

Jody expresses much concern about today’s youth, both homosexual and heterosexual. A rather fatalistic attitude is developing among many young, gay men who feel they will get the disease regardless of how careful they are.

Jody stresses education as a way to reach America’s youth.

“We’re so insertive-sex fixated as a nation that no one talks about mutual masturbation as an option for expressing intimacy,” he said. “Good God, the surgeon general mentions masturbation alone and she gets fired; we are refusing to discuss the alternatives because we just want people not to have sex,” he exclaimed. “Sorry — that’s not going to happen.”

Jody said he was raised with the idea that if something is wrong, it’s talked about, and he feels there is something wrong with the attitude toward HIV and AIDS here on campus.

“I try to get across that, number one, you are at risk, number two, we are people and number three, we’re basically just like you,” he said. “But I think it’s important to say that I don’t speak for everyone with HIV. I am just one person and these are my experiences. This is just my perspective, and that’s all it is.”
Sex in the Age

Getting it whenever, wherever and with whomever

Story by Johnny Payseno
Photo by Peter Lewinsohn

Hey, we all know we should use condoms to protect ourselves and our partners from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, right? So why aren't we? People are still having unsafe sex in the age of AIDS.

In 1993, a Psychological Reports study of college students' knowledge and attitudes regarding AIDS showcased this disturbing trend. Students tested on their knowledge of AIDS were generally well-informed. However, the study found no relationship between the students' knowledge of AIDS and their avoidance of risky sexual behaviors.

The awareness is there, but a lot of unsafe behavior is still going on, said Stacy Thomas, 21, a human services major and HIV tester at Western.

Roger Roffman, a professor of social work at the University of Washington, studies people at high risk of contracting HIV. He explained that several theories have been developed to explain this risky behavior.

"Some people may not form an intention to act safely because they believe ... the outcome is not going to affect them," Roffman said.

Others allow themselves to be persuaded into thinking it isn't "cool" to use a condom. Others aren't able to negotiate with their partners effectively enough to come to the understanding that a condom is essential, Roffman said.

"Some of the self-judgments and societal judgments say, 'If you are (carrying a condom), you are anticipating sex.' ... A young woman is encouraged to carry condoms so that she is doing something in taking responsibility for what might occur with a male partner. The double standards are that this woman is 'easy,' 'she is out looking for sex,'" said Annie Mance, an HIV/STD/AIDS educator and HIV tester at the Whatcom County Health Department.

Mance sits at her desk at the Whatcom County Health Department. A bulletin board above her desk is overflowing with Far Side comics, photographs of friends, a photograph of a few dozen different condoms that are hanging on a clothesline, as well as buttons reading "B safe" and "sex spoken here." A desk piled high with a mish-mash of papers and documents is where the battle for AIDS education begins for this woman. She has a glowing smile, the look of a leprechaun and just a hint in her voice of the many places the self-proclaimed gypsy has lived.

According to Mance, another theory of why people have unsafe sex is they lack self-esteem.

"The theories that exist now can't address the very spontaneous decisions, though," Roffman said.

Some people just get caught up in the moment. "They are just having a good time and aren't thinking about it until afterwards," said Steve Wisener, 25, an HIV tester and graduate student in personnel administration at Western.

Jake, an anonymous source, is a studious 22-year-old nearing graduation at Western. His light brown hair, clean-cut appearance and dimpled smile seem to put him above thinking about such things as an HIV test, but the thought won't go away. He has had eight different sex partners in the past five years — having unprotected sex with most of them. He worries about HIV, but continues to practice unsafe sex. He knows what it is like to get caught up in the moment.

"You meet this girl and she is cute, smart, she's a college stu-
AIDS

Why can't people just talk about sex?

You see sex on TV all the time, but how much good do they look, by how much do you think this girl has got some disease,” Jake said.

“You can't tell if someone is HIV-positive by their age, by how good they look, by how much money they have, or by what kind of car they drive. If you are going to have those kind of sexual encounters, then you need to treat each and every one of them as though you are having sex with someone who has HIV and protect yourself,” said Craig Wunder, a Bellingham resident who volunteers as a safe-sex educator.

According to a 1993 study by the Centers for Disease Control, people age 20 to 29 make up 20 percent of AIDS cases in the United States.

“There are a lot of people who, even though it is a dangerous time to be doing it, are out there getting it wherever, whenever they can with whomever,” Wunder said. “And they’re not even worried about finding out if that person sleeps around a lot, or how many partners that other person has had, or finding out anything.”

Living in a shame-based society, where some religions and ways of thinking make sex a taboo subject, may contribute to the problem.

“On one hand, sex is everywhere, sex sells, yet the prevailing attitudes about sex in this country are still very conservative,” Mance said.

Jake agrees that this is a problem. “I shouldn’t have to be embarrassed to talk about something like that. If I can’t talk about it, I shouldn’t be having it. I don’t understand why it’s such a big deal. You see sex on TV all the time; why can’t people just talk about it? If we could talk about it, I think everyone would be a lot more careful,” he said.

“Nobody likes to talk about (sex). . . . Most parents aren’t very open with their children,” Wunder said. “It’s fine that they want to protect their kids from all of the hazards of the world, but education and knowledge doesn’t kill — ignorance does.”

HIV testers and educators at Western and the Whatcom County Health Department combat ignorance with harm reduction, which entails finding out people’s perceptions of their own risk and then trying to help them reduce that risk, Mance said.

“Let’s say we have a client who has 10 anonymous sex partners a month. Harm reduction for them might be eight unprotected anonymous sex partners a month. . . . For that person, that would be a significant change in risky behavior,” Mance said.

“Somebody who has a very high-fat diet and wants to lose pounds doesn’t start with perfection the next day. They start with incremental steps. People may even lapse, they may even have little slips. Slips don’t mean the end of the world. Of course, with HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, these slips can be life-threatening. You still want to support people for all of the positive things they are doing. And a slip doesn’t mean a person has completely fallen off the wagon,” Mance said.

“If I can help them at least make informed choices,” Wunder said, “that’s what it’s all about. . . . I can’t be there putting the condom on for them, saying, ‘You shouldn’t be doing that.’

“People are very good about the game plans (for safe sex) that they have, but you throw in alcohol and drugs and it’s out the window,” Wunder said.

Wunder considers drugs and alcohol to be the number one reason why people have unsafe sex.

“I’m a person who won’t make the first move on girls. I don’t make any moves on girls,” Jake said. “I won’t have sex unless they initiate it. But alcohol usually makes me a little more apt to initiate something.”

Alcohol has been involved in each of the instances Jake has had unsafe sex. Chemical dependency can be a major stumbling block in people’s ability to be safe, Mance said, shaking her head.

What really stresses me out is people who come in to be tested for HIV and think they were in this monogamous relationship and they were being very faithful. Since it was a monogamous relationship, they decided to stop using condoms.

“Then, after the relationship was over, they found out the person was sleeping with other people. And that is why they are here. They’re very scared,” Wisener said.

“It takes a lot of courage to be tested. . . . It makes you think of your vulnerability as a human. Life is pretty precious,” Thomas said.

“Some people are really scared. They know they have been engaging in some behaviors that are highly risky,” said Mike Ormsby, 29, also an HIV tester and psychology major at Western.

Even after people have a close call with HIV, take an HIV test and come out negative, they don’t always change their habits.

“For every person who changes (to practicing safe sex) . . . there are two who don’t,” Roffman said.

You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make it drink, Mance said of those who continue to have unsafe sex even after counseling.

“I try to be supportive (of those who ‘slip’). I’m not going to candy coat it. I’m going to tell them, ‘Yeah, OK, you fucked up. Now what are you going to do about it?’” Wunder said, leaning forward in frustration.

“Until it is talked about . . . it is not going to go away. And it doesn’t matter if you’re black, or you’re white, or you’re gay, or you’re straight, whether you’re a man, or a woman, or a child, a mother, a father, a brother, a sister . . . it has no barriers. People who think they are safe, if they don’t acknowledge the problem exists, they are putting themselves at risk just by their ignorance,” Wunder said.

“Everyone needs to take a real hard look inside themselves and say, ‘Hey, is it worth dying for?”

March 1995
Florida's Caffe da Vinci was buzzing with '90s-like dissent. College students philosophized with aging hippies while drinking Gator Lager, the state's closest thing to a micro-brewed beer. Under-age punks with ink-black hair sat along the brick walls of the coffeehouse, trying to stretch their $3 lattés through the night.

The conversation quieted as the next performer stepped onto the wooden platform. He pulled the wool cap further down on his head and adjusted the sunglasses on his twenty-something face. He slouched over his acoustic guitar that hung
below his waist and began angrily strumming the three chords of his song. The simple sound system screamed with feedback as he ground his voice into the microphone. The words were unintelligible, but the voice had an incessant regularity.

Several university students sitting at the table nearest the make-shift stage shifted nervously in their chairs. One of them, a 21-year-old in green flannel with curly blond hair, turned to his neighbor. He furrowed his eyebrows and crinkled his nose as if to ask, "What the hell is this?"

A group of teenagers perched along a wall seemed to be responding more enthusiastically. A few leaned back on the cool bricks in their black leather. Others bumped shoulders and tossed bleached hair, trying to find a rhythm in the nebulous noise.

With one last slam to his strings, the performer stepped away from the microphone. The emcee of the night, a graying man with baggy corduroy pants, approached the platform. "Gee," he said with exaggerated sarcasm, "I almost thought I was in Seattle or something."

The post-punk sound of Seattle bands like Nirvana and Pearl Jam has spread across America like an earthquake, causing aftershocks as far south as Florida. Young grunge-wannabes imitate their idols on secondhand guitars. Other listeners cringe at the vibrations and turn Garth Brooks up a little louder. Like it or not, though, no one can deny the impact of grunge music. As John Leland of Newsweek wrote, it's "sound that pounds."

"For me, the most important thing is rhythm," said Rafe Wadleigh, a Western student and local band member. Although he fights against being lumped together with the grunge scene, he admits to being influenced by it.

"I listen to Nirvana. I listen to Pearl Jam," he said, adding that he also listens to everything from modern classical to Miles Davis. After struggling for several years to describe his own band, Krusters Kronomid, he finally settled on "hard-edged, R2D2 music."

"I want to make people move involuntarily," he said of being a guitarist. According to Wadleigh, the goal of music is to seek out a truth that everyone can recognize. For many musicians, this truth is purest when the sound is simple, live and loud.

"Even if it grinds against their ears, it is still drawing them to it," he explained. "Music exists within our biology somewhere, in the beat of our hearts, in the rhythm of nature — we all key in to that somehow."

Roger Briggs, coordinator of Western's composition program and director of the university's orchestra, said he recognizes similarities between grunge music and ancient tribal songs.

"It is fundamentally very simply organized," Briggs said of Nirvana's music. He said when his two adolescent children exposed him to the band, the first thing he noticed was the repetition of chords and lyrics.

"Kurt Cobain is very governed — very black-and-white. The music consists of two or three cords, over and over," he said. "No, it isn't intricate, but so what? It's not supposed to be. If we get into judging quality based on intricacy ... we're really in trouble."

According to Briggs, Nirvana's music reflects a contemporary trend that began in classical music, referred to as minimalism. "Some people think intricacy gets in the way of communication; the simpler, the more direct," he said. Within the context of grunge music, Briggs admitted that such simplicity may be a result of a lack of formal musical education, but he added that the point was irrelevant.

"A lack of education doesn't mean that people can't communicate. If people only know three, four, maybe five chords, but they can still communicate — they've created terrific music." He said that people who have a great deal of musical knowledge will often express themselves in more simple terms.

"They choose to eliminate all of that and get music down to its bare bones," Briggs said.

"I've always been kind of leery of over-trained musicians," confessed Arman Bohn, Western student and bass player for Krusters Kronomid. He recited the old proverb that rules should only be learned so they can be broken.

"Some musicians learn the rules and then cling to them. That's where the problem is. You can never advance further if you're setting up these boundaries," he said.

Although he admitted that the technical quality of music may be declining as the grunge movement gains strength, he feels that more important goals are being reached. "There might not be as many hot guitarists in the spotlight ... but new things are happening, more experimental things," Bohn said.

According to him, learning to play an instrument through formal standards can be detrimental to developing an individual style. The more freedom the musician has, the more innovative the music will be. Bohn described the guitarist of Sonic Youth, who experiments with tuning his guitar in different ways.

"Whether it's good or not is a matter of opinion, but it's obviously not standard," he said.

This type of experimentation in music has led to more "garage" musicians.

"I think, on a grand scale, more people are wanting to get involved with music," Wadleigh said.

"There's an attitude that anybody can play. I like that," he said. He added, though, that he personally prefers listening to people with broader musical backgrounds. He played in school bands during elementary and junior high school, and he is currently taking lessons from David Feingold, Western's classical guitar professor.

Regardless of his own tastes and training, Wadleigh said it is important that music be egalitarian. "Music should be for everyone. Anybody can bang on a drum and feel something. There is no certain criteria you have to meet in order to be a musician."

His attempt to bring music back to the level of the audience has also influenced the recording and production of grunge music.

"A certain aspect of rock 'n roll is letting your hair down," said Feingold. Along with teaching classical guitar and music theory, he performs regularly. He has released a CD with a variety of guitar music, including jazz and improvisational arrangements.

Feingold said he disliked what seemed to be a trend of musicians taking themselves too seriously. "Grunge has gotten away from that. I, personally, had a real problem with bands getting over-technical."

Wadleigh agrees. "It's kind of a rootsy movement," he said.

"People are coming out of their basements and making albums. That's part of the
appeal; it sounds like it could be your next-door neighbors. "The trend is good. It's going towards something not so slick," he continued. "It's not so much a product as a statement. The '80s — it was a nice little package." He said today's music reflects a "raw'er" subject matter and sound that also comes out in the production of the music.

"People are trying to do it themselves," Bohn said, "and maybe save themselves in the process." Krusters Kronomid has yet to look for a manager, despite recording its first CD in late-1994.

Like Feingold, Bohn said he hopes music continues to veer away from the use of computers in its production. He seemed hopeful.

"When you hear an '80s rock album and compare it to Pearl Jam," Bohn said, "it's a lot more glitzy. We're a level below that now. They're sloppy recordings: they aren't spending months and months or thousands of dollars on recordings."

Despite this tendency to downgrade recordings, Bohn added that not all new music is a backlash to the superficiality of the past decade. "We still have Michael Bolton," he said with a smirk. "We haven't completely cleansed ourselves."

He used Nirvana's recording history as an example of the movement toward more basic production techniques. The band's CD "Nevermind" involved a lot more studio work. In Bohn's opinion, "In Utero" was an attempt at a more realistic recording.

"They (the songs) were basically done in one take. The sound is right there in your face — nothing between you and it," Bohn said admiringly.

Krusters Kronomid also tried to capture the sound of a live performance when recording its album. "We recorded it all in one room. ... It sounds like we sound," Bohn said. Both he and Wadleigh said they felt this shift away from artificiality is having a positive effect on today's music.

"In the '90s, people are wanting something more substantial than Cheetos and Gummy Bears," Wadleigh said. "It's a definite improvement."

Not everyone is adjusting to the "new and improved" music as easily or eagerly. Feingold is still wary of some of the grunge bands. Growing up on Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton, he missed the original Woodstock as an eighth grader only because he wasn't able to hitch a ride.

"When someone my age listens to that," Feingold said of Nirvana, "we can't help but think 'bad early rock.' We have to get past that to appreciate it."

He said after listening to a sampling of grunge music, he has gained an appreciation for Soundgarden and some of Pearl Jam's songs. However, he has never learned to love Nirvana.

"When I first saw Nirvana on Saturday Night Live, it just didn't do it for me," he admitted. "My first impression was that they were real hacks." Despite his critical ear, Feingold said he can relate to some of the music by accepting it at face value.

"If I define it on its own terms, I usually like it better," he explained.

"Some people can't identify with where we're coming from," Wadleigh pointed out. "You have to be our age, or at least our mindset. I don't even know what the point is, but it appeals to me."

"Thematically, it's about tackling the more evil, the more subversive," he explained.

"The tweaked," added Bohn.

"Or at least the more provocative," continued Wadleigh. "Musically, it's just more aggressive."

"'Grunge.' The word itself isn't very attractive," Bohn pointed out.

Briggs said one of the messages he hears when listening to his children's Nirvana album is a "cry to be heard. (It) appeals to many people, generally younger ... a cry for help and not really knowing who he's crying out to. It strikes a chord in many of us."

According to Briggs, music is "about communicating through sound. Everyone needs to express themselves within the context of society. Clearly, that is going to manifest itself in a huge variety of ways." If this definition is accurate, then surely these new bands qualify.

"As long as you have a musician and an audience, it constitutes something," Bohn explained, "whether the message is good or bad."

Although not everyone is eager to hear the abrasive cry of grunge musicians, as Bohn pointed out, "it's too late to say it's not music."
Pursued by Pimples: THE HORRORS OF ZIT-DOM

Story
by
Ruby
Quemuel

Everyone has experienced eruptions of this scourge. It's the disease children don't expect, teens must endure and adults want to forget — red bumps with white pus that pop up on various body parts like constellations in the night sky. These spots emerge during the worst of times, like right before encounters with the opposite sex. No cure has been found for this disease that has plagued many since the beginning of puberty.
The disease is acne and is more commonly known as zits, pimples, blemishes, Mr. Kilimanjaro, the Big Dipper and the list goes on.

Acne is not a life-threatening condition. But it can be life-altering for some people who view acne as more than just a few blemishes.

"If it's really bad, it feels gross since it's totally noticeable in a place where everyone can see it. You also start touching the zit with your hands. It makes you feel self-conscious," said Renee LaCasse, a senior majoring in graphic design.

"I never really let it affect me," said junior Kyle Hughes, a human resource management major, as he leaned back on the couch with his legs on the coffee table. "It doesn't lower my self-confidence. But, if I had a choice between having zits and being zit-free, I'd rather be zit-free."

"I had normal teenage acne which did make me feel self-conscious. Thank God I'm female so at least I can cover it by wearing makeup," senior Toni Budoff said.

"I'm also lucky that people confuse zits with my freckles," Budoff said with a laugh. "But it's annoying when you're 23, almost 24, and you still get them."

Acne is usually associated with teens paying dues for growing up. But this skin condition has also followed some people into adulthood. Acne affects about 20 percent of adult women and 10 percent of adult men, said Dr. Edward Kauffman, a dermatologist at Northwest Medical Center.

It is easy for some acne-prone people to not think about their complexion. But other people are often reminded of their acne-plagued condition by strangers who offer advice without being asked or who ridicule the person intentionally.

"In high school, I wasn't a pizza face, but I had a pretty bad complexion," said Ron Weist, Jr., a physical education major.

"During my freshman year in high school, there was one time when I was eating lunch and about five seniors surrounded me with plastic sporks — those things that are both a spoon and a fork. They started to stab me in the face with the sporks. Each time they stabbed my face they would yell, 'Four more won't hurt!'" said Weist as he scowled with a crazed glint in his eye and raised his arm as if he, too, had a spork in his hand. "Meaning that four more red spots won't matter."

"It just annoyed me... It was more like embarrassing, so I tried to play it off or explain it away," Weist said, looking into the gray afternoon sky, searching for the right words. "Like I told people that I was using a dull razor."

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Trouble begins to boil below the surface of the skin about a week before it emerges from the skin. They mix with the oil, or sebum, and work their way to the surface of the skin to be washed away.

But sometimes this process screws up. The reason is still unknown, according to the 1993 book, Clinical Pediatric Dermatology. One explanation for acne is that testosterone has an effect on oil-producing glands and follicular cells, Kauffman said. The process of follicular cell replacement goes awry when follicles produce cells so tightly that they never make it out to the surface. The cells accumulate and mix with more oil and bacteria. So a plug is formed, which clogs up the pore. As more oil is produced, the follicle swells and visible acne activity begins.

A variety of acne formations are bound to attack through the skin. Whiteheads are compacted dead skin cells and skin oils usually seen as small white bumps under the surface of the skin. A blackhead is a visibly enlarged pore with a plug of dead skin cells and skin oil. The dark color results from materials in the follicle.

Red and swollen pimples are from follicles releasing their contents into surrounding tissue. Finally, the active-volcano-looking zits are pustules. They are pus-filled inflammations caused by the body's white cells attacking the contents building up the follicle.

But there are some preventative and treatment methods for those suffering from this perplexing pimple problem.

"Someone told me one time that you should pick at your face and then rinse real thoroughly with stuff like lemon juice," Weist said, emphasizing the word "real."

Actually, the popular practice of popping zits is acceptable with certain acne formations such as pustules and blackheads. But resist the temptation to squeeze the other types of pimples peeking out, especially those cherry-bomb red papules and pimples, since they result in scars, Dr. Kauffman suggested.

Dr. Kauffman suggested keeping stress levels at a minimum, getting adequate sleep and staying healthy. According to Prevention magazine, men who use a safety razor should soften their beard thoroughly with soap and warm water. To prevent nicking pimples, shave as lightly as possible.

When buying makeup, make sure the label says that it is "noncosmogenic." This means that using the cosmetic should not affect the eruptions of acne. Many antibiotics are out on the market today. Particular drugs work for some people, but not for others. If one thing does not work, the doctor can prescribe another.

In other words, there is no cure for this enigma called acne, but it can be controlled through treatment.

"Zits are weird," Budoff said with a look of intent.

The legacy of zits lives on as past horror stories are passed with humor during the present.

"A couple of guys were wrestling around and they kept slapping me in the face. I said, 'Cut it out, you guys. You're irritating my zits,' and they go, 'Your zits aren't irritated, they're pissed!" Weist said between sputters of laughter.

"Another time in high school, I was the weatherman during this mock news broadcast in front of the class," Weist said, suppressing a chuckle.

"I said, 'It looks like things will be clear up...' Someone in the class yelled, 'Yeah, too bad we can't say the same thing about your complexion!'

"I've got more," Weist exclaimed with a grin.
Shattered

For the survivors of a crash, healing is a lifelong journey.

Story by Dawn Bittner
Photos by Ryan Burden
May 30, 1992 was what seemed to be a typical spring day for 19-year-old Gretchen Unick and her boyfriend, 20-year-old Keith McKay. After spending the afternoon on a friend's boat, Gretchen and Keith decided to ride Keith's motorcycle out to Semi-ah-moo. They didn't stay long. It was getting dark and Gretchen wanted to head home.

As they traveled east along Lynden-Birch Bay Road, the evening seemed perfect to Gretchen. She and Keith had reunited just six days before, following a four-month breakup. Gretchen was happiest with Keith and knew he was the one she would marry.

Within moments, Gretchen's happiness was shattered. She looked over Keith's shoulder as they approached the flashing light at the intersection of Blaine and Alderson. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary and she quickly glanced away. But when she looked back, she saw headlights coming straight toward them.

Keith automatically turned the bike to the right in an attempt to avoid the truck, but it was too late. The motorcycle's foot pedal stuck in the ground, causing the bike to jackknife. As it flipped over, Gretchen was thrown into a ditch on the left side of the road. Keith stayed with the bike as it skidded and rammed into the truck.

"I must've hit my head, but when I came to, I knew something was wrong," Gretchen said, "I was trying to pull myself up, but I couldn't. My upper body worked, but my legs just wouldn't."

A woman showed up at the scene and was at her side immediately. "Nobody would tell me..."
where he was at first, but when they put me in the ambulance I finally said, 'Where is he?' And then the man that was in (the ambulance) said, 'Didn't they tell you? Keith's dead.' Very cold."

Gretchen said Keith died instantly when his body collided with the truck.

Despite the injuries she endured, Gretchen said she hasn't felt much physical pain. The thought of what happened to Keith and the emotional trauma she experienced are much more painful than any injury to her body.

"I was real depressed, real lonely for a long time," Gretchen said, her smile slowly fading as she described the details of the accident.

To look at auburn-haired Gretchen, one would never guess her right foot, which was snapped in half in the accident, is held together by a metal plate with seven screws. One would never guess that, for the two months following the accident, she was confined to a wheelchair as she waited for her broken femur (thigh bone, extending from the hip to the knee) to heal.

"Supposedly, a broken femur is the most painful bone that you can break, but I didn't cry at all because I think I was in so much shock. I don't think I could cry," Gretchen said, as she pointed out her scars, evidence of the accident that will be with her forever.

For many people, accidents like the one Gretchen miraculously survived are nothing but segments on the evening news or headlines in the local paper. For others, such stories hit closer to home. Often, fatal accidents kill everyone involved. But in other cases, one person is left behind to cope with unbearable pain, trauma, shock and the uneasy feeling of having barely escaped death.

I met Gretchen in November 1993. She and I share a special connection and it was a blessing to discover that I wasn't the only one who had survived a fatal accident.

It was July 16, 1992, a clear, beautiful, summer night. My friend Jason Werzynski, who was 18, and I had taken out his boat on Lake Sammamish. We had met five days before and were just getting to know each other. Out of nowhere, another boat, traveling at an excessive speed, barreled up behind us. It plowed into the back of Jason's boat and flew over the top. I thought I had seen Jason jump into the water before the boat struck us, but he was never found. It is still a mystery what happened to him. I stood in the middle of Jason's destroyed Bayliner with tiny pieces of shattered glass in my hair and clothes.

A lot of people thought I'd be over it in a few days, but two-and-a-half years later, I still think about it every day.

When a person experiences any type of traumatic event, whether it is an accident, war, rape or natural disaster, it is likely that a very intense reaction will follow. This reaction is called post-traumatic-stress-disorder.

Jim Orr, a clinical psychologist for Western's counseling center, said that tragic events are triggers to a process that involves five steps: outcry, numbing, intrusion, "working-through" and conclusion.

Outcry is the initial response to the trauma most often followed by fear, Orr said, relaxing in one of his office chairs.

When Gretchen was lying in the ditch, unable to move her legs, her main concern was for Keith. She said the shock prevented her from realizing the extent of her own injuries. She just wanted to know if Keith was all right.

The next stage of PTSD, numbing, is the mind's way of distancing itself from the trauma. Symptoms of numbing include sleeplessness, headaches, fatigue and social withdrawal. In extreme cases, a person may turn to drugs or alcohol, Orr said. According to Katsuko Tanaka in the article "Post-Trauma Response," "numbing is a powerful coping method used to reduce the psychological and emotional impact."

"Numbing is a better feeling than what comes next," Orr said.

This, according to Tanaka, is because stage three, intrusion, is a conscious awareness of the trauma. The victim has acknowledged the event and faces powerful emotions that he or she is not sure how to handle. Nightmares, flashbacks, despair, weakness and the inability to function socially are common during this stage.

"I just wanted to lay there, and I don't mean to sound crazy, but just wanting to kind of die ... not kill myself, but just kind of fade away," Gretchen said, reflecting on the tormenting aftermath of Keith's death.

She said during this stage, she faced many sleepless nights, and when she did sleep, her dreams were filled with death.

"There was so much death in my dreams. It went from people were after me and trying to kill me to where I turned it around and started killing people," Gretchen said.

Feelings of guilt are natural throughout PTSD and the healing process. According to Orr, "survivor guilt" is especially common. Even today, Gretchen feels guilty for being the one to make it through.

"There's a lot of guilt. Right from the start, it was my idea to go on the bike ride that night ... Keith wanted to stay at Semi-ah-moo, but I wanted to get home. If we would've just
"Keith was a special person," said Gretchen Unick, remembering Keith, who died in an accident that she survived. "I'm trying to be happy but it's really hard sometimes."

Gretchen continued, "Guilt of why did I live and why did he have to die? Feeling like I was a better person than I am. Why did I make it and he didn't? A lot of guilt about my life now. How can I be happy and keep on having birthdays and Christmases and he doesn't?"

Following the guilt associated with intrusion, victims arrive at the "working-through," where victims can view their traumas in realistic ways. According to Tanaka, "Failure to cope at this stage can result in chronic anxiety, depression or multiple psychosomatic reactions."

Professional counseling is often critical at this stage. "It's a good way to normalize the experience," Orr said.

Once the experience is normalized, the victim will have the ability to make the transition to the conclusion stage. According to Tanaka, conclusion allows the victim to integrate the trauma into daily life without letting it be a constant terror. The trauma can actually have a life-changing impact on the victim. It can lead to a new sense of self and may alter basic beliefs and values.

Reaching the conclusion stage of PTSD doesn't mean the victim's pain and sadness have disappeared. It doesn't mean the person will never cry or have another nightmare.

Conclusion is a stage the victim will remain in for the rest of his or her life. The constant suffering has disappeared, but having endured the trauma leaves a lasting effect. Major decisions will probably be based on something the victim has learned from the trauma.

Nearly three years after her tragedy, Gretchen, now 21, said she has never really gotten over what happened to Keith that night. She has been able to move on with her life and lives with her new boyfriend in a small, chocolate-colored house in downtown Bellingham.

Although most of Keith's pictures are put away, bits and pieces of memoirs are scattered throughout the house. One small photo of a smiling Keith on his motorcycle remains on the fireplace mantle. A thick legal deposition, which describes the details of the accident, is stacked on the shiny coffee table.

"I bet there's at least five places in the house where I find letters I wrote to the guy (the man driving the truck) telling him how I felt. I never sent them. It was a way of getting my feelings out. I wanted him to know that he didn't just kill some punk kid. Keith was a very special person," Gretchen said.

Although she has adjusted to the devastating loss, Gretchen said her life is, for the most part, back to normal. "I'm trying to be as happy as I can but it's really hard sometimes," she said as she turned the pages of a photo album filled with Keith's pictures, compiled by one of her close friends.

Gretchen said she has changed. "I... appreciate my life and the things I have a lot more," she said. "It's like I got a second chance."

Looking Back

I am still devastated that someone so young, with so much to look forward to and who was loved by so many people had to die at the hands of another person's carelessness.

I used to lie awake at night, reliving the accident over and over again in my mind. Through the paper-thin walls of the dorm I used to live in, I could hear my next-door neighbor's Garth Brooks CD playing all night long.

The words of one particular song, "The Dance," really touched my heart:

"I'm glad I didn't know the way it all would end, the way it all would go. Our lives are better left to chance. I could've missed the pain but I'd have had to miss the dance."

If I had never met Jason, I might have missed the pain. But nobody has ever had as much of an impact on me as he has, and I will always cherish the time we spent together.

Dawn Bittner